

The Needs of Government Agencies towards Qualifications of English Graduates in Thailand 4.0

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Abstract

In today's world, English is one of the must-have skills for working not only in the private sector but also in the public sector. The study aimed at investigating the needs of government agencies towards qualifications of English graduates in Thailand 4.0. The sample was 40 employees as the representatives from different government agencies in the Northeast of Thailand. The instrument was the questionnaire concerning the needs of English skills for working in the government agencies. The questionnaire was adapted and developed into the five-point Likert rating scale. The data were analyzed into the mean, the standard deviation, and the Likert scale interpretation. The result revealed the importance of English skills in working. The slight differences were found and indicated that reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills were needed respectively. The result also presented how each skill was applied when working in the government agencies.

Keywords: English Skills, Government Agencies, New Graduates, Northeast

Introduction

The English language has become increasingly significant in communication in recent years. Individuals from all around the world, not just the United Kingdom and the United States, now use it. The English language is one of the most significant communication tools for bridging the gap between people who come from different countries and speak different languages. English is a global language made up of "World Englishes," or diverse varieties of English spoken by different countries or groups.

It is evident that English is a language that is significantly required for job applications these days (Aring, 2015; Chia, 2012; Saraithong, 2013). Many opportunities exist for anyone who is fluent in English (Bloemen, 2012; Chia, 2012; Gonzalez, 2010; Saraithong, 2013). Employees with good English abilities can be successful in the job market (Chia, 2012; Crocco & Bunwirat, 2014; Saraithong, 2013), and they can also get a well-paid job (Saraithong, 2013).

Universities and curriculums are becoming more cognizant of the importance of English for job applications. They strive to encourage students to study English and build curricula by involving the English language to fulfill market need. They anticipate that many students who are fluent in English will be hired following graduation. The new graduates might have an English score as well as the abilities needed for the job.

One of the qualifications for job applications is a good command of the English language. Many jobs require a specific English score from a particular test. Working as a cabin crew, for example, requires a TOEIC score of

around 550. Similarly, many government agencies demand this requirement when hiring new employees. For example, in order to be considered for a government job, applicants must submit their English score or take an English exam.

Many jobs also demand English proficiency because it is commonly used in the workplace. The necessity for English listening and speaking, according to Kraichan (2020), is a key requirement for working in an industry. In the meanwhile, English reading and writing are used sparingly. Communication is usually accomplished through the use of listening and speaking skills. These abilities are put to use in the workplace and in everyday conversation by the personnel (Kraichan, 2020). In contrast, Chanphram (2020) discovered that reading ability is the most important talent for working in an industry. Employees use their ability to read e-mail as well as a paper explaining the product's quality in detail. Other abilities, such as listening, speaking, and writing, are also required, according to Chanphram (2020). Employees, for example, employ listening and speaking skills when having a conversation about their work, or they use writing skills when writing an English e-mail to their supervisor or coworkers. Because the job description and working environment in each place are varied, it appears that different workplaces employ different English skills in working.

The majority of research, on the other hand, appeared to be focused on the English abilities required for working in the private sector. very rare investigates the necessity for English proficiency in government agencies. So far, many new graduates have been able to obtain work in government agencies which are in many provinces in Thailand. Additionally, the Northeast of Thailand is a region that many government work opportunities exist. The study of the needs for English skills in government agencies could aid new graduates in improving their skills and preparing themselves in order to be part of the agencies. Therefore, this study was to examine the needs of government agencies towards qualifications of English graduates in Thailand 4.0.

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to examine the needs of government agencies towards qualifications of English graduates in Thailand 4.0.

Methodology

Participants: A total of 40 representatives from government agencies were taking part. The purposive sampling was employed in the study. Government agencies are places of labor that were created in accordance with government policy. The government agencies including Immigration Divisions, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Tourism and Sport, the Thailand Tourism Authority, the Customs Department, and the Provincial Administrative Organizations are in Thailand's northeast. They were the places where the participants were working.

