



**CHALLENGES AND NEEDS IN ENGLISH
COMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT
AMONG AIR CADETS IN THAILAND**

BY

LAC CHOTIKA PICHAIYUTTHAKIT

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

English is essential for many aspects of life, including business, education, and international relations. However, Thai air cadets may encounter language barriers during academic and training hours. In order to overcome language difficulties and improve English communication, air cadets need to learn and improve their English language skills in order to be prepared to accomplish a mission. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the challenges and needs in English communication development among air cadets and to explore their requirements in regard to improving their English in two areas: listening and speaking. A total of 84 participants were classified and randomly selected to respond to a questionnaire. The participants were 5th-year undergraduates with various fields of study, namely Aeronautical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Industrial & Aviation Management, Computer Science, and Military and Aerospace Materials Science. The data collected from the respondents were analyzed using descriptive statistics: means, standard deviations and percentages. The findings of current study revealed that the majority of air cadets encountered personal challenges about communicating complex content fluently when speaking with foreign armed forces, and they viewed that the academy needs to provide specialists to give them some advice on improving their English communication skills. Additionally, the results illustrated that most respondents need to enhance speaking abilities to effectively communicate in

English-language presentations, and they also need support from the academy to participate in conferences, seminars, or training programs in English overseas.

Keywords: English communication development, Challenges, Needs, Air cadets



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Symbols/Abbreviations	Terms
NKRAFA	Navaminda Kasatriyadhiraj Royal Thai Air Force Academy
RTAF	Royal Thai Air Force



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

This study aimed to investigate the challenges and needs in English communication development among air cadets in Thailand and to explore their requirements in improving English in two areas: listening and speaking.

Even though Thai language is the only official language in Thailand, English is the official language that is being used internationally. Moreover, it plays vital roles in various dimensions, i.e., education, multinational operations and various industries.

Navaminda Kasatriyadhiraj Royal Thai Air Force Academy (NKRAFA) is a military service academy in Thailand. NKRAFA's mission is to educate, train and inspire Air Cadets to become smart soldiers of character motivated to lead the Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF) in service for the nation and people in the future. Therefore, air cadets need to learn and improve their English language skills in order to be prepared to accomplish a mission. In addition, the military has several missions that involve international interactions, i.e., joint training exercises with foreign military, inter-troop exchange programs, equipment or weapons training, field training, continuing education programs, and other military operations.

The researcher is working as an Air Force Officer for the academy and aiming to conduct research regarding challenges and needs in English Communication Development among Air Cadets who will serve RTAF in the future.

1.2 Research Questions

The study explores the challenges in English communicative skills development of air cadets in a military academy. The main questions and objectives of this study are as follows:

- 1) What are the challenges in English communication improvement among air cadets?
- 2) What are the cadets' needs regarding English communication development?

1.3 Research Objectives

- 1) To explore the challenges in English communication improvement among cadets
- 2) To investigate the cadets' needs regarding English communication development

1.4 Definition of Terms

The definition of terms are as follows:

1) Air Cadets refer to Thai cadets who are educated and trained to be commissioned officers for the Royal Thai Air Force.

2) Communication Skills refer to the skills of listening and speaking. Specifically, English communication skills denote the ability and proficiency in using the English language in these activities. The researcher also focuses on the challenges and needs related to enhancing English communication skills among Air Cadets.

3) Challenges refer to the difficulties in English communicative skills development faced by cadets.

4) Needs refer to English communicative knowledge and skills that air cadets have to gain and apply for their further study and training.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study aims to investigate the challenges and needs regarding English communication development among air cadets. The participants were air cadets who were selected randomly from seven different majors at the Navaminda Kasatriyadhiraj Royal Thai Air Force Academy, Thailand. The questionnaire employed in the research was developed based on related studies and distributed to the air cadets. Then, the data were collected and analyzed to answer the research questions.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to provide significant information regarding the challenges and needs in English communication development among air cadets. The findings of this study may prove to be useful to those who are considering improving their learning outcomes of English speaking ability and English listening

comprehension. The results of this study can generate valuable recommendations for planning English language courses in education and training schools.

1.7 Organization of the Study

The study is divided into five chapters.

Chapter one is the introduction, consisting of the background of the study, statement of the problems, the research questions, research objectives, definition of key terms, scope of the study, significance of the study, and organization of the study.

Chapter two contains the literature review, focusing on the main theories or concepts of the study, which are challenges and needs in English development, definition of English communication, English speaking and listening skills, English language skills used by air cadets, and relevant studies.

Chapter three comprises the methodology of the study, including the participants, research instruments and procedures, including the research design, data collection, and data analysis.

Chapter four provides the results of the study gained from the questionnaires distributed to the participants.

Chapter five includes the discussion, conclusion, and recommendations for further studies.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter reviews academic literature in four main areas which consist of: (1) Types of Professional Development, (2) Definition of English Communication, and (3) Relevant research.

In the implementation of this Independent Study, the researcher has studied research, theories, concepts, and related documents to guide the endeavor as follows:

2.1 Types of Professional Development

2.1.1 Challenges in English Development

2.1.2 Needs in English Development

2.2 Definition of English Communication

2.2.1 The Importance of English

2.2.2 Speaking Skill

2.2.3 Listening Skill

2.2.4 English Language Skills Used by Air Cadets

2.3 Relevant Research

2.1 Types of Professional Development

In reference to learning English (TALTS)(2009), professional development can be divided into two categories. The first category is structured professional development. The second category is less formal professional development.

2.1.1 Challenges in English Development

Nowadays, air cadets may encounter challenges in learning English that affect their proficiency. These difficulties stem from both internal and external variables. Internal factors originate from within the students themselves, while external factors are influenced by outside elements (Ali, 2019).

A challenge is defined as something that requires a lot of concentration or effort to complete successfully, or the situation of facing such effort (Cambridge Dictionary, 2018). It is also described as something new and difficult that requires determination

and perseverance (Collins, 2018). Furthermore, a challenge refers to an activity that tests someone's ability and skill (Oxford, 2018).

