



A CASE STUDY OF THE NEED FOR ENGLISH TRAINING OF  
THAI AIRWAYS EXECUTIVE CLASS FLIGHT ATTENDANTS

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A THESIS SUBMITTED  
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN  
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GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ENGLISH (GSE)  
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**September 2008**

Thesis Title            A Survey of Thai Airways Executive Class Flight  
Attendants' needs of English

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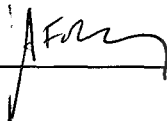
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## Plagiarism Statement

Statement: I certify that all the material in this study which is not my own work has been identified and acknowledged, and that no material is included for which a degree has already been conferred upon me.

Date: 8 October 2008

Sira Nunta

(signed)

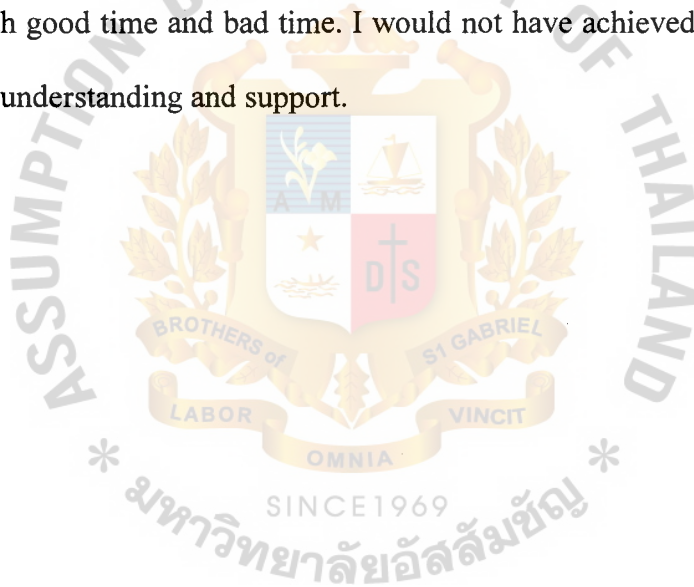




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## **Abstract**

The purposes of this research were 1) to investigate specific English language skills, the Royal Executive Class (REC) flight attendants expect to learn in the Royal Executive Class English training course 2) to study language difficulties concerning the functions of English, the REC flight attendants encounter while working in Royal Executive Class 3) to provide practical suggestions for the Royal Executive English Training Course for Flight Attendants. A study of the needs of these REC flight attendants will help and guide syllabus designers to formulate relevant and useful syllabi in terms of contents and methodologies. Having been involved in teaching and training Thai Airways employees for several years, and in keeping with the view that research into learners' needs is best initiated by the teacher-practitioners, this investigation is an attempt to provide insights for the syllabus development. The instruments employed in this study were a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and analysis of their public announcements. The findings from this study revealed that:

1. Speaking and listening skills were recognized by REC flight attendants as the most essential language skills for their job because this involves communicating verbally with passengers and making public announcements on flights. Knowledge of job-related vocabulary, cultures, cultural differences and cross communication were the three important factors affecting their communication with passengers which were recognized as essential by REC flight attendants.

2. Lack of familiarity with passengers' accents and flight attendants' own

accent and pronunciation were two major areas of difficulty. The results show that the main difficulty in listening is caused by the varieties of passengers' accents. The other area of difficulty was caused by the incorrect pronunciation of the REC flight attendants themselves especially incorrect stress and intonation when making public announcements on board.

3. The indications are that the REC course should place more emphasis on pronunciation practice including both conversation with business class passengers and reading public announcements. Additional English materials relevant to the flight attendants' job should be used as supplementary reinforcement materials in the REC English course. The instructors who teach the courses should be both Thai and English instructors for the flight attendants to be more familiar with foreign accents.

In addition, further research is suggested as to how REC course might be adapted or modified for Thai Airways flight attendants to take account of a number of issues raised by the study.



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# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**

This chapter presents the background and rationale for the study, statement of the problems, objectives of the present study, significance, scope, basic assumptions and definitions of terms.

### **1.1 Background**

Thailand is one of many countries whose economy is growing rapidly. This leads to a situation in which English plays a more significant role than before in the country. The airline industry is fast growing businesses that have made a great deal of profits for the national economy. Therefore, the need of personnel working in these areas is steadily increasing. The rapid growth of business travelers and hospitality workers in Thailand and the region results in high demands for qualified personnel to serve in both the private and government sectors operating in this industry. The ability to use English to communicate with people who speak different languages has become a necessity, especially since tourism has been Thailand's highest income generator since 1982.

The majority of work and communication in the airline industry is based on English. English is the language of international business and English is used as the means of communication in business transactions between large numbers of people, many of whom is a native user of the language (Robinson, 1991: 98). The demand for high proficiency speakers who can communicate well in English is now increasing dramatically. Tourist businesses in Thailand, such as travel agencies, airlines, hotels

and restaurants, require their employees to have a good command of English in order to take care of customers. Therefore, English is considered to be one of the most important factors in determining whether an applicant is well qualified for a job, especially in airline industries. So it is crucial that the airline personnel have adequate English ability to perform their tasks. As the national carrier of Thailand for more than 48 years, Thai Airways International Public Company Limited also recognizes the importance of English. Today, Thai Airways International flies to more than thirty countries on five continents. Thai Airways International serves more than sixty different destinations on five continents. It is essential, therefore, that THAI has an effective training plan that helps promote and support all areas of human resource and service in order to accommodate increased staff ability as well as increased customer demand on a continual basis.

In late 2003, The Language and Culture Institute at Thai Airways International Public Company Limited was officially opened and it was considered an important occasion for the company in developing its future and potential of both the National Carrier of the Kingdom of Thailand and the largest air transport operator in the country. The aims of the institute are: to raise awareness of in-flight service languages and ground support operations, both inside and outside the communities where they are spoken, throughout all channels and media; to support the use of technical languages in all contexts: at the aircraft maintenance center, in education, in the media, and in social, cultural and economic life; to train the flight attendants for onboard public announcements; to support the documentation of in-flight service languages and language training. Because of the difference in the languages used by both passengers and flight attendants, it is important for the airline that its flight attendants are highly trained professionals in terms of both in-flight duties which they

have to perform, and the language they have to use to communicate with the passengers. Flight attendants' duties involve a depth of responsibility, of which passengers or casual observers are not aware.

The primary responsibility of the flight attendants is to ensure and maintain passengers comfort and safety at all times during flights. Flight attendants are briefed prior to boarding an aircraft about the passengers on each flight, anticipated weather conditions and potential emergencies and safety related incidents. Flight attendants are individually assigned to different positions in the cabin, prior to each flight, and they are trained to brief all passengers on the safety requirements for each type of aircraft that they are using. They are also responsible for checking all safety and emergency equipment located in the aircraft. Prior to take off and landing, they must ensure that all overhead lockers and service items in the cabin are properly secured. In-flight service may include meal and beverage service as well as full bar service and the sale of duty free products, in some instances. Another important responsibility for flight attendants in executive class is that they are responsible for making all in-flight safety announcements on board and for assisting passengers with the in-flight safety demonstration. The announcements on board have to be done in both English and Thai. All flight attendants in Royal Executive Class must be able to make public announcement with clear and intelligible English in order to make passengers from different parts of the world on the flights understand.

To ensure passenger satisfaction, flight attendants in Royal Executive Class are trained to cater for all types of people, circumstances, handicapped passengers, medical situations and are trained to meet the needs of business travelers, special airline VIP's and VVIP's (royal families). They have to learn how to address and speak appropriately when encountering with royal families. Sometimes they have to deal with



anticipated problems due to flight delays, meal shortages, passengers' complaints, and sudden illnesses of passengers, among other unpredictabilities.

Therefore, they must be equipped with good knowledge of English in order to cope with unexpected situations. They have to be able to explain the cause of the problems, make an apology for any inconvenience caused by the airline or the service, and give necessary information requested by the passengers. In this kind of situation, using impolite language or incorrect English can lead to misunderstandings, or cross cultural problems.

Flight attendants in Royal Executive Class, as people who have direct contact with Royal Executive Class passengers throughout a flight, are most visible airline employees. Because of this, they must be equipped with a good level of English so that they can speak English properly and politely. The ability to communicate in other foreign languages such as Italian, Japanese, Chinese or French is also advantageous, because flight attendants who can speak the passenger's native languages can impress the passengers or, at least, they can understand the passengers who cannot communicate in English. However, English proficiency is considered an essential skill for REC flight attendants.

As a consequence, one of the requirements for the flight attendants who want to apply to work in Royal Executive Class, is that they must possess a minimum score of 650 on TOEIC (Test of English for International communication) or 550 on TOEFL (Test of English as foreign Language) or 5.5 on IELTS (International English Language Tests).

The Language and Culture Institute is responsible for this training. The duration of the REC course is 2 days from 8.30 to 16.30. The overall purposes are to diagnose the level of English proficiency of the participants in order to help them increase their

English proficiency and also raise an awareness of cross-cultural factors which affect communication. Course assessment includes the placement test, a speaking test, a writing test, listening comprehension exercises, in-class performance, a final test and mock up performances. One day before the course, the participants have to take the placement test in order to assess their level of English proficiency in terms of listening and reading skills and grammatical knowledge. In the writing test, three general topics are given and each participant chooses one topic and writes a 100-word essay. To assess their speaking ability, the participants have to talk about themselves for a minimum of five minutes. These self-introduction statements are tape-recorded so that the course instructors can listen to the tape later and, then rate the participant's speaking ability.

At the end of the day, the scores from each test are added together to give total score. Each participant, then, is assigned to one of three classes; A, B or C, according to their scores. One of the reasons for grouping the participants who have nearly the same English proficiency together is to facilitate learning in the training classroom. In the training class that is composed of participants who have almost the same level of English proficiency, the instructors can select lessons according to the competence of the participants. The content of the REC training course consists of an introduction to English pronunciation for Thai speakers, pronunciation practice on job-related topics such as cooking terms and vocabulary in the public announcement, problematic sounds, listening comprehension and speaking practice through Lab work, and a review of cross cultural awareness, formal language, how to address their passengers and non-verbal communication. The content also includes guidelines and practice with expressions needed in different simulated situations, and using directional and descriptive words and phrases required for effective in-flight communication. In addition, other

supplements including job-related words and general information concerning the airline, food and beverages in business class are included in the course content. (see Appendix 1 for course agenda).

At the end of the course, the participants should have accomplished the three main objectives. First, the participants should be able to communicate and pronounce clearly in English, using certain standard job-related phrases and polite service expressions appropriately, be acquainted with airline vocabulary and terminology and be able to identify their own specific problems in terms of pronunciation, syntax and verbal communication. Assessing participants' performances and assignments during the course can be very effective to know their real problems during the course. After analyzing the feedback, readjustment to the course is valuable for both teachers and learners. Furthermore, a post test is also important to check their progress, to ascertain what they already know as well as what they do not know. It can also motivate them to study in the class because if they do not pass the test, they will not get promoted to work in first class. Teaching activities that are employed by the course instructors are presentation, discussion, interviews and writing, aural and oral practice, pair work activities and Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). Teaching aids used throughout the course are transparencies, cassette tapes, handouts, cue cards and a computer and its software.

The course instructors who are responsible for the teaching of the REC course and other English courses are either full time or part time. The part-time instructors also work as flight attendants in the ASE or AHE ranking (Air Steward Executive or Air Hostess Executive). When English modules are scheduled for the flight attendants, part time instructors will be assigned to teach these courses. However, they still have to fly

according to their own flight schedules. Another group of English instructors are full time. Some of these full time instructors have worked as flight attendants while some have not. Even though every flight attendant takes the REC English course as a fundamental course before beginning to work, many difficulties and problems concerning English language usage do exist.

Although the kind of language related to the flight attendants' work and the language used in the airline industries is limited to certain grammatical patterns and vocabulary, there are still some other problems that REC flight attendants experience during flights. Some REC flight attendants do not understand the passengers' requests because they are not familiar with the accents of the passengers, and vice versa. Sometimes, they can not answer passengers' requests because their knowledge of vocabulary is too limited. Because of these problems, REC flight attendants may not be able to work efficiently and effectively. Despite their well-developed English skills, a large number of staff working in airline industries had encountered problems in interacting and servicing customers. Due to the fact that they constantly have to deal with passengers from different nationalities, REC flight attendants often have difficulties in understanding different accents, and sometimes they find their customers have a particular way of communicating which has more to do with culture than language.

The identification of language problems that REC flight attendants have encountered when performing their in-flight services can lead to a more professional service. Having established the background to the study, the researcher shall now briefly explain the rationale, objectives, research questions, significance of the study defining the terms used before stating the thesis organization.

## 1.2 Rationale for the study

This study is carried out to investigate the problems of REC flight attendants when they use English while working in Royal Executive Class. From a preliminary interview with some of the Thai Airways REC flight attendants and researcher's experience as a flight attendant, many language problems and difficulties exist when flight attendants in Royal Executive Class use English to communicate with passengers unlike working in Economy Class where they have less chance to interact with passengers. There are some problems that the REC flight attendants experience during flight regarding different accents, choice of words and expressions which might sometimes appear unusual to passengers. One of the main responsibilities of REC flight attendants is to make public announcements on board. Many of them have problems mispronouncing words while making announcements which can easily lead to misunderstanding.

For example, when announcing gate numbers 'fifteen' and 'fifty', if they cannot put the right stress on the number, it will create misunderstanding and passengers will get confused. Some flight attendants do not understand passengers' requests because they are not familiar with the accents of the passengers. Sometimes, the flight attendants cannot reply to passengers' questions because they do not know the vocabulary they should use. Moreover, they sometimes use incorrect English words or sentences, which may seem impolite to passengers. In addition, some Executive Class flight attendants stated that the English course that they attended during REC training was not relevant to their work. The topics that these flight attendants studied could not be applied to their work. Additionally, the components of the REC course do not cover every aspect of the flight attendants' work. As a result, these flight attendants could not



use English properly in some situations that they encounter during flights. The flight attendants in Executive Class have many duties and responsibilities throughout the flight. During flights, they have to communicate and deal with passengers with different demands. They should be equipped with the relevant information about the topics that they can converse on especially in business class and services they offer such as cocktail mixtures or the ingredients of the choices of meals on board so that they can reply to passengers' questions professionally. Therefore, there is a need to design and develop a better English training course for them.

### **1.3 The objectives of this study**

The objectives of this study are to identify flight attendants' specific needs concerning English skills, and to investigate the problems and difficulties in using English which the flight attendants have had while working in Royal Executive Class. The identification of language problems that the Royal Executive Class flight attendants have encountered when performing their in-flight services can lead to more professional service. When their language problems are lessened or solved, the flight attendants will be able to use English to communicate and interact with passengers in a more professional manner. This will prevent any misunderstandings that might occur because of incorrect usage of English.

Furthermore, speaking professionally in correct English will give a good impression to the passengers and create a good image for the airline. When the English language problems and difficulties have been identified and the particular needs concerning English skills and job-related language skills have been specified, the course developers can, then, modify the English course to solve the language problems and difficulties and to meet the specific needs of REC flight attendants. In addition,

this study aims to identify the specific language skills, structural knowledge of English and job related knowledge which the REC flight attendants recognize as essential for their work. As a result, those skills and knowledge should be emphasized in the Royal Executive Class English Course (REC) so that the language problems are minimized and the REC flight attendants use English more professionally.

