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The English Language Learning Needs of the Local Thai Rice Product Vendors¹

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Abstract

In Thailand, it is crucial to acquire English language skills for effective communication and business purposes, given the rise to international tourism. It is essential for the vendors in the local markets who sell rice products to be able to communicate in English in order to provide explanations about Thai rice yields to foreign customers. However, these vendors often do not receive sufficient attention when it comes to expanding their English language abilities for interacting with foreign customers. Therefore, the study explores the English language needs of Thai local vendors who sell Thai rice products in order to design lessons based on their learning needs. The participants in the study were vendors of Thai street desserts and products who live in Luang Neau sub-district, Doi Saket district, Chiang Mai province. The instruments used were a needs survey and semi-structured interviews. The researcher used descriptive statistics on the data obtained via the needs survey for quantitative data analysis such as frequency and percentage, as well as means and standard deviation. Content analysis, using HyperResearch software, was used to analyze qualitative data gained from the interviews. The findings showed that most of the sample

¹ The research proposal was developed in 2018 and was approved and fully funded by National Research Council of Thailand in 2019, under the research report entitled, "Creating an English Communicative Innovation for Organic Rice Farmers and Entrepreneurs to Promote Value-Addition in Luang Neua Sub-district, Doi Saket District, Chiang Mai Province."

group were 50 – 65 years old and had high needs to develop their English speaking and listening skills. They reported a need for English lessons on authentic or relevant topics and communicative language to communicate with foreign customers in the local market. When inquired about the extent of their motivation, it was found that they had instrumental motivation and positive attitudes toward learning English, believing that being able to communicate is a great value-added asset as this can better their standard of living and enable them to earn more money.

Keywords: English Language Needs analysis, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Innovation, Motivation in English language learning

Introduction

English has unquestionably emerged as the global language for cross-border interactions. Crystal (2003) stated that the reason behind English's global status is not solely determined by the number of its speakers. Rather, its widespread usage stems from its influence in areas such as education, international marketing, tourism, and commerce. As argued by Grigoryeva and Zakirova (2022), English is a dominant language in various spheres, including politics, media, science, the economy, education, and recreation, which is why both businesses and individuals choose to learn and use English to achieve a high standard of intercultural communication. Thailand relies on tourism as one of the key economic sectors. The surge in tourism has amplified the demand for English proficiency, particularly English for commerce. The ability to communicate in English is believed to play a crucial role in successfully engaging with international tourists and facilitating sales. Therefore, exploring the English language learning needs of Thai vendors who want to sell their products to international tourists in a local market can help design an English for communication course, matching their needs.

Luang Neau, situated in Chiang Mai's Doi Saket district, attracts numerous international tourists due to its rich cultural heritage, especially in terms of food and traditional Thai rice products. In this local market, vendors need to be equipped with English communicative skills to communicate with foreign customers, providing explanations about various Thai rice yields and products. Unfortunately, these vendors are overlooked in terms of the extension of English language for communication with foreign customers. Therefore, this study was conducted to explore the language needs of Thai vendors in Luang Neau sub-district, Doi Saket district, Chiang Mai province who sell rice products in the form of desserts at a local market. This study is expected to be beneficial to the target groups as aforementioned. Knowing their English language learning needs may help in course design and skills development in English communication for commercial purposes.

Generally, many English courses in the past were designed based on teachers' view of what was considered relevant and helpful to improve English skills. Moreover, due to the influence of traditional teaching and limited knowledge of needs analysis and theories, course designers and English language teachers tended either to neglect needs analysis or conduct it ineffectively. The researcher believes that social needs and learners' interest should not be ignored when designing and developing English courses. By collecting information and analyzing the subsequent data about the learners' needs in learning English in Luang Neau sub-district of Doi Saket district, the gap between what is now being taught and what needs to be taught can be identified to assist the Thai rice product vendors there to communicate in English better. This is also to ensure that they can fully learn what they require, and the knowledge is relevant to their needs of learning English for commercial purposes.

By bridging the gap between the needs of the Thai rice product vendors in Luang Neau sub-district of Doi Saket district and communicative English course design, this study aims to introduce innovation in English language education. Darasawang, Reinders and

Waters (2015) defined innovation in English language education as an informed change, resulting in an adaptation of pedagogic practices such that instruction may better promote language learning. This definition reflects the fact that teachers play a key role in the process of innovation. Generally, teachers are given a range of choices when it comes to materials, technologies, and teaching methods. Innovation is also implemented to solve problems. In this study, innovation was implemented to solve the problem arising from the fact that the Thai rice product vendors in Luang Neau sub- district lack communicative English skills. The researcher, representing an English teaching team, explored their needs of learning English to obtain detailed information of what they need and lack. After the needs were collected, innovative lessons matching their needs were designed to help them communicate and converse effectively in English when selling their products to foreign customers in the local market in Luang Neau sub district. Therefore, to some extent, it can be said that needs analysis could bring upon innovation in English language education.

Research Questions

1. What are the English language needs of the local Thai Rice product vendors in Luang Neau sub-district, Doi Saket district, Chiang Mai province, Thailand?
2. What is the English language motivation of the local Thai Rice product vendors in Luang Neau sub-district, Doi Saket district, Chiang Mai province, Thailand?

The insights gained from these research questions are expected to be beneficial to design an innovative English training program for the local Thai rice product vendors, English learning needs in Luang Neua sub-district, Doi Saket district, Chiang Mai province. The research endeavor can be seen as a holistic approach, aiming to benefit and contribute to society.