Sometimes, students struggle to manage professional activities effectively, which can lead them to abandon self-improvement and rely on passive or ineffective instructional techniques. To enhance students' English skills, it is crucial to consider the difficulties they may encounter and to place a greater emphasis on English development activities.

Many researchers have explored these challenges. For example, Kanokorn et al. (2012) identified several obstacles that students face when participating in development projects, such as a lack of knowledge, talent, or confidence, and difficulty accessing academic resources. Wichadee (2012) highlighted additional challenges, including an increased workload, additional tasks, and insufficient financial support from academic institutions. Time constraints are also a significant barrier to English enhancement. Klinkerd (2015) noted that due to the heavy responsibilities of air cadets, they often struggle to manage their studies effectively, leaving them with little time to engage in English development courses..

2.1.2 Needs in English Development

In general, definitions of "need" can vary depending on circumstances, context, and community perception. According to the Oxford Dictionary (2024), a need is something vital or significant to a person, not just something desirable. The Cambridge Dictionary (2024) defines a need as the desire for something essential to fulfill life.

Sleezer et al. (2007, as cited in Mahathamnuchok, 2014, p. 9) categorize needs into three types. First, strategic needs refer to success in the business industry. Second, individual needs pertain to personal achievement of specific goals. Third, learning needs relate to educational knowledge and skills required by individuals.

In this study, the focus is on learning needs, specifically the development of English communication skills among air cadets. This involves improving their educational knowledge and ability to communicate in English. The needs in English communication development include self-development in listening and speaking skills, which are essential for air cadets to perform professionally and intelligently..

2.2 Definition of English Communication

The definition of communication given by Adler and Rodman (2003) is "communication refers to the process of human beings responding to the symbolic behavior of other persons." Additionally, Hamilton (as described in Suthaceva, 2013) claimed that sharing "thought, idea, and feeling" is a process that allows for easier understanding. The ability to employ symbols and words in human communication is what distinguishes humans from other animals.

Communicating messages with language is the essence of what it means to be human." We, humans, are involved vitally and live through communication and human culture would be impossible without communicating. The four language skills needed for effective communication are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Speaking and writing are categorized as productive skills while listening and reading are receptive skills (Nunan, 2003).

2.2.1 The Importance of English

English is now the most extensively used language in the world. According to Bryson (1990), there are approximately 1.46 billion English speakers in the world, and the number of individuals attempting to acquire the language has significantly increased.

Because of globalization and the significance of English as a worldwide lingua franca, the ability to speak and write in English is recognized as a vital competency in a variety of fields, including diplomacy, business, and education. Therefore, the use of English as an education has been embraced in many nations that do not speak English (Coleman, 2006).

Kitjaroonchai (2012) asserts that in the era of globalization and internationalization, nations worldwide are increasingly interconnected, necessitating participation in a global community for various purposes. Proficiency in English not only fosters better understanding but also bolsters a country's competitiveness.

Today, English speakers can be categorized into three groups. The first comprises native speakers, those for whom English is their mother tongue. The second group consists of individuals who speak English as a second language. Finally, the third group comprises those who study English as a foreign language (Graddol, 1997).

According to Swales (1987), English is utilized in more than half of the many academic papers that are published each year, and this percentage seems to rise. Moreover, English is extensively used instead of the national language in scientific journals around the world.

2.2.2 Speaking Skill

One of the most important skills to communicate in English is speaking. Speaking abilities include using appropriate language, pronouncing words correctly, and conveying ideas clearly.

According to McLaren (2006), speaking is thought to be the most crucial language ability for learners. Even after spending so much time learning the language, learners still struggle when it comes to speaking when it is necessary. Harmer (2008) claims that in order to speak English correctly, learners should be knowledgeable of how to pronounce the different sounds in the language and should place special emphasis on intonation, stress, and pitch. They should also utilize vocabulary that is appropriate for the situation and the context. Each of these elements helps pupils speak English effectively and eloquently.

In this study, the researcher examines the speaking skills of air cadets who are undergoing training for multinational military operations. The aim is to augment professionalism and foster strong relations among Thai and non-Thai participating air forces.

2.2.3 Listening Skill

According to Hamouda (2013), listening entails the ability to acknowledge and comprehend spoken language, encompassing aspects such as pronunciation, syntax, vocabulary, and overall meaning. Furthermore, Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) assert that listening comprehension contributes to learners' pronunciation skills, suggesting that increased opportunities for spoken English usage facilitate learning of pitch, intonation, stress, redundancy, and other linguistic features. The multifaceted processes involved in comprehending spoken language, as delineated by Nadig (2013), encompass recognizing speech sounds, understanding individual word meanings, and grasping sentence grammar (Pourhosein Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016).

2.2.4 English Language Skills Used by Air Cadets

There are some specific requirements for English proficiency when recruiting air cadets in this education and training school. An English entrance exam is limited to a multiple-choices examination on grammar, conversation and vocabulary. In general, the air cadets in the Air Force academy encounter foreigners sometimes in special situations i.e., field training, continuing education programs, joint training exercises with foreign militaries, inter-troop exchange programs, equipment or weapons training. In military operations, there may arise occasions when communication in English becomes necessary. Consequently, for air cadets, listening and speaking skills are paramount and are likely to be the most frequently utilized abilities. Hence, the most essential skills for air cadets are listening and speaking, respectively. Moreover, among these skills, listening presents the greatest challenge, followed closely by speaking.

2.3 Related Research

Duanpattra (2019) found that the majority of participants emphasized the significance of English communication skills for career advancement. They advocated for company-sponsored English training courses tailored to enhance specific communication abilities. Notably, the study revealed a consensus among participants regarding the need to improve listening and speaking skills, crucial for their professional engagements, especially in cross-cultural interactions. Consequently, focusing on these skills in training courses seems warranted.

Surakkitthikul (2020) examined the English learning challenges faced by support staff in a Thai institution, highlighting moderate levels of necessity for English in their work. Listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills were identified as essential, with speaking emerging as the most pressing need. Participants cited difficulties in vocabulary usage, complex sentence construction, comprehension of unfamiliar topics, various accents, idioms, and technical terms. These findings underscore the urgency of addressing speaking challenges through targeted training programs, particularly during office hours or weekends.