#### **1.4 Research questions**

This study has been carried out to investigate the current language problems and difficulties in terms of the language functions and English usage, which the Executive Class flight attendants of Thai Airways encountered at work. The study also aimed to identify flight attendants' specific needs regarding job-related language skills and structural knowledge of English that should be emphasized during the Royal Executive English Course for Flight attendants (REC).

This study was, therefore, is designed to answer the following research questions.

1. What are the specific English language skills, which the flight attendants expect to learn in the Royal Executive English Course for Flight Attendants (REC)?
2. What are the language difficulties concerning the functions of English, which the flight attendants encounter while working?
3. What are the flight attendants' own observations on the Royal Executive English Course for Flight Attendants (REC) in terms of the teaching content, or the teaching methodology?

### 1.5 Significance of the study

This survey is being conducted in order to identify the problems and difficulties in using English which Thai Airways flight attendants have had while working in Royal Executive Class. The purpose of the survey is to gather information about classes of individuals rather than data about individuals (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavich, 1979). In other words, the purpose was to obtain general data concerning attitudes or events in a particular set of circumstances.

This survey was conducted in order to identify the problems and difficulties in using English which REC flight attendants have had while working. During flights, the REC flight attendants have many duties and responsibilities. As a result, language problems can occur at anytime. So these problems and difficulties should be investigated so that solutions can be identified.

The findings from this research will be beneficial to Thai Airways flight attendants because one of the purposes of this study is aimed at identifying Royal Executive flight attendants' specific needs concerning English skills. When their language problems are lessened or solved, they then will be able to use English to communicate and interact with passengers in a more professional manner. Furthermore, this professional communication by the flight attendants will give a good impression of the airline. The findings from this study may provide some beneficial guidelines and recommendations for the English course designers, course instructors and Thai Airways International Company. It may also indicate the significant requirements for THAI to provide the appropriate English language courses for REC flight attendants regularly. These training courses might increase their efficiency and self-confidence when performing their duties. This will lead to successful performance of duties by both the

employees and the company as stated in the campaign "The First Choice Carrier, First Time, Every Time".

## 1.6 Definition and Terms

*Air Hostess Trainee (AHT):* The AHT are female flight attendants who have just finished the basic training course for newly recruited flight attendants. These flight attendants have been working for Thai Airways for at least three months but not more than six months and are all still on probation. They do not fly to all domestic and regional destinations because of the restricted number of types of aircraft they have learned about during the training course.

*Air Hostess Economy (AHY):* The AHY are female flight attendants who have been working for the company for a minimum of six months. These flight attendants serve the passengers in Economy Class on Domestic and Regional routes only. After working as ASY and AHY for five years, these flight attendants can apply for higher ranking, such as ASE and AHE.

*Air Hostess Executive (AHE):* These female flight attendants work in Royal Executive Class or Business Class. They have been working with Thai Airways for at least seven years. Because most Domestic flights and all regional flights have business class seats, these AHE fly on almost every Domestic, Regional and Intercontinental route. They only learned the emergency and service procedures of the Airbus A300-600 and A330 aircraft.

REC or Royal Executive English Course for Executive Class Cabin Attendants is the English course that was offered to every flight attendant who works for Thai Airways International for more than five years. The REC English course lasts for three days and the service class lasts three weeks. The main objective of the REC training

course is to analyze the English proficiency level of each flight attendant and to provide basic knowledge regarding the use of English for in-flight services and communication. The Flight attendants in this study are all females, they can also be referred to as cabin attendant or cabin crew. They are responsible for providing assigned services to business class passengers during flights. They have to look after the passengers who need assistance during flights. The most important duty for REC flight attendants is to be prepared for any emergency or unanticipated situation which may occur during take off and landing or during flights.

Language and Culture Institute is responsible for developing all English courses for the flight attendants who work with Thai Airways. They design and develop English courses in relation to flight attendants' in-flight jobs to provide the English knowledge and skills essential for in-flight services.

### 1.7 Organization of the chapters

This thesis comprises five chapters. *The first chapter* introduces the background, the aims and significance as well as the scope of the study. A brief description about Thai Airways International Company where the research project is conducted is also provided.

*The second chapter* presents a review of various theoretical issues found in the literature. Issues that are of relevance to the study will be included.

*Chapter three* describes the methodologies that are adopted in the study. It also provides information about the research subjects and clarifies the research instruments employed in the data acquisition for the study.



*Chapter four* showcases the analysis and interpretation of the findings arising from the compilation of data amassed from the research. In this chapter, the research questions are answered.

*Chapter five* summarizes the findings of the research. Moreover, it presents a possible theoretical framework for the design of transitional for a revised syllabus. This chapter also highlights the limitations of the research as faced by research in the hope that further research should be undertaken, these identified pitfalls are avoided.



## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

This chapter provides background information about English for Specific Purpose (ESP), needs analysis in the field of ESP and the instruments employed in conducting a needs analysis. This review of related literature is divided into two main sections. English for Specific Purposes: characteristics of ESP and Royal Executive Courses for Flight Attendants (REC). Needs Analysis (NA): to explore the characteristics, ways to conduct a needs analysis and different types of needs analysis. ESP courses emphasize the needs for the learners, so that learners can apply the knowledge from the classroom to use it effectively and appropriately outside the classroom. Some examples are, English for Secretaries, English for Tourist Police Officers or English for Commercial Pilots.

#### **2.1 English for Specific Purposes (ESP)**

ESP can be regarded as one branch of English Language Teaching (ELT). It has emerged due to the high demand for language use for commercial purposes. This demand followed the development and expansion of science and technology after the end of World War II. More people were willing to learn English because English had become the international medium for technology and commerce. As a result, the high demand for English for specific purposes arose. For ESP “Time” is very crucial because the ESP course is intensive with a limited time frame unlike the tradition English teaching in a normal classroom. The main purpose of ESP has its specific goal to ensure the learners can apply what they learn in the classroom to their careers in a

short time frame. ESP is an approach to language teaching and learning which is based on learners' needs for a language in particular fields of study or work.

Today, ESP is a major activity around the world. It is an enterprise involving education, training and practice. ESP courses are composed of three major areas of knowledge including language, pedagogy, that is how to practice and learn the language, the learners' specialist areas of interest (Robinson 1991: 28). It is unlike those involved in EGP (English for general purposes) where students need some knowledge of, or at least access information on, whatever it is that students are professionally involved with, for example, economics, physics, nursing, catering. Authentic materials (e.g. texts, recorded discussions, interviews, lectures) may be needed in these work or study situations to be developed as classroom materials.

### **2.1.1 What is English for Specific Purposes (ESP)**

ESP is an approach to language teaching and learning which is based on learners' needs for a language in particular fields of study or work. Hutchinson and Waters (1993: 21) suggested that ESP is an approach to language learning, which is based on how learners will use the foreign language. There are six questions which are considered crucial factors for ESP courses.

1. What does the student need to learn?
2. Who is going to be involved in the process?
3. Where is the learning to take place?
4. When is the learning to take place?
5. How will the learning be achieved?
6. What kind of methodology will be employed?

From the questions above, one can elicit important factors to design one's own ESP courses as "all decisions regarding the content and method of an ESP course are based on the learners' reasons for learning language" (Mackay & Mountford, 1987). Students may learn the language in order to work as a receptionist or do a Ph.D. in an English speaking country. The learner's purposes for language learning should be identifiable so that the objectives can be set based on those purposes.

Hutchinson and Waters (1993: 5) defined 'ESP' as an approach to language teaching in which all decisions about content and method are based on the learner's reasons for learning. They saw ESP as an approach rather than product. Needs of learners are the main reason in learning English and they may vary according to study purposes. They also stated that ESP and GE (General English) share the same process of learning but with a difference in the content.

"English became an accepted international language of technology and commerce, it created a new generation of learners who knew specifically why they were learning a language-businessmen and women who wanted to sell their products, mechanics who had to read instruction manuals, doctors who needed to keep up with developments in their field and a whole range of students whose course of study included textbooks and journals only available in English. All these and many others needed English and, most importantly, they knew why they needed it."

(Hutchinson, and Waters 1993: 6)

English for Specific Purposes is also known as a learner-centered approach for teaching English as a foreign or second language. It meets the needs of adult learners who need to learn a foreign language to use in their specific fields, such as in the Airline Industry. ESP courses are for graduate students and foreign and second language professionals who wish to learn ESP courses and programs in an area of

specialization such as English for Airline Service purposes. Hutchinson and Waters (1993: 5) point out that ESP is an approach to language learning, which is based on how learners will use the foreign language. All decisions regarding the content and method of an ESP course are based on the learners' reasons for learning the language (Mackay & Mountford, 1978: 16). Students may learn the language in order to work as a receptionist or do a Ph.D. in an English speaking country. The learner's purposes for learning language should be identifiable so that the objectives can be set based on those purposes.

In order to create a course, one must first develop the main components of a course design plan for the target population. It should include a syllabus outline based on selected students' outcome goals, the duration of the program, length of lessons, class size, placement considerations, number of instructors and so on. Dudley-Evans, T., & St John, M. (1998: 6) stated that the effective course design and program model as ESP/EAP teaching should use the methodology and activities of the disciplines it serves and focus on the language, skills, discourse types and genres suitable for these activities. The tasks set for the students should be meaningful to them. For example, related to Cabin attendants' job-related orientation to their special purpose, and should involve the use of authentic language.

Another important component is to research current foreign language methodologies that are appropriate for the needs of the target population. The participants will be directed towards rational thought and problem solving, and the grammatical exercises are designed to take this fact into account.



### 2.1.2 Characteristics of ESP

Dudley Evans and St. John (1998; 4-5) identify five key roles for the ESP practitioner: 1. teacher, 2. material designer and material provider, 3. collaborator, 4. researcher, and 5. evaluator. ESP has been reshaped into two characteristics by its absolute and variable characteristics. ESP characteristics consist of the specified needs of the learner; themes and topics to particular disciplines, occupations and activities; and language acquisitions (i.e. in its syntax, lexis, discourse, semantics). They are restricted for specific disciplines; used for specific situations and different methodology from that of general English; designed for adult learners either at a tertiary level or in a professional work situation or even at secondary school level; generally designed for intermediate or advanced students, but can be assumed with beginners on the basic knowledge of the language system.

Hutchison and Water (1993: 18) classify ESP in many different categories; ESP-English as a restricted language (i.e. Airlines phraseologies), English for Academic and Occupational Purposes (i.e. Tree of ELT broken down into EST- English for Science and Technology, EBE- English for Business and Economics, ESS- English for Social Studies), English with specific topics (i.e. English based on the situational language or integral components). Accordingly, these subject areas are further divided into two branches: English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). An example of EOP for the EST branch is 'English for Technicians' whereas an example of EAP for the EST branch is 'English for Medical Studies.' However, these purposeful types of ESP have an integrated characteristic of turning learners to users or "self-direction." However, their notions can be connected to Dudley-Evans and St John's the continuum of ELT course types which clearly illustrate definable General English courses through to very specific ESP courses (P. 8-9).

There are a number of features that make ESP different from General English. Firstly, ESP is normally goal-oriented (Robinson, 1991). The course may be English for study or work purposes. The ESP course developers must have a specified target or purpose when designing an ESP course. The activities and content of the course should be based on the objectives of the course. All English courses for the flight attendants organized by Thai Airways have one major goal, that is; to provide the flight attendants with an adequate knowledge of English for the in-flight services.

Secondly, all ESP courses should be based on a needs analysis. "A Need analysis of the learners is the key element of ESP". (Munby, 1978: 22) The aim of the needs analysis is to specify as exactly as possible what the students need to do in English. An assessment of the students' needs may be conducted at the beginning of the course to identify the needs of the learners or the need analysis may be performed at the end of the course to assess whether the learners are satisfied with the course.

Team teaching is another technique that is widely used. English instructors who teach the English course for flight attendants may not have been flight attendant themselves. Therefore, it would be more effective to have another teacher who has experiences in this type of work teaching in the same class. Instructors who work as flight attendants can provide appropriate solutions to further develop problem solving skills since these instructors can use their own experience as guidelines. The English instructor who has no flying experience, in turn, can provide the knowledge of the correct usage of English; how to speak politely and appropriately to passengers who have complained. Though there are a number of teaching methodologies and activities that can be employed in the ESP classroom, the strengths and weaknesses of each method need to be carefully considered. The methodology used in the language classroom must be appropriate to the learners' English proficiency level, the

background knowledge of the learners and the learners' characteristics. Classroom discussion may be ineffective in a language classroom where most of the learners lack confidence, where the majority of the learners have a very low level of English or where the learners have no background information in the topics being discussed in the classroom.

Thirdly, the length of an ESP course is usually clearly specified. It is normally, short since the course is goal-directed and the learners want to use the language in the near future (Robinson, 1991: 19). As such, The REC course for Royal executive class cabin crew lasts for only three days, for example.

The variable characteristics are that ESP may be related to or designed for specific discipline. It may use a different methodology from that of general English, it may be designed for adult learners, and it may be designed for intermediate advanced learners. The quotation of Hutchison and Waters (1993: 26) "Tell me what you need English for and I will tell you the English that you need" clearly implies the connection between the choice of language content in syllabus design and the specific purposes for which learners need to learn the target language. Therefore, in designing syllabuses in ESP to suit the learning needs of a particular group, it is important to bear in mind certain criteria that fit the basic tenets of ESP. According to Robinson (1991; 2) criteria of ESP are:

1. ESP is normally goal directed. That is, students study English not because they are interested in English as such but because they need English for study or work purposes.

2. An ESP course is based on a need analysis, which aims to specify as closely as possible what exactly it is that students have to do through the medium of English.
3. The students on an ESP course are likely to be adults rather than children.

## 2.2 The learner-centered approach

The most important thing is to define the meaning of “learner-centered approach” correctly, since misinterpretation of the term can lead to failure in practice. According to the Ministry of Education’s Foreign Language Teaching Manual (2002:106-107), the learner-centered approach focuses on promoting learners’ skills in term of both language learning and language use. In the learner-centered view, classroom instruction should be based on learners’ needs and promote their learning autonomy. This means that learners should take greater responsibility for their own learning and become self-directed, no longer depending solely on the teacher. It can only be implemented in small classrooms. In a classroom with more than 30 students, it seems impossible for the teacher to focus on every need of the individual learner. Moreover, the traditional Thai style of learning is to sit, listen and follow rather than discuss and express with the teacher and peers.

Tudor (1997:271) asserts that in the learner-centered approach, the conceptual and linguistic content of classroom activities should be designed by the students. In practice, it seems too difficult for learners to choose their own linguistic learning content. Moreover, the designing of the conceptual content might be more appropriate to the real practice of learners, since their schemata can be the resource for this conceptual content. It is necessary for the teachers to study carefully the approach

before applying it and it is also important that the learners have enough linguistic competence.

### 2.3. Needs Analysis (NA)

Needs analysis: In this study the process of needs analysis involves a set of decisions, actions and reflections that are cyclical in nature. The researcher follows the steps as suggested by (Graves's 2000: 100). Firstly, decide what information to gather and why, when, from whom and how to gather it. Secondly, gather the information and interpret it. Lastly, act on it and evaluate the effects of the action.

