

## การสำรวจความต้องการจำเป็นและปัญหาทางด้านทักษะภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษาหลักสูตรศิลปบัณฑิต

### A Survey of Fine Art Students' Needs and Problems with English Language Skills

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#### บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษานี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อสำรวจความต้องการจำเป็นและปัญหาทางด้านทักษะภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษา คณะศิลปะและการออกแบบและคณะดิจิทัลอาร์ต มหาวิทยาลัยรังสิต กลุ่มตัวอย่างที่ใช้ในการวิจัยครั้งนี้คือนักศึกษาคณะ ศิลปะและการออกแบบ และคณะดิจิทัลอาร์ต ชั้นปีที่ 4 จำนวน 192 คน ซึ่งได้มาจากการสุ่มตัวอย่างแบบง่าย เครื่องมือที่ใช้ เป็นแบบสอบถามมาตรฐานส่วนประมาณค่า 5 ระดับ ค่าสถิติที่ใช้ในการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลได้แก่ ค่าร้อยละ ค่าเฉลี่ยเลขคณิต ค่าเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐานและ ค่าคะแนนถ่วงน้ำหนัก ผลการสำรวจจะเป็นประโยชน์ต่อการเรียนการสอนในวิชาที่เน้น ความสำคัญของภาษาอังกฤษและสอดแทรกภาษาอังกฤษในการสอนวิชาชีพ

ผลการศึกษาพบว่านักศึกษาแสดงความคิดเห็นเกี่ยวกับความต้องการจำเป็นทักษะทางการอ่านมากที่สุด รองลงมาคือการฟัง การพูด และการเขียนตามลำดับ ส่วนปัญหาของนักศึกษาจัดอยู่ระดับปานกลางในทุกทักษะ ซึ่งทักษะ ทางด้านการพูด พบว่ามีปัญหามากที่สุด รองลงมาคือการฟัง การอ่านและการเขียนตามลำดับ

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#### Abstract

This study investigated the needs and problems of the students in the Faculty of Art and Design and Faculty of Digital Art. Data obtainment will be used as a basis for the curriculum improvement as English language skills will be emphasized in the major course and integrated in the teaching methods.

The subjects of the study were fourth-year current students in the Faculty of Art and Design and the Faculty of Digital Art, Rangsit University. The total number of subjects was 192, selected from the whole population through simple random sampling technique. Questionnaires were employed as the data collecting instrument, featuring five-point Likert

scale. The statistical devices used to analyze the questionnaires results were percentage, arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and weighted scores.

The main results of the study showed that the respondents ranked overall needs in English language skills as follows: reading, listening, speaking, and writing respectively. All English skills were perceived as moderately problematic, and speaking was rated the highest. The respondents perceived listening, reading, and writing in second, third, and fourth ranks respectively.

**Keywords:** needs analysis, Fine arts student, English language skills

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## 1. Introduction

In Thailand, Thai language is used as the mother tongue, and it is the only official language. Students must study English as a foreign language because it features in the curriculum at schools and universities. Due to the globalization, many employers require English to be spoken in the workplace. Therefore, students need English communication skills more than ever to be competitive in the job market. (World Bank, 2001).

Every year around 2,000 students graduate from Rangsit University (RSU). RSU realizes the importance of internationalization generated by globalization. In the past, it was considered that the university could not refrain from becoming more international (RSU Roadmap to excellence 2005).

The Faculty of Art and Design and Faculty of Digital Art are responsible for the courses in the field of fine arts. The students in these fields do not possess strong background of the language. They are learning to be art creators, designers of beautiful and functional space and products, painter of enthusiastic pictures, and

photographers of elaborate scenes. All these are in the nature of their profession which are not involved much in language. Thus, these students have much trouble in studying the English language and their native language.

According to the curriculum, in general education subjects, the students had to take two courses of English subjects. Compelling the students to take two English subjects gave the students in these fields a lot of problems and some students could not graduate. The information from the university's Registrar Office has shown that the students have a high grade point average, but they could not receive the honors degree because they failed English courses.

In the program, the English language is included in some subjects. By the policy of Rangsit University, each curriculum has two specific courses to use English language in the class. This policy has been started since 2005 and to adopt a 10% per year increase of English as a medium in teaching and learning. The teachers use the video clip, textbooks, presentation, and so on in English language. Both languages are equally applied at 50% each

in overall teaching and learning process in the specific subjects within the year 2009. This RSU policy encouraged the students to be more exposed to the English language.

