
ปัญหาการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษในการสื่อสารของบุคลากรภายในคณะวิทยาการจัดการ
มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏกำแพงเพชร

English Communication Problems of Employees from the Faculty of
Management science at Kamphaeng Phet Rajabhat University

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บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีจุดมุ่งหมายเพื่อตรวจสอบปัญหาในการสื่อสารภาษาอังกฤษของบุคลากรภายในคณะวิทยาการจัดการ มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏกำแพงเพชรตรวจสอบวิธีการแก้ปัญหาในการสื่อสารและวิเคราะห์ความต้องการในการฝึกอบรมเพื่อพัฒนาทักษะในการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษ ประชากรในการทำวิจัยประกอบด้วยบุคลากรภายในคณะวิทยาการจัดการ มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏกำแพงเพชร จำนวน 45 คน เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการวิจัยคือแบบสอบถาม ผลการวิจัยจากการใช้เครื่องมือทางสถิติพบว่า ในการสื่อสารภาษาอังกฤษของบุคลากร ทักษะการฟัง การพูด การอ่านอยู่ในระดับปานกลาง ในขณะที่ทักษะการเขียนเป็นปัญหาในระดับมาก กลยุทธ์ในการพัฒนาการสื่อสารภาษาอังกฤษคือหลักสูตรการฝึกอบรมภาษาอังกฤษควรจัดให้พนักงานก่อนที่จะเริ่มการทำงานและควรจัดอบรมอยู่เสมอมหาวิทยาลัยควรมีกลยุทธ์ในการรับพนักงานใหม่ที่มีความสามารถในการสื่อสารภาษาอังกฤษได้อย่างคล่องแคล่วและมีประสบการณ์ที่เกี่ยวข้องในการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเกี่ยวกับการทำงาน

คำสำคัญ : ทักษะการสื่อสารภาษาอังกฤษ / คณะ / พนักงาน / ทักษะ / ปัญหา

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ABSTRACT

The aims of this study were to examine English communication problems of staff from the Faculty of Management Science at Kampheang Phet Rajabhat University, to determine solutions to communication problems, and to analyze English training needs so that English communication skills may be improved. The subjects were 45 employees from the Faculty of Management Science at Kampheang Phet Rajabhat University. The instruments used in this study were questionnaires. The Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) was used to process the data. The results of this English communication skills study indicate that employees' listening and speaking problems are at a moderate level. Problems with reading skills are also at a moderate level, while writing skills are more problematic. Training employees before they start working and more on-the-job training is necessary. The university should recruit new employees who are able to communicate fluently in English and have relevant work experience.

Keywords : English Communication Skills / Faculty / Employees / Skills / Problems

Introduction

ASEAN country members have agreed to expand economic integration in 2015. This will make the region more competitive with other international regions and more able to cope with changes and new challenges in the future. ASEAN countries will change in many aspects such as economics, politics, society, culture, and education. Public and private organizations in Thailand have to equip their employees with the knowledge and skills required to compete in the global economy and the ASEAN Community.

In 2015, educational institutions will face the challenge of further ASEAN integration. Therefore, it is important that Kampheang Phet Rajabhat University should prepare its students and employees to be ready for the change. Preparation must start soon to enable employees to cope with the demands of the future. This study should be beneficial to Kampheang Phet Rajabhat University students, teachers, and other employees who will be required to work in the integrated ASEAN community.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2011) stated that the liberalization of trade in goods and services would result in more cross-border education between ASEAN countries. This means it will be easier for students and employees to travel between participating countries which will result in the transference of knowledge, language and culture. Therefore, educational institutions need to prepare for further liberalization of the ASEAN Community. Educational institutions have to think and take action, because they are the source of the country's human resources. They must develop skills that are appropriate to the needs of ASEAN. Thai people require knowledge, understanding and awareness to prepare for the

ASEAN community. In particular, employees skilled in foreign languages will be needed to help with the expansion of the ASEAN free trade area.