Needs Analysis is a crucial first step in the cycle of activities to make curricular decision in designing an ESP course. Many scholars agreed that the step of needs analysis is paramount important in constructing any ESP course, decisions regarding the aims and objectives as well as the content of the language syllabus should be based on an analysis of learner needs. "Needs analysis should be the starting point for devising syllabuses, courses, materials and the kind of teaching and learning that takes place" (Jordan, 1997: 37).

"Needs" in the present study refers to what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target situation (Hutchinson and Waters, 1993: 54). In this study, they are needs or necessities of flight attendants working at THAI.

"Needs Analysis/Needs Assessment is the process of determining the needs for which a learner or group of learners require a language and arranging the needs according to priorities" (Richard et al, 1992: 38).

In this study, a number of research instruments i.e. questionnaires, interviews and observations were used to gather information about the participants' backgrounds and requirements for English knowledge. The information obtained was analyzed and used as the basis for the English course development.



The use of questionnaires is one of the most common research methods because it can produce a large amount of information about many different issues such as communication difficulties, preferred learning styles, preferred classroom activities, attitudes and beliefs (Richards, 2001: 65). In this particular research context, questionnaires are initially used to elicit information about flight attendants' attitudes towards the English course, and what they want to learn in the course. The questionnaire distributed to the flight attendants was in English. Attempts were made to guarantee ample time for the respondents to fill in the questionnaires. The questionnaires items were designed based on the researcher's experience as a teacher to the flight attendants and informal consultation with other teachers at the Language and Culture Institute who were able to provide informed judgments about the objectives as well as the subjective needs of the flight attendants. The content of the questionnaire is crucial for the course designer because it has direct influence on whether the real needs can be identified. Interviewing the teachers who taught the general English course in the previous year, the course designer can gain insights into the flight attendants' current English proficiency, their specific weaknesses and strengths in the four skills. Moreover, informal discussions and interviewing can be adopted as follow-up sources of information to be conducted individually or in groups. Informal discussion allows students to convey their ideas and thoughts spontaneously and does not take much time to plan or prepare. More in-depth exploration of information can then be obtained by interviews before the design of the questionnaire, which may help designers to get a sense of what the focus and topics should be in the questionnaire (Richards, 2001: 34).

Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998: 53) defined needs analysis as the process of establishing the "what and how". Needs analysis helps identify language skills that learners are capable of (PSA = Present situation analysis) and what they want to be able



to achieve (TSA = Target situation analysis). In addition, “needs analysis helps to collect information on real-life problems which learner has when using English to perform their duties.” (Robinson, 1991: 47). Needs Analysis means “the identification of difficulties and standard collections by functioning in a target situation in conjunction with interviews and questionnaires. Essentially, needs analysis is perceived as a systematic process of gathering information about learners’ needs and preferences, interpreting the information, and then making course decisions based on the interpretation in order to meet the needs. This claim is congruent with a generally accepted actuality that needs analysis should be the starting point for devising syllabuses, courses, and materials (Brindley 1989, Hutchinson and Waters 1993, Yalden 1987, Tudor 1996). Therefore, an all inclusive consideration of needs should precede the selection of teaching contents and the adoption of teaching methodologies.

According to the citations stated by Dudley-Evans, & St John 1998; Hutchinson, and Waters 1993; Jordan 1997 in language curriculum development, the purpose of needs analysis echoes cyclical provisions: 1) a mechanism of input, content, design and implementation of a language program through involving such people as learners, teachers, administrators and employers in the planning process; 2) a general and specific language need in developing goals, objectives, and content, for a language program; and 3) data can serve as the basis for reviewing and evaluation an existing program.

### 2.3.1 Types of needs analysis

There are many ways in which needs analysis can be carried out. A questionnaire can be used and employed to collect information from the students about their backgrounds and goals (Benesch 1996 : 34). Observations can also be conducted to observe the students or instructors in naturalistic settings. Because of different methods of needs analysis have their own advantages and disadvantages, the researcher has to carefully select the particular method to be employed.

Needs can also mean “what the user-institution or society at large regards as necessary or desirable” (Mountford 1981 :65). For example, REC flight attendants have to study public announcements on board because Thai Airways recognizes the importance of English and regards the knowledge of English is a necessity for REC Flight attendants to have intelligible English in order to perform their job well. Thai Airways realizes that English, an international language, is used during every flight to serve passengers from different parts of the world with different native languages. Needs can also be interpreted as lacks. From this perspective, needs are what the students do not know or cannot do in English.

“Learning needs” refer to how learners expect to learn and what motivates them (Hutchison and Waters 1993: 61). In their metaphor, learning needs are the route which learners have to take from the starting point to the destination. That is the reason why an analysis of the target needs does not suffice. The potentialities and constraints of the route must be taken into careful consideration to draw a panoramic picture of what learners do need from a certain syllabus. “ These areas (target needs and learning needs) need to be in harmony so that the ways students are asked to learn keep them sufficiently engaged so that they can learn what they are supposed to learn” (Graves 2000: 105). Garb (2006) makes a list of teaching methods for use in the classroom. It

includes lecture, audiovisual methods, experiential methods, role playing and computer based methods among others. It should be noted that some methods are more appropriate for achieving particular objectives than others, depending on teaching and learning styles. The question of choosing the most appropriate teaching mode depends on how acutely the teacher, as a syllabus designer, perceives learners' subjective needs. Harris and Bell (1994: 42-43) contend that it is crucial for teachers to be well aware of students' learning style because: "Every person has a learning style –it is as individual as a signature. Knowing students' learning styles, we can organize classroom to respond to their individual needs". Yet it can be incredibly difficult to diagnose learning styles. Therefore, it is highly advisable that a harmonious combination should be adopted because as Marsh mentioned "Teachers and learners both benefit from initiating/ experiencing a range of modes of instruction. It is essential that a varied combination of modes is used to ensure that all learners are exposed to at least some approaches which are closely amenable to their interests and preferred ways of learning." (Marsh, 1987:66)

Needs analysis is an approach to course design which has been used by ESP practitioners, researchers, course designers, material writers, course instructors, as well as evaluators, for so many years. Since learners' needs are the basis for conducting ESP courses, an analysis of the needs of the learners will help when developing an ESP course. If the learners, course developers, course instructors and other concerned people understand why the learners need English, this awareness will have an influence on what will be acceptable as reasonable content in that language course (Hutchinson & Waters, 1993). Therefore, need analysis is an important feature of ESP.

Needs Analysis means the identification of difficulties and standard collections by functioning in a target situation in conjunction with interviews and questionnaires.

According to Dudley-Evans & St John (1998), Hutchinson & Waters (1993) and Jordan (1997) in language curriculum development, the purpose of needs analysis echoes cyclical provisions: firstly, a mechanism of input, content, design and implementation of a language program through involving such people as learners, teachers, administrators and employers in the planning process; secondly, a general and specific language needs in developing goals, objectives, and content, for a language program; and lastly data can serve as the basis for reviewing and evaluation an existing program.

### **2.3.2 Present Situation Analysis (PSA)**

Present Situation Analysis or Learning Situation Analysis according to Hutchison and Waters (1993: 68) is an analysis of needs which aims to investigate the strengths and weaknesses of the students before attending a course in order to design an English course to suit their levels of English proficiency. A present situation analysis tries to establish what the learners are like at the beginning of the language course.

This type of analysis can ascertain the learners' state of language development at the beginning of a language program. Needs analysis is an inevitable step in designing and setting up ESP courses. The assessment of learners' needs can really provide useful information about the learners' purposes for learning the language, the learners' background data, aspects of the language which the learners still lack and wants which the learners and other people involved consider to be as important.

### **2.4 Significance of needs analysis**

Although needs analysis is clearly discerned as the initial process for syllabus design, it is interesting to notice that the views on its contributions remain divided across the globe and in various contexts. Teachers complain that needs analysis detracts

from their own authority and status in the classroom. Education administrators feel that it is virtually impossible to cater to numerous yet conflicting needs which learners expect the syllabus to satisfy. Some responsible learners air their opinions that if teachers or institutions ask for their opinion, it is seen as a sign that they do not know what they are doing. Consequently, teachers' and institutions' reputation will be seriously undermined (Sowell 1996; Nunan 1998). Another criticism voiced is that needs analysis is "rather irrelevant because the planned curriculum will be transformed in its implementation" (Nunan 1998: 45). Furthermore, an assessment of individual needs could result in a multiplicity of course objectives which would require resources far beyond those which are available to accomplish it (Brindley 1989: 54). In this respect, the practicality of need analysis is severely eroded.

On the other side, the usefulness of needs analysis is widely recognized (Marsh 1987; Longstreet and Share 1993; Sowell 1996; Oliva 1997; Richards 1984). Richards makes a strong case for needs assessment on the ground that "needs analysis serves three main purposes: it provides a means of obtaining wider input into the content, design and implementation of a program; it can be used in developing goals, objectives and content; and it can provide data for reviewing and evaluating an existing program" (Richards 1984: 5).

## **2.5 Research Instruments employed in conducting needs analysis**

Different procedures and instruments can be used to gather needs analysis information. The most frequently used methods, which are questionnaire, interviews, observation, and data collection such as, gathering texts, and informal consultations with sponsors learners and course instructors can be used to investigate the needs of the learners (Hutchison & Waters, 1993; Brown, 1994). Robinson (1991) also adds another



needs analysis instrument which is the collection of authentic materials, such as audio and video recordings and documents from the students' workplace.

A questionnaire is one of the most widely used methods in needs analysis. It is a useful way of gathering information about affective dimensions of teaching and learning such as beliefs, attitudes, motivation, and preferences (Richard 1996). It can also be used to see information for both present situation analysis and target situation analysis (Robinson, 1991). It can be used to gather information concerning the opinions, points of view and comments of the participants on a topic. Brown (1994) also adds other purposes of the questionnaire. Cohen, Manion and Morison (2000) cited in Wilson and McClean, (1994: 37) stated that "The questionnaire is a widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information, providing structured, often numerical data, being able to be administered with out the presence of the researcher, and often being comparatively straightforward to analyze"

## **2.6 Essential structural knowledge of English**

It is unrealistic to make REC flight attendants sound like native speakers of English unless they have high English proficiency. In daily life communication, REC flight attendants' main concern is to get the message across as efficiently as possible when communicating with passengers from different parts of the world. The role of pronunciation would not matter as long as the vital information is successfully expressed. "What does matter is whether the people chat in such a way that they find each other acceptable" (Widdowson, cited in Dalton and Seidlhofer, 1994:10) Two aspects of pronunciation and structural knowledge of English are necessary for REC flight attendants and will be discussed below.



### a) Pronunciation and Intelligibility

Pronunciation becomes a social marker reflecting the extent to which knowledge a learner possesses the knowledge of language features as well as social and cultural knowledge in which the language is used. Social dimension is important and affects the value of language. Pronunciation is important for the REC flight attendants. As representatives of Thai Airways, The REC flight attendants should possess moderate or good ability in communicating in English. They should be able to pronounce and stress words correctly. However, much more important than perfect pronunciation is the goal of intelligibility and efficiency (Hammer 1991: 17). The study of pronunciation is necessary because language is a means of communication consisting of three main components, which are *grammar*, *vocabulary* and *pronunciation*. When speaking to passengers, the flight attendants often or sometimes used incorrect tenses. For example, they did not use the past tense when referring to events that had happened in the past. Instead, they used the past tense when speaking about current activities. However, regardless of the use of incorrect tenses, the flight attendants could communicate with their passengers. The message was conveyed and both parties; the REC flight attendants and the passengers understood each other. Harmer (1991) states that the main aim in teaching grammar should be to ensure that learners are able to communicate effectively with the grammar they have at their level. This indicates that the correct use of tenses was not very important as long as the message is conveyed and the meaning was understood by the parties involved. To form verbal communication, the last component, pronunciation is very vital. To develop communicative efficiency in pronunciation, the REC flight attendants need to understand how sounds are made and how stress is used. They also need to hear language used so that they can both imitate the pronunciation and also learn to recognize the sounds and patterns of

language. According to Pennington and Richards (1986: 208), for most language teachers, pronunciation is largely identified with the articulation of individual sounds and with the stress of intonation patterns of a language. Pennington and Richards (1986:210) explains that suprasegmental features involve the relative levels of stress and pitch within syllables, words, phrases, and longer stretches of speech. The introduction of these significant features is considered advantageous for EFL learners to be aware of similarities and differences between native and target language. REC flight attendants have difficulty in articulating accurate sounds of English owing to a lack of sufficient knowledge to understand how speech sounds of English and Thai differ. One source of language that REC flight attendants can listen to is the English course instructors. Course Instructors especially English speakers can be good language models for the learners. Most of the REC flight attendants are not able to pronounce the exact native-like accent when they speak to their passengers but yet they are able to communicate effectively in real life context. Dolton and Seidlhofer (1994) agrees that primary goals of pronunciation training are intelligible speech and effective communication not native-like pronunciation. The REC flight attendants should be taught pronunciation, but they do not necessarily need specific accents. "Not only has English become international in the last half century, but scholarship about English has also become international: the ownership of an interest in English has become international. We are in international community". (Brumfit 1995:16)

Mehrotra (1982) points out that English tends to admit greater varieties and move in a more diverse situation in a non-native multilingual setting than its native surrounding. Because the number of second language speakers of English is constantly increasing, this leads to even greater variation in English accents and problems with comprehension. Firstly, problems concern comprehensibility between people who

communicate with each other. Mutual intelligibility among native English speakers is common because they use the same grammatical structure, same lexicon, and similar patterns of stress and intonation (Mehrotra, 1982). However, speakers of non-native varieties of English are unlikely to be able to communicate with each other.

King (1971: 28) also mentions that non-native varieties of English particularly in Asia and Africa pose a serious problem to English in serving as a medium of international communication. This is because there are certain words, expressions, grammatical structures, and accents that are comprehensible only locally, regionally and nationally. Some words are spoken only among local people and, as a result, people who are not in this group cannot understand those words. Another major factor which prevents mutual understanding is the phonological feature of non-standard accents. The vowel and consonant system and consonant clusters in standard and non-standard English are not the same. The obvious examples are differences in accents, pronunciation of particular consonants, and intonation (Masica, 1966).

The role of pronunciation would not matter as long as the vital information is successfully expressed. "What does matter is whether the people chat in such a way that they find each other acceptable" (Widdowson, cited in Dalton and Seidlhofer, 1994:10). The teaching of pronunciation in REC training course, thus, should aim to train the flight attendants to communicate and make public announcement effectively. Making public announcement on board is the main duty for REC flight attendants in order to develop their reading and communicative skill efficiency in pronunciation. The flight attendants need to understand how sounds are made and how stress is used. They also need to hear language used in real life context so that they can both imitate the pronunciation and also learn to recognize the sounds and patterns of the language.

