

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

English is considered an international language which takes an important role in many countries around the world either as the native language or foreign language. It is not only used in academic education but also used widely in almost every area such as technology, science, commerce, religion and even military areas.

Many people may wonder how English takes a role in the military field. Actually, the military organizations are in every country and they have to communicate internationally with others in order to support or ask for military cooperation such as training and security plan setting. As a result, English is mostly used as an official language for these purposes. One of the international military exercises is Cobra Gold, a joint-combined training in which the army, navy and air force of at least two countries are trained together. Another example is Sing-Thai which is a training program for the Thai and Singapore Air Forces. For security aspects, military organizations have to join with those of other countries to set a security plan especially when there is a state visit.

In Thailand, the military organizations including Royal Thai Army, Royal Thai Navy and Royal Thai Air Force realize the importance of English so they have set up their own English Language Centers in order to offer their officers, both commissioned and non-commissioned, a chance to learn English by themselves. Moreover, they have encouraged their officers to learn English by creating English courses and adding English subjects in every military syllabus.

Similar to other military organizations, the Royal Aide De Camp Department or RADC also has an English Language Center and many ESP courses such as American English courses; Australian English courses and Communicative English courses are provided to the officers. Nevertheless, according to the statistical record of the RADC English Language Center, which gathered the information of English learners from year 1996 - 2005, the number of learners tends to decrease and their English is not much better after taking the courses. It may possibly be interpreted that

the existing courses are not effective enough. One reason may be that the needs of the officers to study English can not be met. To make ESP courses more efficient, the learners' needs are necessary to be considered in designing the course, including the approach (Hutchinson & Waters, 1995, p. 7). Although there are many research papers studying the needs of English, the need analysis of the military officers in studying English can not be found. Therefore, this research is conducted to find out the needs of English in the military field, to improve and to set up English ESP courses for military officers by taking the officers of RADC, one of the military organizations, as a case study.

At RADC, the needs of studying English for the commissioned and non-commissioned officers may be different because their responsibilities are not the same. The commissioned officers have more chance to use English in the real situation especially when there is state visit or when the members of the royal family go abroad. They have to communicate with foreign officers to ask for information of those countries in order to set a security plan. Although the non-commissioned officers rarely have a chance to use English, they are required to study English as well because English becomes a part of promotion considerations. Thus, this study will investigate the needs of commissioned and non-commissioned officers in studying English.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

1.2.1 What are the needs of the RADC commissioned officers in studying English?

1.2.2 What are the needs of the RADC non-commissioned officers in studying English?

1.2.3 Are the needs of commissioned and non-commissioned officers in studying English different?

1.2.4 What should be improved, content, teaching style or others?

## **1.3 OBJECTIVE**

This research study consists of three main objectives as follows:

1.3.1 To survey the needs of the RADC officers, both commissioned and non-commissioned, in studying English.

1.3.2 To suggest improvements to the existing English courses to be more appropriate.

1.3.3 To create new effective ESP courses that can respond to the officers' needs.

#### **1.4 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS**

Definitions of the terms of this study are the following:

1.4.1 ESP refers to English for specific purposes

1.4.2 RADC refers to the Royal Aide De Camp Department, one of the Thai military organizations.

1.4.3 Officers refer to the military officers of RADC including commissioned and non – commissioned officers.

1.4.4 Commissioned refers to the military officers who are in lieutenant, captain, major and lieutenant-colonel ranks or equivalent.

1.4.5 Non-commissioned refers to the military officers who are in private first class, corporal, sergeant and sergeant major ranks or equivalent.

#### **1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

Since the officers who are required to study English are both non-commissioned and commissioned officers, this research study is conducted to survey the needs of RADC officers who are in private first class, corporal, sergeant, sergeant major, lieutenant, captain, major and lieutenant-colonel ranks, or equivalent only. The colonels who are considered to be administrators are not included because they are not required to study English.

#### **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

1.6.1 This study will identify the needs of English for the military officers which can be applied to the other military organizations.

1.6.2 It can be used to improve existing English courses to be more effective and more appropriate for the military officers.

1.6.3 It can be used as a guideline in designing ESP courses for other military organizations.

## **1.7 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY**

This research study is divided into 5 chapters which are

Chapter 1: Introduction- background, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, definition of terms, scope of the study and organization of the study are described in this part.

Chapter 2: Review of literature- relevant concepts to the study which are ESP courses, needs analysis and relevant research are included.

Chapter 3: Methodology- it concerns subjects, materials, procedures and data analysis used in the study.

Chapter 4: Results of the study- the results gathered from the questionnaire analysis are shown.

Chapter 5: Conclusions, Discussions and Recommendations- the summary of the study and conclusions of the findings are discussed. Recommendations for further study are provided as well.