Pinsaikeow (2019) reported moderate challenges and needs across various English proficiency domains among Royal Thai Army officers. Speaking was identified as the top priority, with writing posing the greatest difficulty. Challenges in writing and

reading closely mirrored the top demands, whereas listening issues were primarily associated with communication with foreign troops. These insights inform the development of tailored English training programs for army officers.

Ruenvongsa (2020) explored the English language requirements of Thai Young Smart Farmers (YSFs), highlighting reading as their primary need. However, participants expressed a desire to enhance all language skills to apply knowledge effectively in their careers and teaching endeavors. Preferences for in-person instruction, mobile apps, and online classes varied, with a notable request for government support in establishing English language centers and providing agricultural-specific language training.

Overall, these studies emphasize the importance of listening and speaking skills in diverse professional contexts. Thus, my research aims to delve deeper into the challenges and needs of Air Cadets in English communication development, particularly in the realms of listening and speaking, to inform targeted training interventions.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The major objective of this research was to investigate the challenges and needs in English communication development among air cadets at a Thai military academy, which focusing on speaking and listening skills and their suggestion for improving their essential English language skills for successful operations. Questionnaires were used for data collection, which included only close-ended questions, using a Likert scale measurement method. The Likert scale questionnaires were distributed to participants in order to explore the English speaking and listening skills development barriers faced during academic hours and their suggestions for enhancing their English speaking and listening comprehension.

This chapter delineates the methodology and data collection procedures employed to address the research questions. It comprises four principal sections: (1) participant information and selection criteria; (2) description of the research instrument utilized for data collection; and (3) procedures, and (4) data analysis .

3.1 Participants

The participants in this study were 84 air cadets from the Nakorn Pathom Air Force Academy (NKRAFA), undergoing both academic instruction and military training in preparation for future service as commissioned officers in the Royal Thai Air Force. The sample size determination followed Taro Yamane's method. These cadets, all in their fifth year of undergraduate studies, represented diverse fields including Aeronautical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Industrial & Aviation Management, Computer Science, and Military and Aerospace Materials Science. Selection was conducted via random sampling, employing a stratified approach to prioritize students committed to learning and communicating in English, particularly with counterparts from other armed forces.

3.2 Research Instrument

For this study, a scaling questionnaire was used as the research instrument to collect the data for examining challenges and needs in English communication development among air cadets at the Navaminda Kasatriyadhiraj Royal Thai Air Force Academy. It was written in Thai to ensure thorough comprehension, and then the responses were translated into English. The questionnaire was developed based on related studies. However, to ensure its validity and effectiveness, the researcher conducted a pilot study involving commissioned officers who had previously graduated from NKRAFA. This allowed for the identification and refinement of any potential issues or ambiguities in the questions prior to their distribution to the study participant.

The questionnaire consisted of three parts as follows:

Part I: Demographic data: The close-ended statements allowed the respondents to provide personal information on age, classification, major, and English learning experience in the past.

This part also covered the frequency of English oral communication use. The participants were asked to indicate how frequently they communicate in English in their military education and training.

Part II: Level of English communication challenges in speaking ability and listening comprehension

The participants were requested to rate their opinion toward challenges in English speaking ability and listening comprehension based on a five-point Likert scale, with the scoring as follows:

1	means	Extremely low
2	means	Low
3	means	Moderate
4	means	High
5	means	Extremely high

Part III: Level of English communication needs in speaking ability and listening comprehension

The participants were requested to rate their opinion toward needs in speaking ability and listening comprehension based on a five-points Likert scale with the scoring as follows:

1	means	Extremely low
2	means	Low
3	means	Moderate
4	means	High
5	means	Extremely high

3.3 Research Procedures

3.3.1 Research Design

To accomplish the objectives, a quantitative research design was applied in the study. The questionnaires are employed to collect the data from air cadets who are non-native English speakers. They took approximately 20 minutes to respond.

3.3.2 Data Collection

Stratified sampling was utilized to ensure representation from various fields of study among the participants. Data collection was facilitated through Google Forms online software. The questionnaires, categorized into seven majors, were created and distributed to participants via the internet in proportion to the distribution of majors. A total of 84 questionnaires were sent to a commanding officer of air cadets and then randomly forwarded to 12 air cadets per major. All 84 questionnaires were completed and submitted within two weeks of distribution.

3.3.3 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics (SPSS version 26.0) right after the completion of the surveys. The statistics of frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were employed in this process.

Frequencies and percentages were employed in the data analysis of the demographic information, English learning experience and the frequency of English oral communication use of air cadets.

Means and standard deviations (SD) were employed in the data analysis of both the second part, focusing on challenges in English communication, and the third part, examining needs in English communication. The Likert scale range was utilized to gauge and interpret the participants' responses.

Mean score	1.00-1.80	means	Extremely low
	1.81-2.60	means	Low
	2.61-3.40	means	Moderate
	3.41-4.20	means	High
	4.21-5.00	means	Extremely high



CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This study desires to identify challenges and needs in English communication development among air cadets in a Thai military academy, focusing on English speaking ability and listening comprehension and their suggestions for improving their essential English language skills. The survey results from 84 participants are described in chapter 4. The participants filled in the questionnaire through Google Forms (n = 84). The responses were calculated in Microsoft Excel and are reported in tables. The research findings are characterized in two subtopics: (1) participants' background information as well as English language proficiency, (2) challenges and needs of English language skills according to participants' experience.

The findings of the study are presented in this chapter, which is divided into three parts in accordance with the questionnaires' section. The results of the general demographic information are in the first part, followed by the outcomes of English communication challenges in speaking ability and listening comprehension. Finally, the third part is the results of the English communication needs in speaking ability and listening comprehension.

In the following section, descriptive statistics, such as percentages, frequencies, mean, and standard deviations were used to interpret the quantitatively investigated data.