## **b) Cross cultural communication**

Davies (2000) reported that being able to understand the people and their cultures is an advantage for those who work in the tourism and leisure industry. Culture can be described as the way people do things or, as the way in which a group of people solves problems. According to Schein (1985), culture is complex and comprises different aspects, such as national, professional, organizational and personal culture. Cultures can play an important role in communication, especially in an environment where there are many people from different parts of the world. Within the relationship between language and culture, it is crucial to recognize when statements or expressions have a cultural bias. When people from different cultures come into contact, differences in their languages and cultural backgrounds can result in misunderstandings and breakdowns in communication. Biased statements can lead to conflicts (Dudley-Evan & St John, 1998). Cross-cultural awareness should be raised in order to communicate more effectively with foreign passengers. The classroom activities in REC training courses should place an emphasis on real life language which is relevant to the work of the flight attendants. Learners often focus their conscious attention on the actual items to be learnt (Littlewood 1984: 82). The tasks and learning activities should aim at providing the REC flight attendants with more opportunities to practice speaking English in real life context. It is also a necessity for the REC flight attendants to know about the cultures of different countries; what distinguishes them, their similarities and, their norms, customs and taboos. They should know how to speak clearly and politely to their passengers in English without sounding patronizing or offensive, thinking about how to make the language more explicit, and considering problems that might occur in cross-cultural communication could help raise cross-cultural awareness when dealing with foreign passengers. When people from different part of the world with different

cultures come into contact, differences in their languages and cultural backgrounds can result in misunderstandings and breakdowns in communication. A sensitivity to cultural issues and an understanding of our own and other's cultures and behaviors is important in the REC training course. The knowledge of cross-cultural communication is crucial for REC flight attendants since misunderstandings may lead to conflicts or, even, offenses. This aspect of knowledge, therefore, should be included in the REC training course.

## 2.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, as stated by St John and Dudley-Evans (1991), Robinson (1991), Graves (2000), needs assessment can be regarded as one of the crucial component of an ESP course. This present study is, thus, conducted in order to elicit the major language problems when using English during in-flight services. The importance of pronunciation should be raised in the REC training courses. Having reviewed the literature relevant to this study, the researcher shall now set out the methodology for my study.

# CHAPTER 3

## Research Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an explanation of the research design of the study. Included in the explanation are a restatement of the research questions, the description of the research context, the research population/theory and the method of data collection and method of analysis. This study is an investigation of the Executive flight attendants' needs of English. The following three research questions related to the REC at Thai Airways International will be explored in this study.

### 3.2 Restatement of the Research Questions

Three research questions are as follows:

- 1.What are the specific English language skills which the flight attendants expect to learn in the Royal Executive English Course for Flight Attendants (REC)?
- 2.What are the language difficulties concerning the functions of English which the flight attendants encounter while working?
- 3.What are the flight attendants' own observations on the Royal Executive English Course for Flight Attendants (REC) in terms of the course duration, the teaching content, or the teaching methodology.



### 3.3 Description of the Research Context

To ensure a degree of reliability in this research study, a design of two phases was conducted. The first phase constructed a quantitative study, which examined the leadership model intervention study. In the second phase, a qualitative study was constructed which examined the flight attendant profile. Both phases highlighted the benefits of the curriculum development for all crewmembers.

For the second phase, qualitative data from different sources was triangulated. Nunan (1988, 3), addresses that “Qualitative research assumes that all knowledge is relative, that there is a subjective element to all knowledge and researchers, and that holistic, ungeneralizable studies are justifiable.” Investigators in qualitative research are aware of their own biases and strive to capture the subjective reality of participants.

Therefore, this study used more than one technique for collecting data. Interviews, questionnaires, tape recording of the public announcements on flights were used to monitor and analyze the learners’ needs.

### 3.4 Construction and Development of the Questionnaire

In order to construct the questionnaire, firstly, related research and literature concerning needs analysis were used to limit the scope of the study. After that the researcher gathered background information regarding the language difficulties and problems that the flight attendants in Royal Executive Class had encountered during flights by interviewing them. By doing so, the researcher now had guidelines for the topics to be constructed in the questionnaire. The researcher also had experience with teaching English for flight attendants and had encountered some of the problems that the flight attendants had in the classroom. Therefore, the researcher constructed the questions based on real life experience in the classrooms.

Cohen and Morison (2000; 258) stated that “the questionnaire is a widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information, providing structured, often numerical data, being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher, and often being comparatively straightforward to analyze”. The data collected in this thesis were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively.

### 3.4.1 Components of the questionnaire

A survey questionnaire was constructed by an experienced surveyor at THAI. It is also modified from other researchers' questionnaires. It consists of 4 parts as follows:

- 1 The first part gives background information.
- 2 The second part consists of overview of English language use in different situations which are job-related. It also gives an overview of skills needed in language use.
- 3 The third part is about the overview of difficulties in language skills encountered when performing four skills of English language use (LSRW - listening, speaking, reading and writing).
- 4 The fourth part contains activities and materials that REC flight attendants suggest to be essential and useful in their training courses.

**Data Analysis:** The questionnaire is analyzed by means of a Likert scale questionnaire because of its simplicity, accuracy and reliability. The items were constructed in the manner that helped the target respondents understand and answer easily in order to make sure that “ the questionnaire must look easy, attractive, and interesting, rather than complicated unclear, forbidding and boring” (Cohen and Morison 2000: 258).

### **3.4.2 Preliminary Interviews**

To be able to design the questionnaire, a preliminary interview of some REC flight attendants who have at least one year work experience to obtain relevant information for the study. The REC flight attendants who were interviewed had to explain their difficulties and problems when making public announcements in English and using English to communicate with business class passengers. These interviews served as a primary survey of necessary information that was used as a guideline for designing and developing the questionnaire.

### **3.5 Description of the Research Population**

This study was limited to the current language problems and specific needs in terms of language functions and English usage which Business Class Thai Airways flight attendants who have been working for Thai Airways International Public Company Limited encountered. The subjects in this study were 95 Thai flight attendants. They work in Royal Executive Class or Business Class and fly to every destination on Domestic and Regional routes in Airbus 300-600,330 and Boeing 777, 747 aircrafts. Therefore, these subjects interact with business travelers in Royal Executive Class. The results from this survey may not be generalized to all flight attendants from Thai Airways.

These flight attendants were of the AHR ( Air Hostess Royal Executive class) ranking. The subjects included female cabin attendants who speak Thai as their native language. Their minimum educational level was a bachelor degree. They have different educational backgrounds. They have graduated from different fields of study from various educational institutes. Therefore, they are equipped with different levels of

English proficiency. Several of them have studied abroad while some have studied at Thai universities. They have different work backgrounds also. Some of them have worked elsewhere before joining Thai Airways as flight attendants, while some have not.

### **3.6 Method of Data Collection**

In this research, questionnaire, interview and recording public announcements from the REC flight attendants were the method of gathering data concerning the language problems and specific needs for the flights attendants. The REC flights attendants were interviewed and asked to respond to questionnaires. The use of questionnaires produced a large amount of information about many different issues such as communication difficulties, preferred learning styles, preferred classroom activities, attitudes and beliefs (Richards, 2001). In this particular research context, questionnaires were initially used to elicit information about flight attendants' attitudes towards the course, and what they wanted to learn in this REC English course. Moreover, informal discussion allowed interviewees to convey their ideas and thoughts spontaneously.

#### **Tape Recording**

A tape recorder was used for 55 flight attendants to record their voices when they make public announcements. Due to the company rules and regulations, tape recording on flights is not allowed. The researcher therefore had to provide the script and asked the flight attendants to make public announcement like they do on board the plane. The researcher then analyzed their problematic sounds, intonation, words stress speed and pauses. It helps the researcher to have a better comprehension of what is

going on during their public announcement on flights. The researcher also examined the recorded public announcement to find out their English problems and find ways to help them to overcome those problems.

### **Interview**

An *oral interview* is another instrument that has also been widely used as a research tool in applied linguistics. Interviews can be characterized in terms of their degree of formality which can then be categorized into three broad types: structured, unstructured and semi-structured interviews. The researcher selected semi-structured interview in this thesis because this type of interview is the most popular format for interviews. It combined a certain degree of control and certain degree of freedom over the development of the interview. Most of the questions are open-ended so the interviewees can give detailed responses or comments on topics or issues in the interview.

Interviewing the flight attendants who have worked in REC setting enabled the researcher to find out specific problems which they have encountered while working. The result will also benefit the course designer to gain insights into the learners' current English proficiency, their specific weaknesses and strengths in the four skills.

### **Questionnaire**

In this particular research context, questionnaires are initially used to elicit information about flight attendants' attitudes towards this course, and what they want to learn in this English course. The purposive random sampling method is used in this study. The subjects were all 30 females REC flight attendants. The content of the questionnaire is

crucial for the course designer because it has a direct influence on whether the real needs can be identified. Questionnaires are preferable to interviews because learners are notoriously vague about what they hope to learn from the course (Nunan 1992). Moreover, most of the items in the questionnaires were closed questions.

The questions in the questionnaire were divided into five different parts, covering the following aspects.

Part 1: The questions about background information of the respondents' were put in this section through Yes/No questions, fill-in the blank questions and multiple choice questions.

Part 2: It consists of overview of English language use in different situations which are job-related. It also gave overview of skills needed in language use.

Part 3: The questions are about the overview of difficulties in language skills encountered when performing four skills of English language use (LSRW – listening, speaking, reading and writing).

Part 4: This part will be the activities and materials that REC flight attendants suggest to be essential and useful in their training courses.

### **3.7 Pilot questionnaire.**

The pilot questionnaire was distributed to 10 REC flight attendants who had been working for Thai Airways for a minimum of four years and been working in REC class for at least one year. These ten subjects were volunteers for the pilot questionnaire. They were asked to comment on the content of the questionnaire and to give suggestions regarding questions that should be included in the questionnaire and irrelevant information or statements that should be excluded to make questionnaire as



focused as possible. They were also encouraged to identify any ambiguous statements which they found while doing the questionnaire. The total time used to complete the questionnaire in this pilot study was about 25 minutes. The researcher timed the ten participants when doing their questionnaires. If it took too long to complete the questionnaire, the researchers would adjust the number of the questions and readjust the questionnaire. The questionnaire was, then, revised and improved based on comments and suggestions of the subjects in order to create an effective questionnaire.

This study was, therefore, to conduct the effectiveness of the research instrument employed in this survey. The aim was to eliminate ambiguities in the language used in the questionnaire to prevent the participants from misunderstanding or misinterpreting the instructions or questions in the questionnaire. In order to produce the final version of the questionnaire, the researcher made sure that unclear wording was eliminated and all the questions were clear and could gather the required data effectively. A semi-structured interview was employed as a check up to ascertain the occurrence of the language problems of the REC flight attendants. The interview was conducted individually with ten interviewees, the researcher then was able to ask each participant their problems in details. In addition, the researcher was able to obtain other important information regarding the language problems and their needs that had not been covered in the questionnaire.

### 3.8 Method of Analysis

This study employed a blend of qualitative and quantitative approaches to analyze the questionnaires, interviews and tape recordings. Thus, this research will survey the needs of THAI REC flight attendants in their English language use in order to know their lacks, wants and needs. On the other hand, an analysis into the learning needs will clarify the teaching activities that the learners will enjoy and participate in. In short, it is hoped that a consideration of the target needs will throw light on the specification of the contents for the prospective translation syllabus while an assessment on the learning needs will help the syllabus designer work out the appropriate teaching methods. This information will be helpful in conducting a more effective language courses for them. A questionnaire administered to 30 REC flight attendants who had been working in the Royal Executive Class in THAI for at least one year. The closed items in the questionnaire were analyzed quantitatively. The researcher conducted a semi-structured interview with at least 10 respondents. The interviews will be recorded with the interviewees' permission. The researcher hopes that the findings of the study will be useful to improve the current status of REC at Thai Airways.

## Chapter Four

### Data Analysis

This chapter presents the data of the study in following the three research questions stated in Chapter1. The answer for each research question is based on the data statistical analysis of the responses obtained from the returned questionnaires, interviews and public announcement tape recordings from REC flight attendants.

#### 4.1 Analysis of needs perceived by REC flight attendants.

This section presents and discusses the responses to questionnaire deal with respondents' background information. The first part of the questionnaire asked the subjects who were 30 Thai Airways female flight attendants about their age, educational background, English background and working experience. The results are shown in the following tables.

Findings

Part 1

4.1.1 REC flight attendant biodata

REC flight attendants’ biodata includes the information about their learning experiences and English proficiency. The knowledge of biodata is of great importance for the study since it helps to clearly define the target subjects and certify that they qualified enough to answer the questionnaire. The 30 participants consist of 30 females.

Table 1: Flight attendants’ background information (age)

Age	REC Flight Attendants (female)	%
23-25	2	6
26-30	15	50
31-35	12	40
Over35	1	3

Regarding the subjects’ age, half of them (50%) are between 20 to 30 years old. However, only 3% of the subjects were over 35 years old. They are all female flight attendants and the reason is because there were only 120 male applicants who qualified for Thai Airways flight attendant positions, whereas there were approximately 500 female applicants who passed the examination and interview processes last year. The number of female flight attendants was nearly three times greater than male cabin attendants. Furthermore, only female flight attendants who are the subjects of this study

are allowed to do public announcements on flights. The age of female REC flight attendants is under 30 years old while average years of working experience and years of English study are 5 years and 7 years, respectively. The reason is that one of the requirements for applicants is age. The company has set the maximum age for female applicants at 26, and, for male applicants at 28 years of age.

**Table 2: The respondents’ educational background (faculties)**

Faculties	Numbers of respondents	%
Arts (English)	13	43
Education	4	13
Business Administration	4	13
Economics	2	6
Communication Arts	3	10
Engineers	1	3
Political science	2	6
Law	1	3

The results indicate that the REC Thai Airways flight attendants who were the subjects of this study graduated with Bachelor’s degree from various fields studies. The majority of the respondents (43%) majored in English. The second field which the respondents studied, were Education and Business Administration, which accounted for 13% each. Another 10% of the respondents studied in the faculty of Communication Arts, whereas the final 6% and 3% studied in the faculty of Political Science, Engineers and Law. The major field of study which the flight attendants studied was English. Twenty seven of the participants graduated with a Bachelor degree (90%), Three of them with Master Degree (10%). Thirteen of them studied in English or Business English. Since English was their major, these flight attendants may have experienced

different problems than the respondents who had not studied this major. However, it can also imply that though English was their major, language problems can still occur.