Doungpon Noopong (2545) indicated that human resource development is an important issue for developing countries. Thailand needs to develop its human resources in a sustainable way. The country needs employees who are capable at English to explore and access resources and procedures in English. In addition, English has an important role because people who are non-native English speakers use it to communicate. For example, Thais can communicate with Chinese, Japanese, Koreans or Malaysians who use English as a second language. Since English is being used as an intermediate language, English has become the most widely used second language. English is important to education because it facilitates cross-cultural learning. Therefore, English listening, speaking, reading and writing skills are necessary in order to participate in the ASEAN Community.

While Bickerton (1981) argued the Critical Period Hypothesis O'Grady & Dobrovolsky (1996) investigated learning a first language by linking it to widely-accepted research that states children start to learn their first language when they are very young without using much effort. However, this ability to learn starts to decrease from the age of six and decreases more significantly when the reproductive age is reached. Nevertheless, O'Grady & Dobrovolsky also attempt to determine whether there is a critical age. Their answer is 'yes' and 'no'. Moreover, O'Grady & Dobrovolsky point out that there are no biological reasons preventing adults from learning a second language.

According to Ellis (1996) found that using the language often might not help children to learn the same level as native speakers because children still need to use the mother tongue regularly.

This study was undertaken to gain an awareness of the English skills needs of employees from the Faculty of Management Science at Kampheang Phet Rajabhat University to help them prepare for the upcoming further liberalization of the ASEAN community in 2015.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to investigate the English language skills problems of employees, to investigate the English language skills needs of employees, and to explore the strategies the employees use to improve their English language skills.

Methodology

The study entitled "English Communication Problems of Employees from the Faculty of Management Science at Kampheang Phet Rajabhat University" was conducted as survey research. A questionnaire was the instrument used to collect the data for the study. The population was 45 staff working in the Faculty of Management Science at Kampheang Phet Rajabhat University. The questionnaire was bilingual, English and Thai and it was composed of

open and closed questions. The questionnaire was conducted by researcher and approved by the advisor, which have been divided into 4 parts:

Data Analysis

A quantitative analysis was employed to measure the needs for English communication skills at the Faculty of Management Science at Kampheang Phet Rajabhat University. A quantitative analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage were employed to annotate information. Answers from the open-ended questions were delivered in quantitative data, which will be used as evidence to support the research results.

Results

Personal Data

The population of this study was forty-five employees from the Faculty of Management Science at Kampheang Phet Rajabhat University. 28.9 percent were male, 71.1 percent were female. Most employees were between 30-40 years old and almost of them had a Master Degree.

English language strategy and English language skills problems

1. Listening skills strategy and listening problems

Employees have improved their English by listening English from songs more often than English news. However, both strategies were rated at a moderate level. The greatest listening problem was employees' unfamiliarity with native speaker pronunciation. In other words, they had most difficulty understanding what was said because they could not understand the accent.

2. Speaking skills strategy and speaking problems

Most employees have developed their speaking skills by speaking in English with colleagues while others have practiced by speaking in the meetings or in public. The results show that the employees lack the confidence to use English. Moreover, the analysis found that speaking skills have not been practiced often enough. The speaking problems were found to be at a moderate level. The most significant problem was that the employees did not have enough knowledge of grammar and the least significant problem was that they were too shy to speak English.

3. Reading skills strategy and reading problems

The most popular reading strategies used such as reading the news, novels and journals in English were related to work. However, the least used reading strategy was reading English research because specialized knowledge is required to understand academic papers. Reading problems were found to be at a moderate level. The most significant problem was that they

did not have enough knowledge of English grammar, which might affect other skills. The least significant problem was that they lacked concentration while reading.

4. Needs for an English training course

In summary, most writing skills were improved by writing letters or emails in English. The results show that the employees were less worried about writing letters or email than writing minutes of meetings because the formers can be reviewed before sending, but the meeting minutes must be taken instantaneously and it is important they are accurate. The most significant problem was that they did not have an opportunity to practice in writing English and the least significant problem was their limited vocabulary. Reading problems were found to be at a considerable level. Therefore, it is important to develop the employees' writing skills.