This study is to find the result of needs and problems from the learners in the year 2010. The RSU tentative plan of including the English language in some required courses had been completed. The result of the study will be useful for the lecturers who are responsible for the specific courses. They will reconsider and solve the problems to enhance the Fine Arts students' English proficiency.

To be successful in teaching two languages at the same time, one approach to second language acquisition is as follows; Gardner (1968), referred it as an integrative motive. The concept of the integrative motive implies that successful second language acquisition depends upon a willingness (or desire) to be like valued members of the "other" language community. The acquisition of a new language involves more than just the acquisition of a new set of verbal habits. The language student must adopt various features of behavior, which characterize another linguistic community.

## 2. Objectives

There were two main objectives in the research:

1. To investigate the students' needs in using different English language skills in their studies at the

Faculty of Art and Design and the Faculty of Digital Art.

2. To investigate the students' problems in using English language skills in their studies at the Faculty of Art and Design and the Faculty of Digital Art.

## 3. Materials and Method

The total population was 340 fourth-year students from the Fine Arts field (Faculty of Art and Design and Faculty of Digital Art from the academic year 2010). The subjects for this study were 192 students sampled using the Simple Random Sampling Technique.

The instrument employed was a questionnaire designed specifically for the purpose of this study. Its three parts include information about the general background of the respondents and their opinion on English language needs and problems.

Arithmetic mean was used to calculate the average levels of the subjects' opinion and identify English needs and problems. Percentages were employed to analyze data from the questionnaire concerning general background and other quantitative data.

A specific weight was assigned to each specific rank. (The respondents were asked to rank 1-3 for each item according to their preference). The first rank of each question was given the greatest weight and each consecutive rank thereafter was given a smaller value.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

The results from table 1 show that more than half the subjects were female 57.29% and the male component was found to be 42.71%. The average age of the students was between 21-22 years old 77.60%.

**Table 1** Gender of respondents (N=192)

| Gender        | Number of Respondents | Per Cent (%) |
|---------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| Male          | 82                    | 42.71        |
| <b>Female</b> | <b>110</b>            | <b>57.29</b> |
| Total         | 192                   | 100          |

Concerning the distribution of student responses in terms of English learning experience and their attitudes towards the language, the majority of the group had between 11-18 years experience studying English. As for the highest English level courses the respondents studied, most of the group (88.89%) indicated that the most recent English course they had attended was the RSU Foundation English course. However, 2.92% of the respondents stated that they had taken extracurricular English. With respect to their attitudes towards English, the results show that more than half of the respondents (70.83%) liked English while the rest (29.17%) did not.

**Table 2** The respondents' background knowledge of English skills

| English skills   | Reading | Listening | Speaking | Writing |
|------------------|---------|-----------|----------|---------|
| <b>Excellent</b> | 5.73    | 2.08      | 6.77     | 2.60    |
| <b>Good</b>      | 23.44   | 17.71     | 7.81     | 8.33    |
| <b>Fair</b>      | 50.00   | 56.77     | 44.27    | 41.15   |
| <b>Poor</b>      | 17.19   | 18.23     | 34.38    | 34.38   |
| <b>Very Poor</b> | 3.65    | 5.21      | 6.77     | 13.54   |
| <b>Mean</b>      | 3.10    | 2.93      | 2.73     | 2.52    |
| <b>SD</b>        | 0.68    | 0.49      | 0.59     | 0.47    |

As for respondents' background knowledge of English skills, the data obtained indicated more than a fair background knowledge level of English as shown in Table 3.

Arithmetic means were interpreted as follows:

- 1.00-2.33 poor background knowledge
- 2.34-3.66 fair background knowledge
- 3.67-5.00 good background knowledge

The students' skills were rated at, reading (3.10), listening (2.93), speaking (2.73), and writing (2.52) respectively.

#### 4.1 General English Skills

**Table 3** Mean of respondents' needs and problems in English skills

| Language skills | Needs     |      |           |      | Problems  |    |           |      |
|-----------------|-----------|------|-----------|------|-----------|----|-----------|------|
|                 | Extensive |      | Moderate  |      | Extensive |    | Moderate  |      |
|                 | $\bar{X}$ | SD   | $\bar{X}$ | SD   | $\bar{X}$ | SD | $\bar{X}$ | SD   |
| Listening       | 3.80      | 0.67 |           |      |           |    | 3.25      | 0.46 |
| Speaking        |           |      | 3.47      | 0.50 |           |    | 3.28      | 0.43 |
| Reading         | 4.02      | 0.82 |           |      |           |    | 3.23      | 0.49 |
| Writing         |           |      | 3.45      | 0.49 |           |    | 3.21      | 0.45 |

#### Needs

The results show that the students needed all four skills extensively: reading came first (4.02) and listening was placed second (3.80). Speaking gained mean score at third (3.47), while the fourth most needed skill was writing (3.45). However, all four skills were needed extensively.