#### 4.1.2 Needs for English language use in different situations

**Table 3 Overview of the needs of English language use in different situations and skills needed for REC flight attendants.**

Need of English in different situations	Strongly agree	Agree	Moderate	Disagree	Strongly disagree	% Strongly agree and agree
Welcoming/Greeting/ farewell	26	2	2			93
Offering help	20	4	5	1		80
Denying to help	17	12	1			96
Asking for help	14	13	3			90
Asking for permission	19	7	4			86
Thanking	21	5	4			86
Responding to thank	20	3	7			76
Apologizing	23	4	3			90
Accepting an apology	24	4	2			93
Give suggestions to Passengers	23	4	3			90
<u>Role of English in your career</u>	30					100

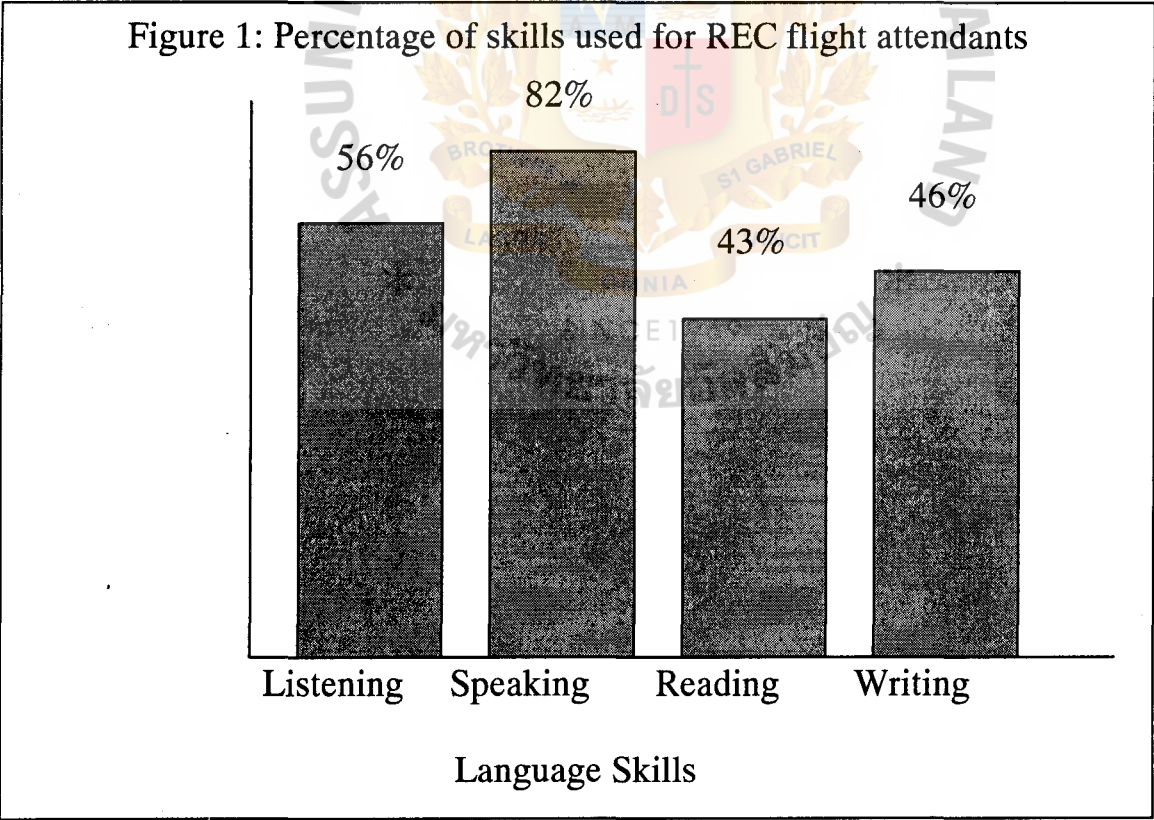
The results show that REC flight attendants strongly agree and agree that English is important to their career (100%). They have to use English every day as a medium to communicate with passengers from all over the world. Welcoming/ greetings/ saying goodbye are the language used the most when performing duty, thanking (93%). Initially, under boarding and welcoming passengers, the flight attendants experienced the most trouble in a situation when the passengers had duplicate boarding passes. It is the responsibility of the flight attendants to solve this problem. They had to ask for the boarding passes and explain to the passengers that they would check the correct seat number for each passenger from the ground staff at



the check in counter. There seem to be many activities involved in solving this kind of problem and some passengers are not easy to deal with. The passengers can easily get upset if they do not get their seats right away. Offering help (80%), apologizing (90%) and accepting an apology (93%) are frequently used. Denying to help passengers (96%) is the most difficult situation for REC flight attendants. Business class passengers may ask them to put heavy baggage on the overhead bins and they find that it is difficult to say no politely in English to business class passengers. According to the table moderate often signifies not having an opinion on something and that is the reason why the research did not include moderate in the summary.

Part2

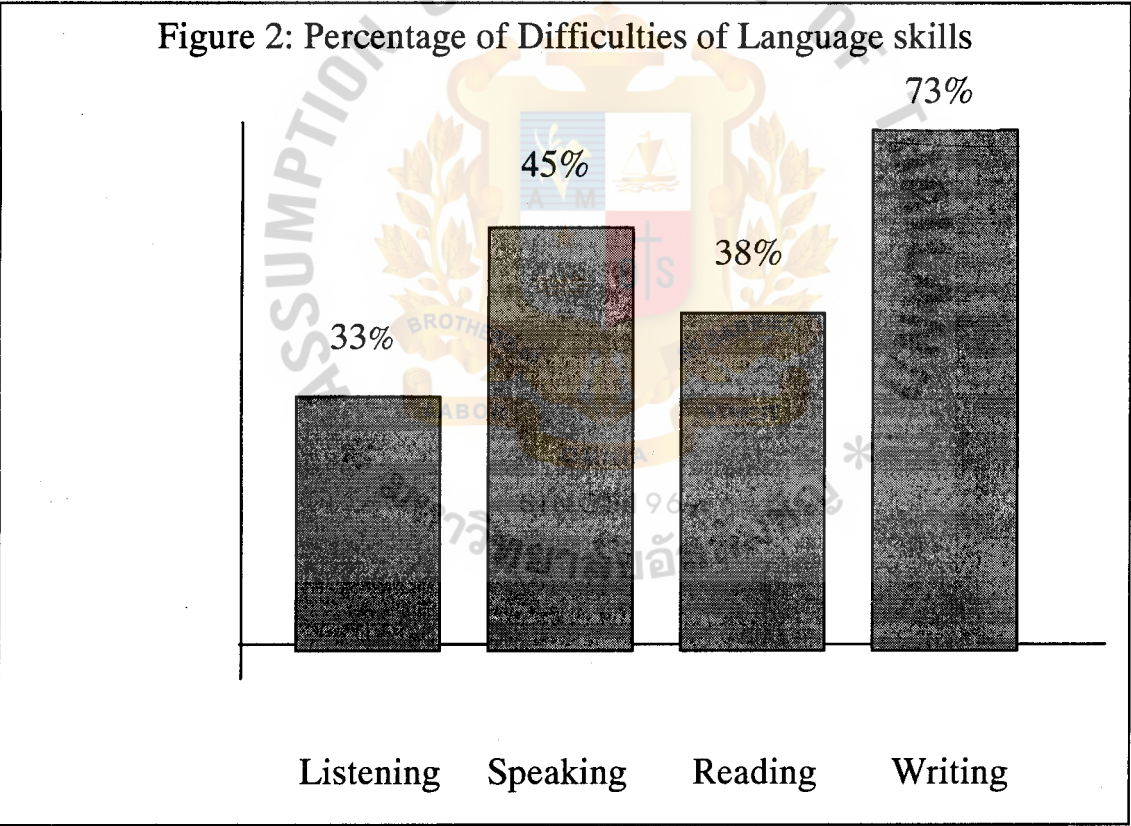
Figure 1: Language skills used in REC class



From Figure 1, 82% of REC flight attendants used speaking skill the most followed by listening (56%), writing (46%) and reading (43%).On average, all four

English skills are needed. When the respondents were asked about their English proficiency based on the four language skills, the result shows that speaking was the most important language skill that was given the highest priority by the respondents as the most essential language skill for REC flight attendants. More than half of them stated that they were good at speaking and listening. These respondents used English to communicate during flights, indicates that most of the REC flight attendants speak and listen to English on every flight.

Figure 2: Difficulties in using English skills



From figure 2, REC flight attendants agree that they seem to have most difficulty in writing skill (73%), followed closely by speaking (45%) and listening skills (33%). Their difficulties in speaking and reading are not a major issue. Listening skills is claimed to be the least difficult even though their job had to deal with passengers from



all over the world. The writing skill may be the most difficult because they often have to write reports to describe about unusual incidents that might occur during their flights and send to the head office. They have to write their reports in English only.

Part 3

Table 4: Details of REC flight attendants listening skills difficulties

Causes of listening difficulty	Strongly agree	Agree	Moderate	Disagree	Strongly disagree	% Strongly agree and agree
Speed; too fast	13	6	11			63
Varieties of accents	24	4	2			93
Poor intelligibility of passengers	15	4	5	6		96
Idioms, slang, technical terms	22	3	5			83
Limit stock of vocabularies	19	6	4	1		83
Unfamiliar topics	23	3	4			86

The results show that most difficulty in listening skills is caused by the varieties of accents from the passengers (93%) and poor intelligibility of passengers (96%). The respondents had the most trouble using English when they had to listen and communicate with passengers whose accents were unfamiliar or else some passengers who are not native of English speak poor English. Since Thai Airways flies to almost every continent, there are always a number of different nationalities on board. When the respondents fly to Australia, for example, the Australian passengers speak with an Australian accent or sometimes use Australian slang or idiom. The respondents who have never heard an Australian-English accent before might be unfamiliar with the accent and might not understand what the passengers say. The respondents agreed that passenger's accents can cause communication problems. According to the table, a limit



stock of vocabulary is also another issue (83%). The respondents stated that they always use the same words when speaking to passengers and they felt that this was not professional. They should be able to use variety of words and phrases when communicate with their passengers in Business class, especially when they could not think of a word and could not express themselves. Other causes (83%) are from passengers use idioms/ slang/ technical terms to communicate. For example if an Australian passenger asks for “lemonade” he means “sprite”. Therefore, flight attendants who have never flown to Australia before will not be able to understand. The technical terms and vocabulary regarding food (ingredients, cooking terms, and cooking processes), diseases (symptoms and medicine), drink (liquor and mixtures) and politics are some of the problem which the respondents have encountered while working. The respondents also revealed that they did not understand or were unable to use and explain technical terms concerning the above fields.

**Table 5: details of REC flight attendants speaking skill difficulty**

Causes of speaking skill difficulty	Strongly agree	Agree	Moderate	Disagree	Strongly disagree	% Strongly agree and agree
Limit stock of vocabularies	23	4	3			90
Nervousness when speaking	14	5	5	6		96
Inability to make yourself understood	21	6	2	1		90
Unfamiliar topics	19	9	2			93
Lack of confidence with pronunciation	24	4	2			93

The result shows that REC flight attendants seem to have difficulty with their speaking when they cannot think of appropriate words to convey the exact meaning (90%). They seem to need a communicative strategy course. They need to repeat their



sentences again to make themselves being understood (90%). They also agree that they are not sure about their pronunciation on particular words (93%). Nervousness is one of the reasons which can cause problems when they speak to passengers. They may not be able say the right things and response to passengers requests when they are nervous. (96%). Unfamiliar topic is another area of difficulty (93%). They had trouble using English or were unable to think of the words to express their ideas when passengers wanted to talk about the topic that they were not familiar with.

**Table 6: Details of REC flight attendants’ reading difficulty**

Causes of reading skill difficulty	Strongly agree	Agree	Moderate	Disagree	Strongly disagree	% Strongly agree and agree
Unable to catch the main idea	16	9	5			83
Inability to understand the meaning of the key words of the passage	13	8	9			70
Mixing up parts of speech; subject, verb, objective, preposition, relative clause, etc.	8	4	5	12	1	40
Too much time-consumption to get the main idea	24	4	2			93

The result of table 6 show that REC flight attendants seems to have some difficulties in catching the main idea (83%) or not able to understand the meaning of the key words of the passage (70%), which causes longer time-consumption in reading (93%). Passengers often asked for information from in-flight entertainment guidebook from REC flight attendants. Therefore, they should be able to read articles quickly and give correct information to their passengers. Sometimes the flight attendants have to



read entry documents when the passengers ask for clarification if they do not understand. Other situations include reading texts or in-flight magazines when passengers ask for information or explanations that can be found in those reading material. Lastly, 40% of the REC flight attendants have problems with mixing up parts of speech; subject, verb, objective, preposition, relative clause when they read.

Table 7: Details of REC flight attendants’ writing difficulty

Causes of writing skill difficulty	Strongly agree	Agree	Moderate	Disagree	Strongly disagree	% Strongly agree and agree
Failing to choose an appropriate words to use when writing	18	8	4			86
Difficulty to put parts of speech in a correct order	11	6	11	2		56
Incorrect use of preposition and conjunction	6	8	12	4		46
Incorrect use of active / passive voice	8	10	7	5		60
Incorrect use of tense	19	8	3			90

Table 7 shows that REC flight attendants’ have difficulties in choosing suitable words to use in their report (86%). The REC flight attendants often have to write short reports in the cabin log book to report the unserviceable items on flights. They find it difficult to use appropriate words to write in their reports. They sometimes had to write job-related documents in English and writing in correct tenses can be difficult (90%). Incorrect use of preposition and / or conjunction (46%), incorrect use of active and passive voice (60%) and putting parts of speech in a correct order (56%). They often have to write reports to describe unusual incidents that occurred during their flight and sent to the head office. In conclusion, there are many factors that may influence the ability of each respondent to use language, such as educational background, English



education and their attitudes towards the language. These factors, as a consequence, could also affect the language difficulties which the respondents encountered while working. This study, however, did not aim to investigate the degree of influence these factors have on using English.

**Part 4: Changes in activities and materials suggested by REC flight attendants in their training courses.**

Activities and materials in English suggested by REC flight attendants in their training courses.	N = 30	%
Authentic news/ documentary films	12	40
Listening to radio broadcasting	13	42
Listening to real-life conversation	21	69
Practice reading newspapers/ company's report	17	57
Grammar exercises	18	59
Role-play, simulated situation	18	59
Practicing pronunciation; words, sentences	22	75
English Language Laboratory	19	62
Practicing announcement; emergency case, call for a doctor on board, property lost and found, delay of the aircraft, etc.	27	90
Practicing report writing in cabin log book; defected equipments, passenger sickness, unruly passenger case.	25	82

**Comments:** Need of a guidebook consists of correct patterns and appropriate language use in several setting of situations, both for speaking and writing a report.

Table above shows that the majority of REC flight attendants (90%) wanted to practice announcements; emergency case, call for a doctor on board, property lost and found and delay of the aircraft in the REC course. The reason could be because their main responsibility is to make public announcement on their flights and many of them are not confident when reading the announcement. They also wanted to practice on report writing in the classroom. 82% of the REC flight attendants want to practice writing because writing is essential for REC in-flight services. Most of the time, they have to assist passengers who cannot read or write English. The REC flight attendants have to fill in entry documents for passengers. Additionally, passengers sometimes ask for information and the flight attendants to write it down for them. 69% of the respondents suggested real-life conversation should be taught in the REC training course as well. This includes both social English and everyday conversation. Reading was perceived by 57% of the respondents. Sometimes the REC flight attendants have to read entry documents when the passengers ask for clarification if they do not understand. Other situations include reading company's text or reports when passengers ask for information or explanations that can be found in those reading materials. 59% of the respondents suggested that grammar exercises should be emphasized in the training course. These respondents should be able to communicate with passengers fluently so that the services flowed smoothly without any language barriers.

#### **4.2 The Flight Attendants' observations on the REC English course.**

The questions presented in this part aim to answer research question, "What are the flight attendants' observations and their suggestions for the Royal Executive English Course for Flight Attendants (REC) in terms of the teaching content, or the teaching methodology?" First part is the respondents' opinions about the

REC course in terms of the necessity of the course. The respondents were asked to give comments or suggestions about improving the course. According to the 30 returned questionnaires, 28 respondents answered this question. The finding can be summarized as follows:

1. Twelve respondents would like to practice their pronunciation. They suggested that there should be more laboratory practice. The instructor should provide CD or cassette tapes of public announcement or job related conversations and dialogues so that the flight attendants can listen on their own and practice. In order to improve their English proficiency, they think the REC flight attendants should be able to speak and read public announcement fluently using correct pronunciation. Moreover, they said that the course should focus on passenger's accents. The flight attendants should be aware of phonological differences between English and Thai language, and actively engaged with exercises to produce basic verbal structures in English accurately and intelligibly, whereas their instructors will guide and facilitate their learning and help them improve the ability to create clear and correct English sounds with less Thai interferences.