The employees from the Faculty of Management Science at Kampheang Phet Rajabhat University need to develop their English communication skills in terms of writing, listening, speaking and reading respectively.

Most employees indicated that an English training course would be an acceptable way of improving communication skills. In addition, the following comments and suggestions from the employees were made:

- Employees should practice reading and writing English every day.
- The employees cannot develop their English skills because English language is not used often.
- Listening and speaking are the most problematic because employees are inexperienced with the language and are worried about making grammatical errors.
- English training should be taken seriously because it is important for the future.

Some employees suggested that the instructor should have relevant experience and good teaching skills. Instructors should be able to understand and empathize with learners who come from different backgrounds and who are at different levels.

Discussion

Forty-five employees from the Faculty of Management Science at Kampheang Phet Rajabhat were taken as sample in this study between September 1, 2012 and October 25, 2012. Most of them were female (71.1%) and aged between 30-40 years (40.0%). The majority of participants had a Master's Degree because it is a condition of employment.

English language problems in terms of listening, speaking, reading and writing were at a moderate level. The majority of employees practiced English by watching movies with English soundtracks. In addition, very few employees practiced English speaking at meetings or in public, writing minutes of meetings and writing memos in English. Furthermore, they felt that practicing English with native speakers would help them. The employees had not developed their English skills because they did not have an opportunity to use the language

regularly. They felt that the university should have a policy that facilitates employees to gain experience by working in English speaking countries.

The employees' listening, speaking and reading problems were found to be at a moderate level whereas writing problems were found to be at a considerable level because they did not have an opportunity to practice regularly. Therefore, there is a need for a training course that would improve their English communications skills. Chutima Chittavitti (2005) revealed that while reading was rarely used in their work, the three other skills of listening, speaking and writing were never used. Great problems in speaking and writing skills and moderate problems in listening and reading skills were reported. Nevertheless, there was a need for training courses in English as it was reported that there was a great need to improve their English competency. The main cause of listening problems was that they rarely had a chance to practice. However, the main cause of speaking problems was the employees felt shy when they had to speak English. These results concur with Ellis (1996) who found that having a lot of experience with a second language might not help children to learn to the same level as a native speaker because they need to use the mother-tongue language regularly. In addition, Dulek and Dielden (1995) noted that listening is a complex process that involves a variety of related, but different, skills.

The employees' reading problems were found to be at a moderate level. The main causes of reading problems were a lack of knowledge of English grammar and unknown vocabulary in the text. The main cause of writing problems was that they did not have an opportunity to practice English writing. Consequently, lack of vocabulary knowledge and lack of concentration when reading may be the causes of communication problems. Therefore, an English language-training course, which focuses on refining these skills, should be provided by the university.

Regarding strategies to improve English communication skills, the employees' comments and suggestions revealed that the majority felt that they needed English language tuition urgently. Nadler (1989) classified needs into three types: stated needs, implied needs, and felt needs. "Stated needs" refers to what a person should do and shows a specific signal of the need for the job that they are doing. Implied needs arise when a new worker enters an existing unit. Some of the implied needs are really stated needs that have been spelled out by the organization.

Based on the results, the employees from the Faculty of Management Science at Kamphaeng Phet Rajabhat University need to improve their English communication skills.

Recommendations for further research:

1. The employees' English communication skills at other universities or organizations could be surveyed to compare with the results of this research.

2. Comparative research on employees' English language skills before and after training could be conducted to ensure that the training course is effective.

Recommendations to Kampheang Phet Rajabhat University:

1. The university should recruit new employees who are able to communicate fluently in English and have relevant work experience.

2. A training course should be arranged for the employees before they start work and more on-the-job training should be provided.

3. The university should be arranged English evaluation for staff every year by either a TOEFL or a TOEIC test.

4. The university should be arranging an English Language Center by a native speaker to help staff or students.

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