4.1 Demographic Data

This part provides general demographic data of male participants, including their age, classification, majors, experience in English studying, level of proficiency in English speaking and listening skills, and methods to improve communication skills, with the results shown in Table 1 to Table 13.

Table 4.1*Age of Air Cadets*

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18 – 22 years	61	72.62
23 – 27 years	23	27.38
Total	84	100

Table 4.1 presents the age categorization of the 84 male participants studying at the NKRAFA. Most of them were 18 - 22 years old (72.62%), and the rest were 23 - 27 years old (27.38%).

Table 4.2*Year of Study*

Classification	Frequency	Percentage
1 st year	0	0
2 nd year	0	0
3 rd year	0	0
4 th year	0	0
5 th year	84	100
Total	84	100

Table 4.2 shows the comparison of frequency analysis of the participants' classification. All of the respondents were 5th year students, calculated to 100 percentage from the total of 84 participants.

Table 4.3*Field of Study*

Field of Study	Frequency	Percentage
Aeronautical Engineering	12	14.29
Mechanical Engineering	12	14.29
Electrical Engineering	12	14.29
Civil Engineering	12	14.29
Industrial & Aviation Management	12	14.29
Computer Science	12	14.29
Military and Aerospace Materials Science	12	14.29
Total	84	100

Table 4.3 indicates fields of study that participants have studied in the academy, namely Aeronautical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Industrial & Aviation Management, Computer Science, and Military and Aerospace Materials Science. According to the statistics, participants of all major ranges were included in the same proportion.

Table 4.4*Frequency of Using General English Speaking and Listening Skills Among Air Cadets*

Frequency	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 day/ week	9	10.71
1-2 day(s)/ week	40	47.62
3-4 days/ week	15	17.86
5-7 days/week	20	23.81
Total	84	100

Table 4.4 indicates the frequency analysis of practicing general English in terms of speaking and listening skills among air cadets during their academic and training hours. Most of participants had the chance to improve their English speaking and listening one to two days a week (47.62%), followed by those cadets who improved speaking and listening skills five to seven days a week (23.81%), followed closely by 17 air cadets who practiced their English skills three to four days a week (17.86%). The minority of participants (10.71%) improved English speaking and listening skills less than one day a week.

Table 4.5

Frequency of Communicating with English Speaking Armed Forces Companies

Frequency	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 day/ week	45	53.57
1-2 day(s)/ week	33	39.29
3-4 days/ week	4	4.76
5-7 days/week	2	2.38
Total	84	100

Table 4.5 displays how often participants communicate in general English speaking and listening with foreign armed forces. The majority of respondents (53.57%) had the chance to communicate with English speaking troops less than 1 day a week, while only 2 persons out of 84 respondents (2.38%) communicated in English with foreign armed forces five to seven days a week.

Table 4.6*Self-Evaluation of Proficiency Level in English Speaking Skills of Air Cadets*

Proficiency level in English speaking	Frequency	Percentage
Very poor	5	5.95
Poor	33	39.29
Moderate	36	42.86
Good	9	10.71
Excellent	1	1.19
Total	84	100

As seen in Table 4.6, the majority of participants (42.86%) rated their English speaking skill proficiency at moderate level, followed by a poor level (39.29%); meanwhile, only one participant (1.19%) rated their English speaking ability at an excellent level.

Table 4.7*Self-Evaluation of Proficiency Level in English Listening Skills of Air Cadets*

Proficiency level in English listening	Frequency	Percentage
Very poor	13	15.48
Poor	20	23.81
Moderate	33	39.29
Good	15	17.86
Excellent	3	3.57
Total	84	100

According to Table 4.7, the largest group of cadets had a moderate level of English listening skill (39.29%), compared to a small number of those with an excellent level (3.57%).

Table 4.8

Methods to Improve Speaking and Listening Skills in General English Among Air Cadets

Method	Frequency	Percentage
1. Additional English language learning from a school or language institute	44	16.67
2. The academy provides English language learning courses	39	14.77
3. Having a positive attitude towards English	57	21.59
4. Watch movies, listen to music, or play games in English	64	24.24
5. English skills training through online media such as YouTube	60	22.72
Total	264	100

Table 4.8 displays the techniques that air cadets believe will help them become more proficient speakers and listeners of English. Watching movies, listening to music, or playing games in English is the most preferred technique (24.24%), followed by English skills training through online media (22.72%) and having a positive attitude towards English (21.59%). Conversely, the technique of the academy providing English language learning courses is the least preferred (14.77%).

The preceding section presented the personal data of the participants, who are fifth-year air cadets in a military academy. The following section will illustrate the

challenges in English communication development, specifically in terms of speaking and listening skills.

4.2 Challenges and Needs in English Communication Development Among Air Cadets

This part illustrates challenges and needs in English communication development in terms of speaking and listening skills. The responses to close-ended statements are listed by degree of challenges and needs. The ranking of problems and needs was calculated according to two skills, namely English speaking skills and listening skills, through means and standard deviations. The levels of challenges and needs were classified as extremely high (EH), high (H), moderate (M), low (L), and extremely low (EL), corresponding to mean ranges of 4.21-5.00, 3.41-4.20, 2.61-3.40, 1.81-2.60, 1.00-1.80, respectively.

4.2.1 Results of Close-Ended Statements

Most participants illustrated that they have personal challenges when communicating with foreign armed forces, with a mean score = 2.99, S.D. = 1.07. Thus, the level of challenges was mostly at a moderate level. However, improving speaking abilities in order to communicate throughout English-language presentations is the highest need in English communication development for most participants, with a mean score = 3.74, S.D. = 1.02. Therefore, the levels of needs in English communication development among air cadets were mostly at a high level.