2. Ten respondents suggested *role-plays* should be provided for the participants to practice dealing with various in-flight situations using English. The situation on each flight is varied so they would like to practice how to deal with different situations on the flights. They would like to be able to use English that appropriate for each situation in order to communicate with business class passengers effectively. Also, they would like practice discussing the actual in-flight services and problems in English. Formal language and polite service language should be taught in the course. English should be used as a medium of communication for the REC course so that the participants would have more opportunity to practice speaking.

3. Four of them revealed that they would like to attend English courses regularly. They would like to have the opportunity to improve their English and to practice English. One of the flight attendants suggested that Language department is responsible for language training should provide regular English courses that can cover all four skills.

4. The instructors who teach the courses should be both Thai and foreign instructors. They want to be more familiar with foreign accents. English speakers should teach speaking and listening classes so that the flight attendants can recognize the correct English example. This item was mentioned by two flight attendants.

5. Three of the flight attendants suggested that English materials such as an English manual about using polite and appropriate English, an English newsletter, and leaflets about English usage and vocabulary should be published and distributed to the flight attendants. The content of the materials mentioned above should cover the following aspects: how to deal with various in-flight problems and polite language, how to pronounce job-related words correctly. The flight attendants can use these materials as guidelines for appropriate and polite language.

#### **4.3 Roles of English courses offered at Language and Culture Institute.**

The two questions in the interviews attempts to ascertain the importance of English courses offered at the Language and Culture Institute. Further, it aims at probing for in-depth information about the purposes for which the flight attendants need to learn at the Language and Culture Institute. Relevant information drawn from the interviews is showcased in Table 4.3.1a and 4.3.1b as follows.

**Table 4.3.1a: The role of English courses offered at Language and Culture Institute**

<b>Question 1: How important are English courses offered at Language and Culture Institute?</b>	
CA1	I think that English courses is important and necessary to me. The teachers can teach us English and tips and techniques how to talk and deal with passenger. So we can talk with passengers easier then before and improve our English at the same time in class.
CA2	I need to tell you that my English is not all that good but my job requires me to use English to communicate with passengers on my flights at all time. I think that it is important to me to improve my English and I like Role Play activity in the class room, it help me with what kind of language I can or cannot talk to passengers. And I don't sleepy when I do role play in the classroom. My writing is not so good. May be I should practice in English as well.
CA3	I believe English courses give for flight attendants are absolutely important. I like it. For example, through role play practices, participants can deepen their understanding of two concerned languages and cultures. We can practice more.
CA4	I was introduced to a better understanding of formal language and how to solve problems on the flight.
CA5	I think English courses can help us to fulfill our job effectively. I can certainly perform well and speak English with confidence. The course should be longer.
CA6	I have to say that more time should be devoted to English courses. Two or three days course is really too short for me. More text types should also be used in the classroom. Some teachers use boring activity in class.
CA7	My TOEIC score is quite good. I get nearly 800. But the skills an knowledge that I got from English courses are very useful. I was taught how to cope with various situations on flights. So there are many new things to be learnt from the English course.
CA8	I like to practice more on the announcement; emergency case, call for a doctor on board, property lost and found, delay of the aircraft, etc. My major problems is when I have to communicate with non- English like Indian or Singaporean, I find it difficult to understand them. The course gave me tips how to deal with the problems.
CA9	I learn a lot from the courses offered at Language and Culture Institute. The methodology using in the English courses is very easy to understand and fun to learn But some teachers are boring. They make class not fun.
CA10	The course should focus more on practicing report writing in cabin log book; defected equipments, passenger sickness, unruly passenger cases because we have to write a lot of reports for the company. However, it helps me to handle passenger's problems because I have difficulties saying things in English.



From the responses given in Table 4.3.1a, it is clear that REC flight attendants attach great importance to the English courses offered at Language and Culture Institute. Most of them were satisfied with the course. The REC flight attendants who would like to take a longer course may have low English proficiency. Or, these REC flight attendants may recognize the importance of English and would like to study job-related language more extensively so that they would be able to use English in a professional manner at manner at work. They are aware of contributions that the courses make to their job on flights. It is interesting to note that most of the respondents believe that problem solving techniques that they acquired in the English courses have greatly assisted them to deal with problems which they have to face during work. Two of them also added that they want to practice more writing during the English training course. Therefore, the findings indicate that ESP coursed offering for flight attendants through role plays simulations in the classroom will enable the participants to use English in their workplace. The second interview question was based on the major areas of difficulties that REC flight attendants have while working.



**Table 4.3.1b Language difficulties when flight attendants work in REC class.**

<b>Question 2: What kind of language difficulties you have when working in REC class?</b>	
CA1	When I listen to passengers from Australia or Singapore, It is difficult for me to understand them. So I always have to ask them to repeat what they say to make sure that I understand the passengers correctly. I think they get annoyed if we do not get them.
CA2	Sometimes when I want to explain the passengers something, the words do not come out right or else I just cannot think of the vocabulary. I know exactly how to say it in Thai but not in English. I get nervous and lost confidence if passengers do not understand me. For example, If passengers ask me questions about how to get the visa on arrival at the Airport Immigration or custom allowance.
CA3	When I talk to non-English speaking passengers. I have difficulties communicating with them. I often have to use body language to help me get through. When I talk to Indian passengers , I find it extremely difficult to understand their English.
CA4	I need to have a better understanding of formal language when talking to business class passengers. Last time, I did not know how to address an Ambassador on my flights. Another problem will be passengers' accents. I have great difficulty understand Indian passengers.
CA5	I want to be able to communicate in English effectively but I am not confident with my pronunciation. For example, when I have to ask passengers for their meal choices, I have difficulty to pronounce the coking terms. I am not confident to do public announcement on board as well.
CA6	My difficulty is when passengers ask me detailed or complicated information about the topics that I am not familiar with. I also find it difficult to understand Korean and Chinese passengers speak English. Writing cabin report is sometime difficult.
CA7	I am not able to explain or understand technical terms concerning food, drinks, diseases or politics. I often get nervous when passengers want to have serious conversation with me. I would rather keep the conversation short because I am not good in English.
CA8	When I was assigned to do the announcement on the flights, I often get nervous because some countries the announcement can be very long and full of difficult words. Another major problem is when I have communicate with non- English like Indian or Singaporean, I find it difficult to understand them.
CA9	I have many problems with English. First of all is public announcement, I am not confident with my pronunciation. Second is when I speak with passengers and if they do not understand me, I then will loose my confidence. Lastly, I have difficulties understanding passengers from India, Australia, Korea and Chinese.
CA10	My problem is when I have to do report writing in cabin log book and when I have to handle passenger's problems in English because I have difficulties saying things in English. I often cannot find the appropriate words or phrases to say to passengers.

Every interviewee agreed that passengers' accents can cause communication problems. Most of the interviewees agreed that they had problems when communicating with non-English speaking passengers, using inappropriate or impolite language, and using incorrect pronunciation and unclear accents. Most of them have trouble using English when they had to listen and communicate with passengers whose accents were unfamiliar and can cause communication problems. Seventy percent of the interviewees agreed that problems also occurred when they did not understand or were unable to use and explain specialized vocabulary concerning food, drinks and cooking terms. The technical terms and vocabulary regarding food (ingredients, cooking terms, and cooking processes), diseases (symptoms and medicine), drink (liquor and mixtures) and politics are some of the problem which the respondents have encountered while working.

Sixty percent of the interviewees agreed that they had problems when the passengers asked information about ticketing, connecting flights, VAT refunds and ground services. The interviewees sometimes were unable to give detailed explanations to passengers due to limit stock of vocabulary. Limit vocabulary is also another main issue which was mentioned in the questionnaire. They are not able to use a variety of words and phrases when communicating with their passengers in Business class, especially when they could not think of a word and could not express themselves. The findings from the interviews, therefore, show that the areas of language difficulties mentioned in returned questionnaires are common problems which REC flight attendants actually experience while working.

#### 4.4 Public announcement analysis

The findings in this section were obtained from flight attendants' public announcements. The researcher asked 55 REC flight attendants to read the public announcement just like they do on their flights and then analyzed their pronunciation problems. The findings in the previous section show that most of the REC flight attendants want to improve their speaking skills. They are aware that they need to acquire clear and accurate pronunciation so that they can communicate and make the public announcements effectively. The flight attendants' own accent and pronunciation is another major area of difficulty when they make public announcement on the flights. Sometimes the flight attendants could not correctly pronounce words that they have to use quite often in the public announcements. Consequently, the passengers could not understand what the flight attendants had announced. In other cases, the flight attendants read the announcements too fast and also pronounced some words with the incorrect stress. Many passengers reported to the company directly that they have difficulties understanding the public announcements on the flights. In order to develop pronunciation skills and overcome some of the pronunciation problems when non-native speakers speak English, the researcher analyzed the REC flight attendants' public announcements based on the following components: consonants, vowels, word stress, sentence stress, intonation, rhythm and linking and speed and pausing.

**Table 4.4.1 Analyze REC flights attendants public announcement**

<b>Public announcement by REC flight attendants in their training courses.</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Weak</b>	<b>Very weak</b>	<b>Percentage of a good level of English proficiency N=55</b>
Non-shared sounds	27	14	9		49
Initial and final sound	32	21	2		58
Vowel sounds	26	23	6		47
Cluster sounds	23	22	10		41
Word Stress	13	24	15	3	23
Intonation	15	26	12	2	27
Rhythm and linking	21	21	13		38
Pausing and Speed	45	10			81
Total fluency	30	12	13		54

Pronunciation is the area of language learning most resistant to change or improvement. REC flight attendants have probably already developed over a number of years speech habits which have fossilized and become progressively harder to unlearn or change without serious and concerted effort. This problem is often compounded by their own lack of awareness of communication and pronunciation problems.

They may focus on the inability to differentiate /l/ from /r/ or /p/ from/b/ it is in fact much more likely that their overall patterns of intonation, rhythm, and stress are the real culprits in their communication difficulties. These problems affect not only their own speaking skills, but also affect the comprehension of native speakers.

### **Non-Shared sounds**

Knowing a language means knowing what sounds are in that language, and what sounds are not. There are certain sounds in the English language that do not exist in the Thai language. These sounds thus become a problem for most Thais when learning English as a second language. The usage of the consonants /l/ and /r/, both in the initial and final positions, are often not clear. Many of the flight attendants can not differentiate /l/ and /r/ so they tend to mix up the two sounds. (49%) For example, saying 'alive' instead of 'arrive'. The 'th' sound in 'three' in English is pronounced as 'tree' because there is no 'th' sound in Thai.

### **Vowel, initial and final sounds**

The results have shown in REC flight attendants' public announcement that there are many mistakes in consonant level both initial and final positions (58%). When pronouncing voiced consonants such as /v/ as in 'life vest' is not clear, it sounds like they said 'life west'. Being used to all the rules of the Thai language, Thai flight attendants normally have the tendency to apply Thai language rules to the English language. Therefore, when saying an English word ending in letter 'l', the REC flight attendants have a tendency to change it to the 'n' sound, for example, 'central'.



They also have to concentrate on the final sound. They often drop the /s/ in plural words. It is a common problem amongst the Thai flight attendants because in Thai, they do not have to pronounce the final sounds. Therefore, in the announcement 34 flight attendants read “seat bell” instead of “seat belt” and “upride” instead of “upright”. The important quality for an announcer and comprehensible pronunciation is they must have clear voice.

### Cluster sounds

Cluster sound is another weak area in the public announcements (41%), many words are uttered wrongly such as “travel”, “declaration”, “pleasure”, “armrest” and “pressure”. They tend to skip the cluster sound. A consonant cluster occurs when two or more consonant sounds come together. For example, the word “*spell*” begins with the consonant cluster /sp/ and the word “*must*” ends with the consonant cluster /st/ and each sound should be pronounced.

### Word stress

One of the characteristics of a poor announcer is pronouncing an unstressed syllable. When learning Thai, students are taught to stress and enunciate on every syllable in order to have clear pronunciation in Thai but students learning English should keep in mind that if they want to be better understood, they must pronounce the stressed syllables clearly and completely and obscure all the unstressed syllables. The analysis showed that REC flight attendants weakest area when reading public announcements was word stress. There were only 23% of the REC flight attendants who did not have problems with word stress. They definitely need more practice on word stress, as it can create the confusion in the listener especially when the REC flight



attendants making public announcements. Many of the REC flight attendants frequently make mistakes on stress placements. Such as words like “continuing”, “electronic”, “injury”, “allowance” and “automatically”. That means some words are stressed incorrectly. Many of them wrongly pronounced the word ‘passengers’ which must be stressed at the first syllable by stressing the second syllable instead. They have been mispronouncing words for a long period of time. So it is very difficult to get them to pronounce each word correctly. Intonation is something that most of them have never been taught before when they study English. So the result is most of the announcements sound really monotonous. However, if they are aware of the problems and able to do self correction, it will be beneficial for them. Some of them speak a little bit fast, however it is still comprehensible but when they do their announcements on flights, they must slow down their speed. They tend to read the announcements too fast when they perform their duties during flights out of habit.

### Intonation

When REC flight attendants read the English announcement, they tend to read every word on the same note only 27% of them had correct intonation when reading the announcement. There is a change in pitch, which goes by the nature of intonation. It’s a way of expressing our attitude at the moment of speaking to the situation we are in, or to what we are talking about or to our listener. The intonation is necessary to convey the message correctly especially when reading public announcement. For example, when the flight attendants make announcement on board, they must do it with the correct intonation otherwise it can cause confusion to the passengers.

### Common Pronunciation Problems:

1. When the voice may stay level when it should rise or fall. This would make them sound bored or uninterested. It may even confuse the passengers into thinking they didn't finish the sentence.

Example: "We are looking forward to see you again" ↗ (rising tone).

2. When their voice might rise when it should fall. This would change a declarative statement into a question. It may make them sound doubtful or annoyed.

Compare: We are now parked at gate number fifty three? ↗ (rising tone)

We are now parked at gate number fifty three. ↘ (falling tone)

This shows how important intonation is in English. Presenting the right tone of voice to the sentence will convey the intended meaning without having to use extra wordings. Understanding it is equally important. To improve one's understanding and usage of the desired language is to be exposed to the natives. If the flight attendants are constantly hearing usages of the language, obviously with all the aspects of pronunciation intact, he/she will eventually be able to understand English with intonation, stress, and linkages. Having understood and gotten used to this notion, they should also put it into practice so what is learnt will be used and not forgotten.

