

## **A Survey of Societal Needs for Using English**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This survey study was conducted to find out about the following :-

1. The extent and the types of English used and needed by personnel in Thai government agencies, state enterprises and business circles.
2. The extent and the purposes of using the skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation.
3. The adequacy of English skills obtained from educational institutes.

The survey had two phases. The major part was in Phase II. Questionnaires and interview technique were used. In phase II, 1011 forms were used to obtain data from the administrators in the three sectors mentioned above. Four hundred and eighty six administrators or 48.1% cooperated fully.

Results of the survey indicated that government agencies and state enterprises used English moderately whereas business sectors used more English. The ratio of the number of personnel using English and those who do not use English was 1 : 4. Among the five skills, reading was used most, writing ranked second, listening came third, speaking ranked fourth and translation was fifth. The arithmetic means were 5.3, 5.0, 4.7, 4.6 and 4.5, respectively. The sixth skill level was needed most, and the differences between the actual skill levels of the personnel and the skill level needed were statistically significant at .001. Besides, English was used more for working purposes than for social and personal purposes. The types of personnel using English most were academicians in governments agencies (61.11%), administrators in state enterprises (57.35%) and business sectors (89.71%). Furthermore the administrators felt that the English skills that their personnel obtained from educational institutions were operationally inadequate, especially education at M.S. 5, M.S. 6/Vocational and diploma levels. However, they felt that university education to the Bachelor's Degree level and higher was quite adequate. The results also revealed that most of the personnel improved their English by self-instruction.

### **Recommendations**

1. Other survey studies on the same problem should be conducted more extensively by including those who use English and by conducting the survey in other provinces besides Bangkok such as Chiangmai, Khonkaen or Phuket.

2. Results of the survey indicated that English skills obtained from educational institutions were operationally inadequate and that there existed a big gap between the actual skill level of the personnel and the skill level needed by various sectors. Therefore, those responsible for handling English programs should try to improve the curriculum by considering English styles, types or registers and purposes of using English in the various sectors in Thai society in order to produce educated citizens with operational English.

3. Most personnel improved English by self-instruction because very few agencies offered improvement programs. Therefore, educational institutions should offer courses on English for occupational purposes to working people.