Table 4.9

Level of Challenges in English Communication Development: Personal Challenges

Challenges in English communication development	Mean	S.D.	Level of Necessity	Rank
1. You do not know how to develop your profession in terms of English speaking and listening skills.	2.61	0.97	Moderate	7

2. You rarely convey technical terms in English for military purposes (such as combat orders or without weapon orders).	2.99	1.08	Moderate	6
3. You feel nervous when communicating in English with foreign visitors.	3.12	1.06	Moderate	3
4. You cannot choose the proper tense when speaking English.	3.34	1.13	Moderate	2
5. You cannot speak complex content fluently when communicating with foreign armed forces.	3.51	1.03	High	1
6. You do not understand the accent of foreigners who speak English.	3.04	1.09	Moderate	5
7. You cannot listen to presentations conducted in English, such as the pre-briefings, discussions in presentations for training and exercises.	3.10	1.01	Moderate	4
Total	3.10	-	Moderate	-

Table 4.9 displays the results of the individual aspects of difficulties in developing English communication skills among air cadets. The most frequently encountered challenge in their professional development was item 5, "You cannot speak complex content fluently when communicating with foreign armed forces" (mean score = 3.51, SD = 1.03), which was ranked at a high level. Conversely, item 1, "You do not know how to develop your profession in terms of English speaking and listening skills" (mean score = 2.61, SD = 0.97), was at a moderate level and proved to be the least difficult issue for air cadets regarding personal obstacles. The overall mean score of challenges in professional development related to personal challenges for air cadets was 3.10, indicating a moderate level of difficulty.

Table 4.10*Level of Challenges in English Communication Development : Organization Support*

Challenges in English communication development	Mean	S.D.	Level of Necessity	Rank
8. You do not get any support from the academy to attend English training programs, seminars, or conferences.	2.88	0.95	Moderate	2
9. You do not have enough time to improve listening and speaking skills because you have many training hours.	2.87	1.06	Moderate	3
10. You do not have experts to give you some advice about English communication development.	3.03	1.09	Moderate	1
11. You do not have enough learning resources (such as specific books or electronic devices) for developing speaking ability.	2.86	1.04	Moderate	4
12. You do not have learning resources such as specific books or electronic devices for developing listening comprehension.	2.57	1.01	Low	5
Total	2.84	-	Moderate	-

Table 4.10 demonstrates challenges in English communication development related to organizational support. The most significant challenge identified was item 10, "You do not have experts to give you some advice about English communication development" (mean score = 3.03, SD = 1.09), which was ranked at a moderate level. This was followed by item 8, "You do not get any support from the academy to attend

English training programs, seminars, or conferences" (mean score = 2.88, SD = 0.95), item 9, "You do not have enough time to improve listening and speaking skills because you have many training hours" (mean score = 2.87, SD = 1.06), and item 11, "You do not have enough learning resources (such as specific books or electronic devices) for developing speaking ability" (mean score = 2.86, SD = 1.04). The least significant challenge was item 5, "You do not have learning resources such as specific books or electronic devices for developing listening comprehension" (mean score = 2.57, SD = 1.01), which was ranked at a low level. The overall mean score for challenges in professional development regarding organizational support for air cadets was 2.84, indicating a moderate level of difficulty.

Table 4.11

Level of Needs in English Communication Development: Self-Directed Development

Needs in English communication development	Mean	S.D.	Level of Necessity	Rank
1. You need more time to improve English language skills by yourself, i.e., reading books, watching movies, listening to music, or playing games in English.	3.90	0.85	High	5
2. You need more time to practice English skills with your classmates.	3.38	0.99	Moderate	8
3. You need to improve your communication skills for translating for senior commanders.	3.69	1.09	High	7
4. You need to improve listening skills in order to understand presentations conducted in English.	3.97	0.98	High	3
5. You need to improve speaking skills in order to give presentations conducted in English.	4.07	0.97	High	1

6. You need to improve speaking ability for communicating with foreign troops during exercises.	3.96	0.99	High	4
7. You need to improve listening comprehension for communicating with foreign troops during exercises.	3.98	0.95	High	2
8. You need to learn English for exchanging opinion about military training during exercises or operations.	3.79	1.02	High	6
Total	3.84	-	High	-

Table 4.11 displays the results on the needs in English communication development of air cadets in the aspect of self-directed development. The top three needs were item 5 “You need to improve speaking skills in order to convey presentation conducted in English” (mean score = 4.07, SD = 0.97), followed by item 7 “You need to improve listening comprehension for communicating with foreign troops during exercises” (mean score = 3.98, SD = 0.95), and item 4 “You need to improve listening skills in order to understand presentations conducted in English” (mean score = 3.97, SD = 0.98), respectively, with all three items was ranked at a high level. However, the lowest mean score of the needs in English communication development regarding self-development were item 2 “You need more time to practice English skills with your classmate” (mean score = 3.38, SD = 0.99), which was ranked at a moderate level. The overall mean of challenges in professional development in the aspect of self-development for air cadets was 3.84, which was at a high level.

Table 4.12*Level of Needs in English Communication Development: Continuing Education*

Needs in English communication development	Mean	S.D.	Level of Necessity	Rank
9. You need support from the academy to attend the English training programs, seminars, or conferences abroad.	3.88	0.91	High	1
10. You need to take English courses with lecturers.	3.26	1.13	Moderate	5
11. You need to attend English courses in educational settings.	3.44	1.04	High	4
12. You need to learn English for military purposes (i.e., vocabulary, orders for participating in joint exercises and operations with foreign troops).	3.60	1.03	High	3
13. You need to learn English to provide requested information about The Royal Thai Air Forces to foreign visitors.	3.78	0.95	High	2
Total	3.62	-	High	-

Table 4.12 reveals the level of needs in English communication development among air cadets in the aspect of continuing education. The outcome shows the item which received the highest mean scores was item 9 “You need support from the academy to attend the English training programs, seminars, or conference abroad” (mean score = 3.88, SD = 0.91), which was ranked at a high level. On the other hand, the item which had the lowest mean score in this table was item 10 “You need to take English courses with lecturers” (mean score = 3.26, SD = 1.13), which was ranked at a moderate level. The overall mean of challenges in professional development according to continuing education for air cadets was 3.62, which illustrated a high level.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter illustrates a summary of the research, a summary of the findings, the discussion, conclusion, and recommendations for further research.