Research instrument: The purpose of the questionnaire was to look at the government's requirements for English graduates. The questionnaire was divided into three parts. The first part covered the participants' general information, such as gender, age, government agencies, and provinces. The second part focused on the English

skills needed to work in the company. There were 22 questions on various English skills. This section was based on research by Polsombat (2015) and Phetcharat (2012), who looked at the English language requirements for a certain job. The requirement for English primary abilities, such as hearing, speaking, reading, and writing, was mentioned in this section. Sub-statements pertaining to the requirement for the abilities were included in each main skill. The section was also expanded to include a five-point Likert scale. The final part was turned into an open-ended question in which participants might comment or offer additional comments about the English skills required for working in government agencies. Furthermore, to minimize misunderstandings, the questionnaire was translated into Thai.

Data collection and analysis: The questionnaire was sent through internship students who were currently working at government agencies as interns. They were asked to give the questionnaire to their supervisors who worked in various positions inside government agencies. The participants were then asked to complete a questionnaire. The data was statistically analyzed into the mean, the standard deviation, and the Likert scale interpretation when the questionnaire was completed.

Result

The data analyzed and classified the needs of government agencies towards qualifications of English graduates in Thailand 4.0 into English listening, speaking, reading, and writing were as follows.

Table 1 The need of English reading and listening skills

Items	mean	S.D.	Interpretation
Reading	4.10	0.79	very important
Reading written document related to government field	4.15	0.81	very important
Getting details information from government documents	4.00	0.92	very important
Reading governmental news to keep up to date about world events	4.05	0.94	very important
Reading information from various media	4.05	0.89	very important

Based on the table 1 the results Besides indicates the need of reading and listening skills. It was found that the skills, which were reading ($\bar{x} = 4.10$, S.D. = 0.79) and listening ($\bar{x} = 4.05$, S.D. = 0.76), were very important when working in the government agencies respectively. According to reading skill, all specific situations of reading skill were ranged at very important level. Reading written document related to government field ($\bar{x} = 4.15$, S.D. = 0.81) was the highest requirement in the government agencies while the lowest was getting details information from government documents ($\bar{x} = 4.00$, S.D. = 0.92). The participants also indicated that reading governmental news to keep up to date about world events ($\bar{x} = 4.05$, S.D. = 0.94) and reading information from various media ($\bar{x} = 4.05$, S.D. = 0.89) were the needs for working in the government agencies.

Table 2 The need of English reading and listening skills (con.)

Items	mean	S.D.	Interpretation
Listening	4.05	0.76	very important
Listening to spoken discourse related to government topics	3.90	0.79	very important
Listening to a face-to-face conversation with the superior	3.85	1.04	very important
Listening to a face-to-face conversation with the visitors	4.00	0.92	very important
Listening to conversation by the phone	3.80	0.95	very important
Listening to a discourse in a meeting	3.75	1.02	very important

Based on the table 2 the results Likewise, all specific situations for English listening were ranged at very important level (Table 1). Listening to a face-to-face conversation with the visitors ($\bar{x}= 4.00$, S.D. = 0.92) showed the highest requirement in the government agencies while the lowest was listening to a discourse in a meeting ($\bar{x}= 3.75$, S.D. = 1.02). The participants also indicated that listening to spoken discourse related to government topics ($\bar{x}= 3.90$, S.D. = 0.79), listening to a face-to-face conversation with the superior ($\bar{x}= 3.85$, S.D. = 1.04), and listening to conversation by the phone ($\bar{x}= 3.80$, S.D. = 0.95) were the needs for working in the government agencies.

Table 3 The need of English speaking and writing skills

Items	mean	S.D.	Interpretation
Speaking	4.00	0.79	very important
Conducting a face-to-face conversation with the superior	3.55	1.00	very important
Conducting a face-to-face conversation with the visitors	4.00	0.92	very important
Conducting a conversation by the phone	3.70	0.92	very important
Participating in a group discussion	3.65	1.18	very important
Delivering a presentation in a meeting	3.65	1.04	very important
Writing	4.00	0.86	very important
Writing e-mail	3.85	0.99	very important
Writing document which include technical terms in the field	3.80	0.95	very important
Taking note at presentations, seminars, and meeting	3.70	1.08	very important
Producing the correct format for memos and minutes of meeting	3.70	1.08	very important