### **Pausing and Speed**

81% of the Flight attendants did not have difficulty with pausing and speed. How fast a person speaks in a conversation is determined by many circumstances: who the speaker is speaking to, how formal or informal the situation is, and how well the listener knows about the topic being discussed. On flights the REC flight attendants

tend to read much faster than when they are asked to read for this research. The reason could be that when they work on flights, they must read the announcements quickly and try to get back to their work as fast as possible so that they do not have a chance to monitor their speed during making public announcements. They often rush and read the announcement too fast. This sometimes causes difficulties for passengers. In public announcements, the message needs to be conveyed precisely; therefore, the message should be read slowly and clearly. The announcers should cut the speed down of their normal speed. Therefore, REC flight attendants should monitor themselves whether they read too fast or too slow. Therefore, they have to keep in mind of their speed and make appropriate pauses when they have to make public announcements. The passengers will not be able to understand and follow if they read too fast. Furthermore, they can also be too slow and bore the passengers because passengers will lose interest in the message being delivered.

### **Rhythm and Linkage**

The combination of word stress and sentence stress creates rhythm which is the beat pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables. When a speaker who does not have rhythm when speaking; the listener may be confused and misinterpret the message. As music has its rhythm, so has English the timing of beats. Therefore, a speaker should be aware of the rhythm and timing of stress in an utterance because English is a stress-timed language; unlike Thai, Japanese, French, Spanish and many other languages which are syllable-timed. The stress-timed nature of English means that the vowels and syllables are reduced when pronounced in order to harmonize with the rhythm of the sentence. 38% of the REC flight attendants have rhythm and linking when reading public announcement. Native speakers pronounce phrases and sentences as one smooth

sound instead of a series of separate words. To do this, speakers blend words together and sounds should be frequently reduced or omitted. The amount of linkage in a person's speech depends on the formality of the conversation. The less formal conversation, the more linkage is used.

#### 4.5 Summery of the main findings

The data on the English of REC flight attendants at THAI shows their lacks and what they want to be able to achieve. It provides us with the guideline for the content and material which will be useful for their training courses. So REC flight attendants can increase their self-confidence when using their English and can communicate with all the customers efficiently. However, 54% of the flight attendants have fluency when reading the announcement which is shown that the REC flight attendants have fluency in English but they must have also accuracy when making announcement. According to public announcement analysis, the flight attendants wrongly pronounce the word, '*passengers*', '*penalty*', '*injury*' and '*officer*' which must place the stress on the first syllable by stressing on the second syllable instead. And even, they get corrected, they tend to forget easily and make the same mistake again. Another factor that may influence pronunciation is the flight time. The REC flight attendants who work on short flights must work quickly so that they do not have a chance to monitor their pronunciation during making public announcement. They might rush and read the announcement too fast so that they ignore the correct stress. The influence of Thai on pronunciation can be regarded as one of the major language problems which the flight attendants have encountered while reading public announcement. For example, when they fly Domestic flight, the shortest flying time can be only thirty five minutes. They must rush and do everything quickly in order to complete their job on time. Therefore,

this indicates that correct pronunciation with the appropriate speed is important for the in-flight announcement. The REC flight attendants were not aware of the correct pronunciation of some words or phrases, or they might know where the stress falls but they were not able to produce those words with correct stress. The reason for this is that English is not the native language of the REC flight attendants. They are used to listening and speaking with wrong stress patterns all their lives. Therefore, when making public announcement on the flight, the Thai mother tongue of the REC flight attendants, might influence stress and pronunciation. Some REC flight attendants who attend the REC course may not know how to politely ask passengers to turn off electronic devices during flights. Also, some of the REC flight attendants may read their public announcements using incorrect intonation and word stress patterns. Some of them may not know how to correctly pronounce names of the destinations or airports that they fly to. It can be concluded that different definition of needs have been given by quite a number of different people. For this reason, there are several approaches that can be employed when conducting a needs analysis for an ESP course.

Speaking and listening skills were the most important language skills for the REC flight attendants. Pronunciation and using polite language were other skills that were recognized as crucial for in-flight services.

According to the findings in Chapter four, it can be seen that most of the problems using English which REC flight attendants have encountered concern reading announcement and handling problems on flights. In addition, unfamiliarity with passengers' accents and the flight attendants' own pronunciation were mentioned by the REC flight attendants as major areas of language difficulty they encountered while working. These two areas accord with the questionnaire responses; that is, passengers' accents and incorrect pronunciation especially wrong stress and intonation, were also

perceived by the REC flight attendants as problems when using English and read public announcements.

The results from this study showed that REC flight attendants sometimes had difficulties using English to communicate with passengers during flights. According to the public announcements analysis, they mispronounced many words when reading the announcement. They were not aware of the correct pronunciation of some words or phrases, or they might know where the stress falls but they were unable to produce those words with correct stress. The reason for this is that English is not the native language of the REC flight attendants. Regarding the types of language skills *Speaking and listening* were essential for REC flight attendants which were recognized as critical by the majority of the REC flight attendants. They had to use both skills to deal with problems that could occur on their flights. The finding in this chapter showed that most of the language problems which the REC flight attendants had encountered while working were not directly related to the use of language functions and the usage of English. The problems were mostly concerned with unfamiliarity with varieties of English. Inadequate knowledge of job-related vocabulary and pronunciation when reading the announcement were two other major problems for the REC flight attendants.



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **Conclusion**

This chapter makes summarizes the major findings, and presents some recommendations for future actions. It also raises the limitations of the study, and puts forward several suggestions for further studies.

#### **5.1 Findings of the research**

This need analysis has highlighted several aspects of REC flight attendants problems and difficulties when using English while working. This study set out primarily to ascertain the needs of REC flight attendants in relation to the REC English training course offered at Thai Airways International. Overall, the findings obtained from this study are able to identify the real needs in terms of the subject matters and teaching and learning activities. In addition, practical suggestions about the REC course in terms of how the course should be conducted, topics and learning activities that should be employed in this course, were investigated so that the REC course can be developed based on the above areas. As a result, the REC course for Thai Airways flight attendants would be more relevant to the needs of the learners.

## 5.2 Summary of the Main Findings and Discussion

1. What are the specific English language skills which the flight attendants expect to learn in the Royal Executive English Course for Flight Attendants (REC)?

According to the questionnaire responses, speaking and listening skills were recognized by REC flight attendants as the most essential language skills for their job because their job is to communicate with passengers and make public announcements on flights. Reading public announcement with intelligible English was also their weak points. They need a proper training on their pronunciation in order to improve their mistakes when reading public announcement. Knowledge of job-related vocabulary, cultures and cultural differences and cross communication were the three important factors affecting their communication with passengers which were recognized by REC flight attendants. They recognized that they need to be trained in the REC course. The result also showed that REC flight attendants seem to have difficulty with using appropriate words to convey the exact meaning. So they need to repeat their sentences again to make themselves being understood. They also agree that they are not sure about their pronunciation on particular words. These language skills and knowledge should be taught in the REC course so that the flight attendants could improve their English proficiency. As a consequence, the REC flight attendants' English problems will be lessened after they take the course.

2. What are the language difficulties concerning the functions of English, which the flight attendants encounter while working?

The results indicated that REC flight attendants have experienced standard and non-standard English accents of both the passengers and the flight attendants themselves. The results show that most difficulty in listening skill is caused by the varieties of accents used by passengers. The other areas of difficulty was caused by the incorrect pronunciation of the REC flight attendants especially incorrect stress and intonation when making public announcements on board. Since the main responsibility of REC flight attendant is to read public announcement on the plane, the REC flight attendants then have to be trained to do their jobs properly. The trouble using English of the REC flight attendants is when they had to listen and communicate with passengers whose accents were unfamiliar. Limit stock of vocabulary is also another main issue. The respondents stated that they always use the same words when speaking to passengers and they felt that this was not professional. They should be able to use variety of words and phrases when communicate with their in Business class, especially when they could not think of a word and could not express themselves in English. There are many factors that may influence the ability of each respondent to use language, such as educational background, English education and the respondents' attitudes towards the language. These factors, as a consequence, could, could also affect the language difficulties which the respondents encountered while working. This study, however, sis not aim to investigate the amount of influence these factors have on using English. Therefore, only an overview of the respondents' background is presented in this chapter to highlight these considerations.

3. What are the flight attendants' observations on the Royal Executive English Course for Flight Attendants (REC) in terms of the teaching content, or the teaching methodology?

According to the data obtained from the questionnaire and the analysis of REC flight attendants' public announcements, the English courses for the flight attendants should give them enough time to practice their English continuously. In their point of view, the REC course should place more emphasis on pronunciation practice including both conversation with business class passengers and reading public announcements. More in-flight role plays should be also provided in the classroom so that the flight attendants had more opportunity to familiarize themselves with various in-flight situations. Additional English materials relevant to the flight attendants' job should be published and used as supplementary in the REC English course as well. These materials should be examples of standard English and appropriate use of the language. The knowledge of vocabulary relevant for in-flight services is essential. The flight attendants need to know both technical terms and general vocabulary regarding, airlines and services. These words are important for the REC flight attendants since it is possible that, during in-flight services, passengers may ask for clarification of these words. The REC flight attendants, then, have to know the meanings or definitions of specialized words and explain the meanings and sometimes they have to write reports about the flights.

Lastly, the instructors who teach the courses should be both Thai and Native English instructors because the flight attendants should be more familiar with foreign accents. Native speakers should teach speaking and listening classes so that the flight attendants can recognize the correct example of English. As for Thai teachers, they

should have experience with the REC flight attendants' jobs so that they can fully understand the needs of REC flight attendants. Language activities in speaking and listening skills should be considered the most essential language skills for REC flight attendants, since they have to communicate continuously with the passengers. Speaking with an intelligible accent and pronunciation should be included in the training course. They should also be taught to use polite language and to speak with correct grammar. Lastly, problem-solving skills should also be considered as essential for the flight attendants who have to deal with unanticipated situations during each flight. Knowledge of job-related vocabulary, cultures and cultural differences and cross-cultural communication should be recognized as vital for the work of the flight attendant.

### **5.3 Possible suggestions for the REC training course for flight attendants**

This English training course serves as the bridge between their professional knowledge and their English proficiency to further develop their English competency in the real life context. The REC flight attendants who work for Thai Airways need to learn the language that is used for dealing with business class passengers and for in-flight services. The Language and Culture Institute must consider its curriculums to cater for a broader range of needs. Teaching skills in ESP programs are seen as: vocationally relevant, challenging for a broad range of participants, and capable of preparing learners for more effective entry into workplace. Clearly, there are implications for Thai Airways International; the institute has an effort to manipulate certain kinds of academically and professionally disciplined improvements. Nevertheless, there are limited domestic personnel who can develop the specific

English course or even intensive training course to serve the public. One prominent area that the institute needs is an area of ability enhancement for In-flight services, particularly educating the cabin crew employees and familiarizing them with the solutions of job-related orientation. The reasons are flight attendant employees must be seen as independent for their participated activities and problem-solving regarding their service duties on the flight. On the other hand, when the existing features of specific situations and contexts occur, they need to perform well using English language skills, the ability of present knowledge and attitude, and outcome performance towards a variety of the in-flight services and the emotional stress of handling passengers and team colleagues. This will help promote THAI to be “First Choice Carrier” for passengers from all over the world. Therefore, THAI’s flight attendants must attain international standards of professionalism in every skill and since English is considered the core competency that every flight attendant needs to acquire for the ongoing professional development. It is the means of communication for all international airlines. Flight attendants of each airline are regarded as the front line employees whose leading roles are to interact with passengers and ensure their safety and comfort, as well as to provide impressive services in order to create customer’s trust and satisfaction.

All cabin crew English instructors are responsible for promoting effective teaching. They should be able to confer the best ways in teaching how to handle passengers’ demand; promote the professional service knowledge; and make more appealing English teaching ability, instructional material application and development, assessment and evaluation. To this point, a curriculum developer must draw to a large extent on the literature of language teaching and curriculum design, it is necessary to make a very clear distinction between the integration of ESP teaching and professional development content. English will be considered as the major medium of learning.



English for REC flight Attendants is tailored-made and should be designed on their needs in different language areas in order to improve their English proficiency especially where English is concerned with their daily work. Here is where ESP merges in and will be used in planning the principles for English for the REC flight attendants throughout the course. REC flight attendants who participate in the training course should be actively engaged with content through a process of problem solving, their instructors should guide and facilitate their learning and help them to make the most of the content which intentionally and carefully designed to meet their individual needs and learning styles.

In summary, the course designer and program model developer need to combine the two areas. First, all areas of knowledge and skills are required by students to achieve communicative competence and academic proficiency in an English speaking environment. Second, all areas of knowledge and skills are required by non-native speakers of English to achieve communicative competence in pre-and post experience professional contexts (ESP).

#### **5.4 Limitations of the study**

This study adopted a needs analysis by examining REC flight attendants' needs in relation to the REC English courses offered at Language and Culture Institute. It must, however, be acknowledged that there are several limitations, which make the results obtained in this study tentative.

First of all, the flight schedule of REC flight attendants is very busy. Thus, they might not really have time to do the questionnaires thoroughly, this can cause biased responses. However, 30 subjects had returned the questionnaire to the researcher.

Therefore, since only 30 students were involved in the questionnaires, the findings of the present study cannot firmly be generalized to the whole. Thus, the limited scope of the study does not allow the researcher to make strong general claims.

Another limitation in this study is the questionnaire survey is restricted their response, with the danger that the information so obtained remains at a rather general and superficial level. Oral surveys in the form of interviewing passengers, course supervisors or group discussions with the REC flight attendants would have produced more information and learn more about their desire and expectation about the training course, etc. Lastly classroom and in-flight observations were not allowed. Therefore, the researcher was not able to analyze the problems of the REC flight attendants during flights and in the REC training classroom.

### **5.5 Recommendations for Further Studies**

A further study should be carried out to find out and investigate the major language problems in using English which the REC flight attendants have encountered during the in-flight services by using other research instruments, such as, VDO tape recording or interviews with the course instructors. Defining the language requirements for flight attendant job should be done by finding as much as information possible regarding their language difficulties. On the basis of this study, there are needs for further research and study, further research on the flight attendants' language difficulties should also be carried out with the passengers on the flights in order to investigate those language problems and needs according to the opinions of the passengers. The complaints from business class passengers should also be studied

out to investigate areas of language difficulty which the passengers have recognized when having conversations with REC flight attendants.

Lastly, an evaluation of the REC course and other English courses for flight attendants should be investigated the effectiveness of those English courses and to identify aspects of the courses that need improvement in detail.

The result should indicate various aspects of those courses to be adjusted and improved. More effective English courses will help the flight attendants to improve and increase their English proficiency.



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## APPENDIX 1

### Course Agenda: English for REC Flight Attendants (ADH 004)

#### Day 1

Time	Topic	Venue
08.30-09.30	<b>Course introduction:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An Introduction to REC In-Flight Service Language.</li> <li>• How Being Skillful in Language Affect Your Work Performance.</li> </ul>	
09.15-10.15	<b>Ice Breaking Activity:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let's Share.</li> </ul>	
10.15-10.30	<b>BREAK</b>	
10.30-11.45	<b>Error Free in Speaking English:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants' Fluency and Accuracy in English for In-Flight Communication.</li> </ul>	
11.45-13.00	<b>LUNCH</b>	
13.00-13.45	<b>Special Tips for Non-Native Speakers When Speaking English.</b>	
13.45-14.30	<b>Formal Language Functions for In-Flight Service Context:</b> Degree of Formality and Situational Appropriateness for In- Flight Service Context.	