5.1 Summary of the Study

5.1.1 *Research Objectives*

This study aimed to investigate challenges and needs in English communication development among air cadets, focusing on enhancing their learning objectives in English speaking ability and English listening comprehension.

5.1.2 *Participants, Research Instrument, and Data Collection Procedure*

The participants in this study were 84 NKRAFA air cadets who were completing their military training and academic coursework before being commissioned officers and serving in the Royal Thai Air Force. The research instrument employed in this study was a close-ended scaling questionnaire, which was written in Thai to ensure thorough comprehension and consisted of three parts. The first part reported demographic information, i.e., personal information on age, classification, major, and English learning experience in the past. The second part elicited the level of English communication challenges in speaking ability and listening comprehension. The third part measured the level of English communication needs in speaking ability and listening comprehension. The participants were chosen using stratified sampling, which divided them into smaller groups based on their field of study. After the surveys were finished, the data were examined using descriptive statistics (SPSS version 26.0).

5.2 Summary of the results

The findings of this study may be summarized as follows:

5.2.1 Demographic Information of the Participants

The findings indicate that all participants were male. The majority of respondents were aged between 18 and 22 years old (72.62%), followed by those aged between 23 and 27 years old (27.38%). All participants were fifth-year air cadets, making up 100% of the total 84 participants. Regarding educational background, participants were selected in groups of twelve, with each group representing an equal percentage from different areas of study. In terms of the frequency of using general English speaking and listening skills, most participants (47.62%) practiced speaking and listening in English one or two days a week. When self-evaluating their English speaking proficiency, the majority of participants (42.86%) rated their proficiency at a moderate level. Similarly, for self-evaluation of English listening competency, the highest percentage (39.29%) rated their listening skills at a moderate level. Additionally, the most commonly used technique for improving English was watching movies, listening to music, or playing video games (24.24%), followed by learning English through internet media (22.72%) and maintaining a positive attitude toward English (21.59%).

5.2.2 Challenges in English Communication Development of Respondents

In this research, the challenges in English communication development were categorized into two areas: (1) personal challenges, and (2) organizational support. Regarding the challenges in terms of personal support, the most frequently encountered challenge was the participants cannot communicate complex content fluently when speaking with foreign armed forces. Meanwhile, the least challenging aspect for the participants was knowing how to improve their profession in terms of English speaking ability and listening comprehension.

Regarding challenges related to organizational support, the most common difficulty was the lack of specialists available to provide advice on improving English communication skills. Conversely, the least challenging aspect was the insufficient availability of learning materials, such as specialized books or electronic gadgets, for improving listening comprehension.

5.2.3 Needs in English Communication Development of Respondents

According to a recent study, there are two types of English communication development needs: (1) self-directed study, and (2) continuing education.

In the self-directed study category, the most significant need identified by participants was enhancing speaking abilities for effective communication in English-language presentations. Conversely, the least significant need in this category was the necessity for additional time to improve English language skills with classmates.

Regarding continuing education, the results revealed that the highest need for respondents was support from the academy to participate in conferences, seminars, or training programs in English overseas. Conversely, the lowest need was for enrolling in English courses with lecturers..

5.3 Discussion

This section discusses the main findings of this study, based on the relevant research studies and the literature review in Chapter 2.

5.3.1 Research Question One: What are the Challenges in English Communication Improvement Among Air Cadets?

According to the findings of this research, the participants were asked to point out the level of problems in English speaking and listening skills. This study illustrated that the respondents had a moderate level of difficulty in improving speaking ability and listening comprehension. The results of this research are consistent with the findings of Khocharatana (2017), where participants were asked to rate the degree of difficulty in each English language skill. The results indicated that the overall use of English language abilities by RTA officers at work was at a moderate level.

The current study revealed that many respondents recognized the importance of speaking skills, particularly regarding personal challenges. Most identified that their greatest difficulty was the inability to speak English effectively while interacting with foreign military forces, highlighting a high level of necessity. These outcomes align with McLaren (2006), who posited that speaking is the most important language skill for learners. Despite extensive language study, learners still face difficulties in crucial communication situations. This is also in line with Pinsaikeow (2019), who found that

Royal Thai Army Infantry Corps officers needed effective speaking skills for verbal communication during exercises or operations. This necessity for strong speaking abilities to overcome barriers in English communication with foreign visitors is further supported by Surakkitthikul (2020), who noted that support staff struggled with speaking complex English sentences to foreigners.

Another significant challenge for air cadets was the lack of professionals to provide guidance on improving their English communication skills, ranking as the most challenging issue in terms of organizational support. This result is supported by the findings of Kanokorn et al. (2012), who identified a shortage of advisors and inaccessibility of academic resources as problems in teacher development programs. Similarly, Chattranuchat (2016) showed that teachers needed experts to offer professional development suggestions. Farrell's (2019) findings also corroborate this, indicating that respondents respected foreign experts for their engaging methods of teaching English through speaking exercises.

5.3.2 Research Question Two: What are the Cadets' Needs Regarding English Communication Development?

In terms of needs in English communication development, the findings illustrated that the majority of air cadets saw the significance of speaking ability, followed by listening comprehension, with both skills ranked at high levels of necessity. Therefore, speaking and listening skills were the first and second most needed skills for the respondents. The present study's outcomes align with Sukprasert (2016), which found that speaking and listening abilities were essential for academic support staff due to their high necessity in the workplace. Similarly, Park's (2015) Needs Analysis of English for Korean Naval Officers showed that speaking and listening abilities were used more frequently than other skills by Korean naval officials. This result is also supported by Sae-Jeng (2018), who identified that Thai tourist police personnel urgently needed to improve their speaking and listening comprehension of English to achieve efficient communication.