Based on the table 2 shows the equal important importance of speaking ($\bar{x}= 4.00$, S.D. = 0.79) and writing ($\bar{x}= 4.00$, S.D. = 0.86) skills as the need of the government agencies. According to speaking skill, all specific situations for English speaking were ranged at very important level. The need of speaking skill also indicated the great important importance of a face-to-face conversation with the visitors ($\bar{x}= 4.00$, S.D. = 0.92) while the lowest importance was conducting a face-to-face conversation with the superior ($\bar{x}= 3.55$, S.D. = 1.00). The participants also indicated that conducting a conversation by the phone ($\bar{x}= 3.70$, S.D. = 0.92), participating in a

group discussion (\bar{x} = 3.65, S.D. = 1.18), and delivering a presentation in a meeting (\bar{x} = 3.65, S.D. = 1.04) were the needs for working in the government agencies.

Besides, all specific situations for English writing were ranged at very important level. It was found that writing e-mail (\bar{x} = 3.85, S.D. = 0.99) was the highest requirement in the government agencies while the lowest was taking note at presentations, seminars, and meeting (\bar{x} = 3.70, S.D. = 1.08) and producing the correct format for memos and minutes of meeting (\bar{x} = 3.70, S.D. = 1.08). The participants also indicated that writing document which included technical terms in the field (\bar{x} = 3.80, S.D. = 0.95) was the needs for working in the government agencies.

Conclusion

All English skills are the needs of government agencies towards qualifications of English graduates in Thailand 4.0. When working in different professions in the agencies, the abilities of reading, listening, speaking, and writing are used in all specific details of job. These findings can aid a curriculum developer in designing English courses to suit the demand for English proficiency in dealing with the government. Because they benefit new graduates when they enter the job market, the skills should be encouraged to be taught and practiced.

Discussion

Although the result showed some slightly different mean scores, the major English skills were shown to be the most important when working in government agencies. This could imply government agencies' need for English graduate qualifications in Thailand 4.0.

One of the most crucial abilities in the agencies was the ability to read. This finding was in line with Chanphram (2020), Luankanokrat (2011), and Winiyakul (2011), who indicated a significant demand for reading skills in the workplace. The findings revealed the importance of reading in comprehending messages in government papers and information from various sources on real-world issues. Although government agencies require English reading ability, the specific use of the skill was employed differently from in prior studies because the skill used in the private sector involved reading an e-mail as well as a supervisor's command (Chanphram, 2020).

In government agencies, listening is also a necessary ability. This finding is also in line with Chanphram (2020), Chantanont (2012), Kraichan (2020), and Polsombat (2015), who all agree that listening skills are required in the workplace. The outcome emphasizes the importance of paying attention to a visitor's face-to-face conversation. This could be due to the fact that some government services are open to foreigners. Employees must listen to a conversation in which foreigners raise requests and complaints. As a result, employing this skill could assist employees in dealing with a variety of English dialects (Chantanont, 2012).

Furthermore, the needs for speaking and writing skills were found to be equivalent. Some of these findings paralleled with Chanphram (2020), Choompon (2009), Juan (2014), Kraichan (2020), and Polsombat (2020).

(2015). The employees claimed that they used their speaking skills to have a face-to-face conversation with visitors and that they used their writing skills to write e-mails and documents. Foreigners, like listening skills, visit and complete their legal documents on a regular basis. For example, foreigners must renew their visas at the Immigration Division. As a result, foreigners may ask employees to explain anything or fill out a form.

The majority of government employees are Thai (Arin & Suwanarak, 2019). They always use Thai at work, as well as communicate and work in their mother tongue. Not all departments are in charge of contacting foreigners who use English as a communication medium (Arin & Suwanarak, 2019). As a result, while the results showed slightly varying demands among the skills, it could be concluded that skills connected to English communication, such as reading, listening, speaking, and writing, are required for working in Thailand 4.0 government agencies.

Suggestion

The result of the study provided useful information regarding the current needs of the government agencies towards qualifications of English graduates in Thailand 4.0. The English curriculum can implement the data to develop the English curriculum to meet the needs of the government agencies towards qualifications of English graduates and the English graduates can prepare themselves to become qualified employees.

However, the future study should involve an in-depth interview and specific information related to the needs of English in government agencies. Additionally, the future study should be conducted in other regions of Thailand.

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