

Research Report on : The Need for English ~~for English~~ for Special Purposes
Among Thammasat University Students

Researcher : RABIEB NAKALASIN

ABSTRACT

This research studied the needs of Thammasat University students studying English for Specific Purposes. The subjects were 597 students from the first through the fourth year, and 115 lecturers from eight faculties (excluding those teaching English). The data collecting instrument was a questionnaire constructed by the researcher. The data was analyzed by faculty. The findings were as follows:

Students

1. Wanted to study English as a minor, or elective subject.
2. Wanted to learn English for Occupational Purposes.
3. Were assigned to study a large number of English language texts, but their comprehension was about 50%
4. Were much more interested in Listening-Speaking courses than in courses in other skills (reading or writing).
5. Material will (should) integrate specific technical terms of the students' major area of study with those of a particular course of interest.
6. English minors, when studying in the same class with English majors, felt at a disadvantage due to their lesser facility with English (explanations were too fast), and the greater attention given to the majors by the lecturers.

Lecturers

7. The majority (88.4%) assigned English language texts, only 48.2 % used supplementary materials in English.
8. The majority (61.3%) felt that the students who were able to read the assigned texts and materials in English, only had less than 50% comprehension. The main causes for not understanding were structure and technical terms.
9. Felt that English courses with more than one pre-requisite were not suitable for non-majors.

- 10. Wanted the university to set a compulsory program of English courses in addition to the Fundamental Courses now offered. These courses (two of them) would follow the two-years of Fundamental coursework, be integrated with the skill needed, and use material from the related field of study.
- 11. Recommended not mixing majors and non-majors in the same class.

The Quota System

- 12. After completing their Fundamental Courses, a number of students did not register for further English courses due to problems with the Quota System.
- 13. As a result of being unable to register in needed courses, many students made English elective, instead of a minor.
- 14. The System did not provide an educational atmosphere, one of the main objectives of tertiary level education.

Recommendations:

- 1. There should be a curriculum designed especially for the non-majors. This program would concentrate on English for Academic Purposes, English for Occupational Purposes, or a combination of both. Coursework would be skill-specific and the material would be drawn from the major field of study.
- 2. To alleviate problems with the Quota System, the university should provide funds to hire sufficient lecturers to teach the above-mentioned courses. This would encourage students to study English according to their needs and abilities.