Furthermore, the investigation into the demands related to air cadets' self-directed growth revealed that respondents evaluated their needs for English communication development at a high level. Most participants stated that they needed

to improve their speaking abilities for effective communication during English presentations and practice listening comprehension for communicating with foreign troops during exercises. Both demands were ranked as highly necessary. These findings are consistent with Khocharatana (2017), who stated that in the Thai military context, speaking skill is highly needed for participation in communicative situations in a multinational working environment. In military affairs, speaking skills are mostly used in face-to-face conversations to give information, offer assistance, or exchange information. This aligns with Pinsaikeow (2019), which showed that Royal Thai Army officers in the infantry corps needed to enhance their listening skills for understanding orders, general conversations, suggestions, and information during joint exercises and operations with foreign troops.

In addition, according to the current survey, air cadets believe that developing their English communication skills is essential for continuing their studies. Most respondents mentioned that they required support from the academy to attend English training programs, seminars, and conferences abroad, which was ranked at a high level of necessity. The results of this study are consistent with Khocharatana (2017), which found that some RTA officers believed they could enhance their communication abilities through education abroad supported by their organization. It is possible to explain that assistance from the academy would encourage respondents to develop their English language proficiency by offering new experiences and the chance to interact with foreigners in a multinational environment where English is used daily. This exposure would allow them to practice listening to various accents and become more familiar with the culture of English language speakers.

5.4 Conclusion

This study investigated the challenges and needs in English communication development among air cadets at the Navaminda Kasatriyadhiraj Royal Thai Air Force Academy. The study focused on enhancing their fundamental English language skills, including listening comprehension and speaking abilities in the language. The participants were air cadets who were acquiring academic knowledge and undertaking military training to become commissioned officers to serve in the Royal Thai Air Force in the future. The research was conducted through the distribution of questionnaires to 84 respondents.

The data were collected, summarized, and analyzed to answer the research questions. Participants were 5th-year undergraduates from various fields of study, with different levels of English language proficiency and perspectives on general English development, specifically in speaking and listening abilities.

The results revealed that the challenges of English communication development in this study were at a moderate level. Air cadets faced personal challenges, particularly finding it most difficult to speak complex content fluently when communicating with foreign armed forces, which was ranked at a high level of necessity and well above average. Another significant challenge, in terms of organizational support, was the lack of professionals to provide guidance on improving their English communication skills. Respondents believed that advice from knowledgeable specialists in English language proficiency could help them improve their communication skills.

Additionally, the investigation into the needs for English communication development was divided into two aspects: self-directed development and continuing education. For self-directed development, the results demonstrated that air cadets needed to enhance their speaking skills to effectively deliver presentations in English, which was ranked at a high level of necessity. For continuing education, air cadets expressed a high level of necessity for support from the academy to attend English training programs, seminars, or conferences abroad.

5.5 Recommendations for Further Study

Based on the findings and conclusion of this research, the following recommendations are made for further study. Further research should utilize a qualitative method for obtaining in-depth information on the English communication challenges and needs of military students. In addition, future studies could also include foreign officials to gain insight into the demands and issues of air cadets in English through their interactions with Thai students.

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The seal of Thammasat University is a circular emblem. It features a central five-tiered umbrella (parasol) with a lotus flower at its base. Above the lotus is a horizontal bar with five lines. The entire emblem is surrounded by a circular border containing the university's name in Thai script at the top and "THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY" in English at the bottom, separated by small floral motifs.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

Part I: Demographic data Instruction: please choose the answer that best describe for your opinion

1. Age ☐ 18 – 22 yrs. ☐ 23 – 26 yrs.
2. Classification ☐ 1st year ☐ 2nd year ☐ 3rd year ☐ 4th year ☐ 5th year
3. Majors ☐ Aeronautical Engineering ☐ Mechanical Engineering
☐ Electrical Engineering ☐ Civil Engineering ☐ Industrial & Aviation Management
☐ Computer Science ☐ Military and Aerospace Materials Science
4. How often do you use general English speaking and listening skills everyday matters?
(Including watching movie, listen to the international music and news in English through various media).
☐ Less than 1 day/week ☐ 1-2 day(s)/week ☐ 3-4 day(s)/week ☐ 5-7 day(s)/week
5. Have you had any experience in English communication with English speaking armed forces companies?
☐ Less than 1 day/week ☐ 1-2 day(s)/week ☐ 3-4 day(s)/week ☐ 5-7 day(s)/week
6. What level of proficiency do you think your English-speaking skills are?

English skills	Very poor	Poor	Moderate	Good	Excellent
	1	2	3	4	5
Speaking					

7. What level of proficiency do you think your English-listening skills are?

English skills	Very poor	Poor	Moderate	Good	Excellent
	1	2	3	4	5
Speaking					

8. Which of the following do you think that it will improve your speaking and listening skills in general English? (You can choose more than one answer)

- ☐ Additional English language learning from a school or language institute that is open to a general public.
- ☐ The organization provides English language learning courses along with working.
- ☐ Having a positive attitude towards English
- ☐ Watching movies, listen to the music, or playing games in English
- ☐ English skills training by yourself through various online media such as YouTube
- ☐ Others.....

Part II: Level of challenges in English communication development

Level of challenges in English communication development	Extremely high	High	Moderate	Low	Extremely low
1. You do not know how to develop your profession in terms of English speaking and listening skills. ท่านไม่ทราบวิธีการพัฒนาทักษะวิชาชีพในด้านการพูดและการฟังภาษาอังกฤษ					
2. You do not get any support from the organizations to attend the English training programs, seminars, or conferences. ท่านไม่ได้รับการสนับสนุนจากหน่วยงานในการเข้าร่วมการฝึกอบรมและดูงานที่เกี่ยวข้องกับภาษาอังกฤษ					