#### Problems

The respondents stated that they had moderate problems. Speaking was ranked first (3.28) while listening, and reading came second and third. The students considered that they had the least amount of difficulty with writing which received a mean score of 3.21.

#### 4.2 Listening skills

##### Needs

The analysis found that watching video clips and watching movies were extensively needed (4.11 and 3.86 respectively). The students revealed that they needed to improve their listening skills in the following

areas: listening to conversation on general topics, listening to academic radio programs, and listening to lectures. The least amount of listening skill improvement that was needed was listening to class presentations, which had a mean of 3.24.

##### Problems

The results from both the Faculty of Art and Design and Faculty of Digital Art show that watching movie/videos was rated the highest problem (3.38), listening to presentations in class was rated the lowest problem (3.11). It is interesting to note that the mean scores for this activity were lowest in terms of both the needs and problems of the respondents.

#### 4.3 Speaking skills

##### Needs

With respect to the speaking needs of the respondents, general conversation was rated the highest (3.29), the students in the Faculty of Art and Design and Faculty of Digital Art rated asking and answering questions in class the lowest (2.94).

##### Problems

With respect to the listening needs of the respondents, general conversation was rated the highest (3.20), while asking and answering questions in class was rated the lowest (2.99). It is appropriate to note that most respondents also had moderate problems in all activities and the first rank and the last rank of both the needs and problems were exactly the same.

#### 4.4 Reading skills

##### Needs

With regard to reading activities rated by the students, “reading websites” was extensively needed (4.11). The subjects needed more practice reading the following: reference books, textbooks, academic articles, journals, magazines, and newspapers. The activity, in which an improvement reading skills was needed the least, was reading software manuals, which had a mean of 3.62.

##### Problems

With respect to reading activities causing problems, reading academic articles was rated the highest (3.40). The students from the Faculty of Art and Design and Faculty of Digital Art rated reading journals, magazines, and newspapers the lowest (3.15).

#### 4.5 Writing skills

##### Needs

Concerning the writing activities, which were rated by the students, writing simple sentences was rated the highest (3.84). It is the only activity, which most respondents considered was extensively needed. The group rated writing summaries from texts the lowest (3.19).

##### Problems

As for writing problems, writing compound, complex sentences was rated highest (3.44). The group rated writing simple sentences lowest (3.02)

Concerning their English study objectives, most students agreed that English would be needed for their future career (4.47). The students’ opinions towards leaning English language through pictures were positive, they thought it was easier (3.81). Additionally, they would be motivated to learn English if they spoke with a person who could not speak Thai (3.90). Students were undecided about their English language capability. The item rated the lowest was that the student succeeded in English (2.90). Students were also undecided about the following: “Student is willing to speak English with foreigners” and “Student can ask for help or information in English when necessary”; these two items were rated lower (3.43 and 3.63) respectively. There were three more items related to learning style, where the students were undecided. They are as follows: “Student gains more English language knowledge from the major course” (3.24), “Imitation is an English language learning obstacle” (3.47), and “Student can develop English knowledge skills from real situations” (3.63).

#### 5. Discussion

Concerning the English content of Fine Arts courses, reading and watching media should be used as instructional tools. Courses should permit students to be accustomed to the practical use of all four English language skills. A project or a program that integrates ESL and occupational skills can help the learners acquire the confidence and motivation to speak English (Wong, Duff, and Early 2001). Additionally, the course should allow

students to achieve career goals by including a variety of learning activities. Career lectures have challenged preconceived ideas as to how best to persuade people to throw themselves enthusiastically into whatever it is you want them to do (Kenning and Kenning, 1990). The students did not mind being taught in English when they studied major subjects. They understood that studying English at the same time as their major subject could increase their language competence. RSU policy is helpful because students are exposed to listening and comprehending skills, which can be strengthened at the same time.

#### 6. Conclusion

The students showed a rather strong orientation towards their future work and current specialized practice in Fine Art subjects.

New words, grammatical rules, pronunciation, and sounds, have a meaning over and above what the teacher is trying to present (Gardner, 1968). Learning English while studying their major courses will allow the students to absorb and be familiar with using English language.

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