

## 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.