Level of challenges in English communication development	Extremely high	High	Moderate	Low	Extremely low
3. You do not have enough time to improve listening and speaking skills because you have many training hours. ท่านไม่มีเวลาในการพัฒนาทักษะการพูดและการฟังภาษาอังกฤษเนื่องจากมีชั่วโมงการฝึกทหารมาก					
4. You do not have experts to give you some advice about English communication development. ท่านขาดผู้เชี่ยวชาญที่คอยให้คำปรึกษาแนะนำเรื่องการพัฒนาภาษาอังกฤษด้านการสื่อสาร					
5. You do not have enough learning resources or useful tools (such as specific books or electronic devices) for developing speaking ability. ท่านมีทรัพยากรทางการเรียนรู้หรืออุปกรณ์ในการศึกษาค้นคว้าไม่เพียงพอต่อการพัฒนาความสามารถด้านการพูดภาษาอังกฤษ เช่น หนังสือเฉพาะวิชาหรือสื่ออิเล็กทรอนิกส์					
6. You do not have learning resources or useful tools such as specific books or electronic devices for developing listening comprehension. ท่านมีทรัพยากรทางการเรียนรู้หรืออุปกรณ์ในการศึกษาค้นคว้าไม่เพียงพอต่อการพัฒนาความสามารถด้านการฟังภาษาอังกฤษ เช่น หนังสือเฉพาะวิชาหรือสื่ออิเล็กทรอนิกส์					
7. You rarely convey technical terms of English for military purposes (such as combat orders or without weapon orders). ท่านแทบจะไม่สามารถสื่อสารคำศัพท์ภาษาอังกฤษเฉพาะทางการทหาร เช่น คำสั่งรบ หรือ คำสั่งบุคคลทำมือเปล่า					
8. You feel nervous when communicating English with foreign visitors. ท่านรู้สึกประหม่าขณะสื่อสารภาษาอังกฤษกับชาวต่างชาติ					
9 You cannot choose proper tense when speaking English. ท่านไม่สามารถเลือกใช้ tense ได้ถูกต้องเมื่อพูดภาษาอังกฤษ					

Level of challenges in English communication development	Extremely high	High	Moderate	Low	Extremely low
10. You cannot speak the complex content fluently when communicating with foreign armed forces. ท่านไม่สามารถอธิบายเนื้อหาต่างๆเป็นภาษาอังกฤษได้อย่างคล่องแคล่ว เมื่อสื่อสารกับทหารต่างชาติ					
11. You do not understand the accent of foreigners who speak English. ท่านไม่เข้าใจสำเนียงภาษาอังกฤษของชาวต่างชาติ					
12. You cannot listen understandably to presentations conducted in English such as the pre-briefings or discussions in presentation for training and exercises. ท่านไม่สามารถฟังเข้าใจต่อการนำเสนอข้อมูลหรือการบรรยายเป็น ภาษาอังกฤษ เช่น การฟังการบรรยายสรุป หรือ การแถลงเพื่อเตรียมการฝึก และการปฏิบัติการ					
13. Others (Please specify)..... อื่นๆ โปรดระบุ.....					

Part III: Level of needs in English communication development

Level of needs in English communication development	Extremely high	High	Moderate	Low	Extremely low
1. You need support from the academy to attend the English training programs, seminars, or conferences abroad. ท่านต้องการการสนับสนุนจากโรงเรียนในการเข้าร่วมการฝึกอบรมและดูงานที่เกี่ยวข้องกับภาษาอังกฤษทั้งในและต่างประเทศ					
2. You need more time to improve English language skills by yourself, for example, reading related books, watching movies, listen to the music, or playing games in English. ท่านต้องการเวลาเพิ่มเพื่อพัฒนาทักษะภาษาอังกฤษด้วยตนเอง เช่น การอ่านหนังสือที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการศึกษา, ดูหนัง, ฟังเพลง หรือเล่นเกมที่เป็นภาษาอังกฤษ					
3. You need to take English courses with lecturers ท่านต้องการลงเรียนคอร์สวิชาภาษาอังกฤษกับอาจารย์					
4. You need more time to practice English skills with your classmates. ท่านต้องการเวลาเพิ่มในการฝึกภาษาอังกฤษกับเพื่อนร่วมชั้นเรียน					
5. You need to attend English courses in educational setting. ท่านต้องการเข้าร่วมหลักสูตรภาษาอังกฤษของระบบการศึกษา					
6. You need to learn English for military purposes (i.e., military vocabulary, combat orders or without weapon orders for participating in joint exercises and operations with foreign troops). ท่านต้องการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษทางการทหาร เช่น คำศัพท์ทางการทหาร หรือคำสั่งบุคคลท่ามือเปล่า ทั้งนี้ใช้เพื่อการเข้าร่วมการฝึกหรือการปฏิบัติการร่วมกับกองกำลังทหารต่างชาติ					
7. You need to improve your communication skills for translating for senior commanders. ท่านต้องการพัฒนาทักษะการสื่อสารสำหรับการทำหน้าที่ล่ามให้กับผู้บังคับบัญชา					

Level of needs in English communication development	Extremely high	High	Moderate	Low	Extremely low
8 You need to improve listening skills in order to perceive presentations conducted in English. ท่านต้องการพัฒนาทักษะการฟังเพื่อฟังการนำเสนอข้อมูลเป็นภาษาอังกฤษ					
9. You need to improve speaking skills in order to convey presentations conducted in English. ท่านต้องการพัฒนาทักษะการพูดเพื่อนำเสนอข้อมูลเป็นภาษาอังกฤษ					
10. You need to learn English to provide requested information about The Royal Thai Air Forces to foreign visitors. ท่านต้องการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อให้ข้อมูลทั่วไปเกี่ยวกับกองทัพอากาศเป็นภาษาอังกฤษ					
11. You need to improve speaking ability for communicating with foreign troops during exercises. ท่านต้องการพัฒนาทักษะการพูดภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อสื่อสารกับทหารต่างชาติขณะเข้าร่วมการฝึก					
12. You need to improve listening comprehension communicating with foreign troops during exercises. ท่านต้องการพัฒนาทักษะการฟังภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อสื่อสารกับทหารต่างชาติขณะเข้าร่วมการฝึก					
13. You need to learn English for exchanging opinion about military training during exercises or operations. ท่านต้องการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อแลกเปลี่ยนความเห็นเกี่ยวกับการฝึกทางทหารในห้วงการฝึกหรือการปฏิบัติการ					
14. Others (Please specify)..... อื่นๆ โปรดระบุ.....					