14.30-14.45	<b>BREAK</b>	
14.45-15.45	<b>Specific Language Patterns in The Aspect of Working Procedures.</b>	
15.45-16.15	<b>Practice in The Usage of Suitable Language on C/CL Routine Service.</b>	
16.15-16.30	<b>Homework Assignment.</b>	

## Day 2

<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Venue</b>
08.30-09.30	<b>Developing Deep Understanding of The Functional Communication Skills towards In-Flight Service Context.</b>	
09.30-10.30	<b>Presentation of Homework Assignment.</b>	
10.30-10.45	<b>BREAK</b>	
10.45-11.45	<b>Verbal vs. Nonverbal Communication.</b>	
11.45-13.00	<b>LUNCH</b>	
13.00-13.45	<b>Cross Cultural Diversity and Awareness Based on Different Religions, Beliefs and Needs.</b>	
13.45-14.30	<b>The Emergence of Passenger Contact and The Study of Small Talk.</b>	
14.30-14.45	<b>BREAK</b>	
14.45-16.15	<b>In-Flight Service Role-Play Activity and Problem-Solving Case Study.</b>	
16.15-16.30	<b>Course Summary &amp; Post-Course Evaluation.</b>	

## APPENDIX 2

### Research for MA-ELT Thesis

## Questionnaire of Needs in English Language Use of REC Flight Attendants

The purpose of this questionnaire is to survey the English language needs of REC flight attendants at THAI Airways Intl. The questions are designed to identify the English skills needed most by REC flight attendants. Data obtained will be employed to help developing an English program for the REC flight attendants that will be relevant to their job requirements. The collected information will be used for the purpose of academic research only. Please cooperate by providing accurate answers.

### PART 1. Personal Data

Instruction: Please mark (X) or fill information in the provided spaces.

1. Age

☐ not over 25 years

☐ 26 – 30 years

☐ 31 – 35 years

☐ over 35 years

2. What is your opinion  
towards REC English  
course?

☐ Necessary

☐ Not necessary

3. How long have you been working in

\_\_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_\_ months

Royal Executive Class?

4. Length of study in English

☐ not over 8 years

☐ 9 – 12 years

☐ Over 12 years

5. What kind of English problems you have while working in REC class? (You may select more than one)

- ☐ Poor listening comprehension
- ☐ poor grammar
- ☐ limited vocabulary
- ☐ slow reading speed
- ☐ poor speaking skills
- ☐ Other (Specify).....

6. Please evaluate your four English language skills. (Mark X where appropriate)

	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Listening	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Speaking	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Reading	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Writing	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....

7. Educational Background

7.1 Your highest educational level is:-

- ☐ Ph. D. degree
- ☐ Master’s degree
- ☐ Bachelor’s degree

7.2 Your major field of study was .....in the faculty of.....

7.3 Your educational program was offered in :-

- ☐ Thai
- ☐ English
- ☐ Other (Please Specify)



Part 2 English Usage

Topics	strongly agree	agree	neutral/ moderate	disagree	strongly disagree
1. English plays the most important role in your career					
2. Needs of English language use in different situations					
2.1. Welcoming / Greetings / Saying goodbye					
2.2. Offering help					
2.3. Denying to help					
2.4. Asking for help					
2.5. Asking for permission					
Topics	strongly agree	agree	neutral/ moderate	disagree	strongly disagree
2.6. Thanking					
2.7. Responding to thank					
2.8. Apologizing					
2.9. Accepting an apology					
2.10. Suggesting					
3. Role of English skills that are important to your duty					
3.1. Listening skill					
3.2. Speaking skill					
3.3. Reading skill					
3.4. Writing skill					
<b>PART 3: Difficulty in English Language. Please rate degree of difficulty using the following language features which you have encountered in REC class</b>					
Listening skill					
Speaking skill					
Reading skill					
Writing skill					
Causes of listening skill difficulty					
- Speed : too fast					
- Varieties of accent					
- Poor intelligibility of Passengers					
- Limit stock of vocabularies					

- Unfamiliar topics					
Causes of speaking skill difficulty					
- Limit stock of vocabularies					
- Nervousness					
- Inability of making yourself Understood					
- Unfamiliar topics					
Topics	strongly agree	agree	neutral/ moderate	disagree	strongly disagree
- Lack of confidence with your Pronunciation					
Others _____					
Causes of reading skill difficulty					
- Inability to catch the main idea of the passage					
- Inability to understand the meaning of the key words of the passage					
- Mixing up parts of speech ; subject, verb, object, relative clause, etc.					
- Too much time-consumption to comprehend the content					
Others _____					
Causes of writing skill difficulty					
- Failing to choose an appropriate words to use					
- Difficulty to put parts of speech in correct order					
- Incorrect use of prepositions and / or conjunctions					
- Incorrect use of active / passive voice					
Others _____					

- \_\_\_\_\_ Authentic news/ documentary films
- \_\_\_\_\_ Listening to radio broadcasting
- \_\_\_\_\_ Listening to real-life conversation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Practice reading newspapers/ company's report
- \_\_\_\_\_ Grammar exercises
- \_\_\_\_\_ Role-play, simulated situation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Practicing pronunciation; words, sentences
- \_\_\_\_\_ English Laboratory
- \_\_\_\_\_ Practicing announcement; emergency case, call for a doctor on board, property lost and found, delay of the aircraft, etc.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Practicing report writing in cabin log book; defected equipments, passenger sickness, unruly passenger case, etc.

Please answer the following question according to your own experience opinions.

**Question :** Please give your comments and/ or suggestions about the REC course, for example, how should the class be conducted, What do you expect to learn from the course and your suggestions to improve the effectiveness of REC course?


  
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## **APPENDIX 3**

### **PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT**

#### **WELCOME MESSAGE:**

Sawasdee ka, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thai Airways International, in corporation with our Partner Airline(s), and Star Alliance, welcome you on board, our Royal Orchid Service, flight TG \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

The flight time will be \_\_\_\_\_ hours, and \_\_\_\_\_ minutes.

#### **With Safety Demonstration Video:**

In a moment, we will show you the Safety Demonstration Video.

#### **Without Safety Demonstration Video:**

Please turn off your mobile phone and electronic devices to prevent interference to the navigational and communication system. For more information concerning the use of electronic devices during the flight, please ask a cabin attendant.

In a few minutes, we will show you how to use (the life vest and) the oxygen mask, in case of emergency.

Captain \_\_\_\_\_ and his crew wish you all a pleasant flight.

Thank you

## **SAFETY DEMONSTRATION ANNOUNCEMENT**

Ladies and Gentlemen:

May we have your attention for a moment, please. The cabin attendants will now show you how to use (the life vest and) the oxygen mask.

### **Life vest:**

- The life vest is in the pocket under your seat.
- Put the life vest on over your head.
- Connect the hooks to the ring.
- Tighten the vest by pulling the ends, and secure it behind your back.
- When outside the aircraft, inflate the vest by pulling the red tabs.
- If normal inflation is insufficient, use the mouthpieces to inflate the vest.
- Pull the cord on the battery to activate the light, but it will illuminate only when in water.

### **Oxygen Mask:**

- The pressure in the cabin is controlled for your comfort. If the pressure should drop, and oxygen be needed, the oxygen mask will be automatically released from the container above your seat.
- Pull the mask toward yourself, and place it firmly over your nose and mouth.
- Secure it with a strap. Breathe normally, until you are advised that the oxygen is no longer needed.
- Adults traveling with children should put their own masks on first, before assisting their children.



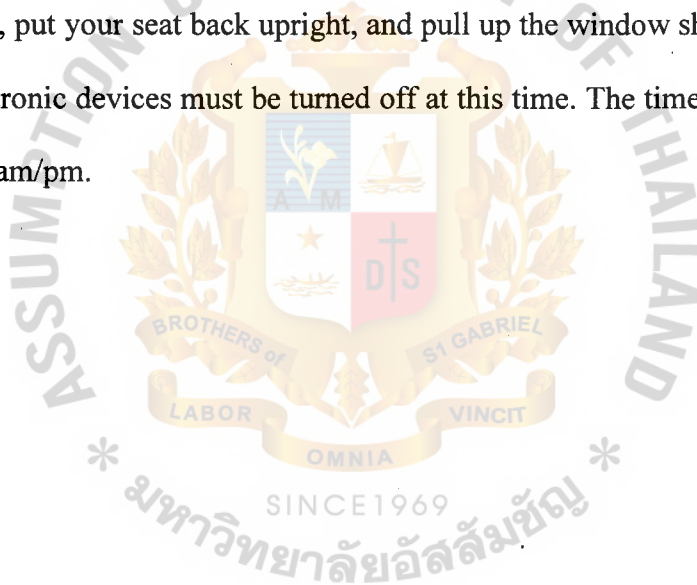
- There are \_\_\_\_ emergency exits on this aircraft, which are clearly marked with RED exit signs.
- Please note the exit nearest you.
- If you would like more information, please contact a cabin attendant.

Thank you for your attention.

### DESCENDING:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are descending to \_\_\_\_ (city) airport. Please return to your seat, fasten your seat belt, stow your table, put your seat back upright, and pull up the window shade. Please be advised that all electronic devices must be turned off at this time. The time in \_\_\_\_ (city) is now \_\_\_\_ am/pm.



## **FAREWELL:**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have arrived at \_\_\_\_\_. Please keep your seat belt fastened, your mobile phone and electronic devices off, until the fasten seat belt sign has been turned off. Please check your personal belongings and travel documents before leaving the aircraft.

### **1. International transit passengers from BKK:**

Passengers who have not cleared Customs, Immigration and Quarantine in Bangkok must go through the international arrival gate. All domestic passengers may proceed to the baggage claim area.

### **2. CIQ passengers from CEI/CNX/HDY/HKT KBV arriving in BKK:**

Passengers with CIQ stickers connecting on international flights, please identify yourself to the ground staff when disembarking.

### **3. Transit passengers in BKK (from the international inbound flights):**

Transit passengers continuing on to CNX/CEI/HKT/HDY/KBV; please proceed to gate number 7 for a transfer flight.

Thai Airways International, our Partner Airline(s), and Star Alliance, together with all the crew, would like to thank you for flying with us, and we look forward to seeing you again, soon.

**STATION ANNOUNCEMENT:**

**Thailand:**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please be informed that the Thai government has enacted a law banning smoking in public buildings. Smoking is not permitted in the airport terminal building, except in the designated smoking rooms.

All arriving passengers are not required to submit a customs declaration form. Passengers without dutiable or restricted articles may proceed to the green channel. If you are uncertain about the status of your belongings, please proceed to the red channel.

Transit passengers with confirmed reservations departing within 12 hours may stay in the transit area.

For more information or assistance, please ask a cabin attendant.

Please be informed that this flight number is TG.....

Thank you.

## Thailand

### Ladies & Gentlemen

We are descending to \_\_\_\_\_. Please return to your seat, fasten your seat belt, stow your table, put your seat back upright, and pull up the window shade. Please be advised that all electronic devices must be turned off at this time.

The time in ..... is now ..... am/pm.

We have to advise all passengers arriving in Thailand that trafficking of illegal drugs is a serious offence under Thai law, and is subjected to severe punishment. Smoking in the terminal is against the law. You may smoke only in designated smoking rooms.

To facilitate Customs Formalities, passengers without dutiable, prohibited and/or restricted articles may proceed through the GREEN channel. The Customs officers may perform a spot check in accordance with international practice. Passengers with dutiable, prohibited and/or restricted articles, as well as those who are not sure, must proceed through the RED channel.

The duty free allowance for each passenger is 1 liter of liquor and 200 cigarettes. Carrying the exceeded amount without declaration or a valid license may result in prosecution and confiscation.

According to Thailand Plant and Animal Quarantine Regulations, it is prohibited to import plants, live animals, meat or any product thereof into the country without making a declaration. Failure to comply with these regulations may result in a penalty of 40,000 baht fine, or up to 2 years of imprisonment, or a combination of the two.

Thank you

## MALAYSIA

### Ladies & Gentlemen

We are descending to \_\_\_\_\_ international airport.

Please return to your seat, fasten your seat belt, stow your table, put your seat back upright and pull up the window shade. Please be advised that all electronic devices must be turned off at this time.

The local time is \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm.

Malaysia enforces very strict laws against drug trafficking, which is a capital offence.

Please read the warning written on your immigration Landing Card carefully.

The Malaysian Government prohibits the entry of animals or animal products without an import permit. It is required to declare these items to the customs officer. Failure to do so may result in prosecution.

Thank you



## Pakistan

Ladies & Gentlemen

We are descending to \_\_\_\_\_ international airport.

Please return to your seat, fasten your seat belt, stow your table,  
put your seat back upright and pull up the window shade.

All electronic devices must be turned off at this time.

The local time is now \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm.

Please note that the use of cameras is prohibited over Pakistan and at the airport.

According to the Customs Inspection System, the GREEN channels are for passengers with non-dutiable goods.

Pakistani passengers returning from India, or passengers who have articles of commercial value, electronic appliances and unaccompanied baggage are required to pass through the RED channel.

To import or export 50 rupees or more of Pakistani banknotes is prohibited.

There are no restrictions on the import or export of foreign currencies.

Please be informed that due to Islamic law and Pakistani restrictions, alcoholic beverages are not allowed into the country.

Therefore, all liquor must be disposed of before landing.

Please contact a cabin attendant if you need assistance.

Smoking in the terminal is against the law. You may smoke only in the designated smoking rooms.

Thank you

## Korea

Ladies and gentlemen,

Disembarking passengers carrying articles purchased overseas with a total value of more than 400 U.S. Dollars, or foreign currency exceeding 10,000 U.S. Dollars, including restricted items such as firearms, explosives, narcotics, or plants must declare these items on the Customs Declaration Form, and proceed through Customs formalities.

In order to prevent possible introduction of diseases and insects into Korea, all kinds of meat, agricultural products and food stuff must be declared to Quarantine authority upon arrival.

Bringing diet pills such as “Diazepam” and “Phentermine” into Korea will be prosecuted by Korean Law.

For more information, please contact the Customs Information Desk in the arrival hall.

Thank you.



## Taiwan

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please study the passenger declaration form carefully. It is requested that you make an honest declaration of your personal effects. The death penalty may be imposed on traffickers of drugs, ammunition and arms.

For your safety, you are advised to comply with Taiwanese law and regulations. According to Quarantine Regulations, you are not allowed to bring fresh fruits into Taiwan. Faulty declaration to customs will be subjected to a fine and confiscation.

Passengers who have experienced vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, periodical chills and fever, general muscle or bone soreness, skin rash or enlargement of the lymph node within the past 3 weeks, please request for a symptom declaration form from a cabin crew.

Thank you

## Australia: Brisbane/Melbourne/Perth/Sydney

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Passengers disembarking at \_\_\_\_\_ must complete both the Immigration and Customs Declaration Form to facilitate the entry. According to Australian Quarantine Regulations, it is prohibited to import food into the country. All personal food must be disposed of in the quarantine bins in the arrival concourse, or declared at the Customs barrier.

Thank you.

# APPENDIX 4

## Evaluation form for public announcement

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ID No : \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_

	Good	Fair	Weak	Very weak
Rhythm and linkage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Consonant Sounds :-

- |                     |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| ● Non-Shared Sounds | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ● Initial Sounds    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ● Final Sounds      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Vowel Sounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Cluster Sounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Word Stress	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Intonation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Pausing &Speed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Total Fluency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Other comments and problem sounds :

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