Literature Review and Related Studies

Learning-Center and Learner-Centered Approaches to Needs Analysis in English Specific Purposes (ESP)

Richards and Rodger (2001) defined English for Specific Purposes (ESP) as learning English as a response to the needs of learners who want to do a specific job such as physician, nurse, engineer, architect, and so on. All these occupations need to use English in actual situations, which is beneficial to their career advancement. At present, teaching and learning English is more specific than general. According to Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), needs analysis is neither unique to language teaching nor within language training but it is often seen as being the cornerstone of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and leads to a very focused course. A more recent definition of needs analysis is given by Nation and Macalister (2010) who stated that needs analysis illustrates the learner's already obtained knowledge and what should be taught. Brown (2016) commented that ESP and needs analysis are intertwined. The role of English in a language course or program of instruction in which the content and aims of the course are fixed by the specific needs of a particular group of learners. The purpose of conducting needs analysis is to identify learner's needs clearly and design an appropriate lesson plan accordingly. To do this, needs analysis is essential for designing and preparing contents and lessons as well as classroom activities for ESP.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a guideline for English language teaching in which learning content must meet needs of the learner (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Richards (2001) highlighted distinctive characteristics of ESP that involve learners' needs analysis, namely 1) to understand input factors for designing and preparing lessons; 2) to help develop learning objectives and contents; and 3) to serve as guidelines for teaching and learning assessment. Nunan (1998) stated that analysis should be done at the initial stage of classroom activities. Data obtained from the learners are divided into two parts: general data

and personal data. Data can be collected formally and informally such as through interviews, tests of English (formal), and observation (informal). Needs analysis aims to analyze the necessity of the use of English for a specific job. It relies on data collection indicating the needs for target language and prioritizes and indicates specific learning data. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) proposed that needs analysis should be utilized for general English learning and ESP to perceive the needs of the learner. However, data analysis must also be considered for indication of needs of the target group. As a result, a survey should be utilized on four English skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing to manage classroom activities.

A recent framework regarding the investigation of needs analysis is proposed by Kaewpet (2009). The researcher presented influential models of needs analysis, which are a sociolinguistic model (Munby, 1978), a systemic approach (Richterich & Chancerel, 1977 cited in Kaewpet 2009), a learning-centered approach (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987), learner-centered approaches (Berwick, 1989; Brindley, 1989) and a task-based approach, (Long 2005a, 2005b cited in Kaewpet 2009). She suggested that these approaches should be elaborated on to match the needs of the learners. This study used a learning-centered approach and learner-centered approach as it was a small-scale study and the researcher hoped that these two approaches would be sufficient to ascertain the needs of the learners. The two approaches which are used as a framework for this study are explained as follows.

Hutchinson and Water (1987) emphasized that more attention should be given to how learners learn and suggested that a learning needs approach should be employed as a framework to guide learners from the starting point to the target communicative situation. Target needs and learning needs are considered two paths from a learning centered approach to needs analysis. Target needs refer to what the learner needs to perform in the target situation, which are broken down into three categories: necessities, lacks and wants. Necessities are what the learner is supposed to know to function effectively in the target

situation, lacks are the gaps in the learner's knowledge, and wants are what the learners think they need. Learning needs are another path for a learning centered approach to needs analysis which involve many factors such as who the learners are, their socio-cultural background, learning background, age, gender, background knowledge of specialized content, background knowledge of English, attitudes towards English, and attitudes towards cultures of the English-speaking world and studying English.

The learner-centered approach is considered another influential framework for needs analysis. According to Berwick (1989), there are three ways to look at learner needs which are perceived needs vs. felt needs; product vs. process-oriented interpretations; and objective needs vs. subjective needs. Perceived needs are derived from the perspective of experts but felt needs come from that of the learners. For the product-oriented interpretation, learner needs are the language that learners require in target situations while in the process-oriented interpretation, the emphasis is on how learners respond to their learning situation, which involves affective and cognitive variables which may affect learning. Lastly, objective needs should be explored before the course starts, and subjective needs are monitored while the course is underway. According to Brindley (1989), the objective needs can be obtained from information about learners, their real-life language use situations, their current language proficiency, and difficulties. Subjective needs can be obtained from the learners' affective and cognitive factors, such as personality, confidence, attitudes, learning wants, learning expectations, cognitive style and learning strategies.

Anthony (2018) and Mobashshernia (2020) suggested that ESP will continue to be based on four pillars. The first pillar concerns the needs analysis: posing questions about the real wants, lacks, and necessities of target learners; posing questions about the environment and context in which learning is expected to take place. The second pillar is the exploration of learning objectives: determining the language, genres, and skills that target learners might

be expected to master and use in a target situation; developing sets of learning strategy objectives for the ESP class. The third pillar deals with materials and methods: developing a teaching methodology, specialized textbooks or other types of materials (e.g., audios, videos, etc.). And the last pillar is evaluation: measuring learners' performance gains on a test; evaluating the success of the ESP course and the quality of instruction.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and Motivation for Language Learning

According to Munby (1978), learners' attitudes and feelings can also play a key role in highlighting the learner-centered approaches; thus, exploring attitudes, feelings and language motivation of the learners is crucial in the investigation of needs analysis. This study included a survey of the language learning motivation of the vendors in a local market who want to sell their products to assess their motivation in using English for commerce. According to Dörnyei (2001), language learning motivation refers to learner's attitude towards native speaker's culture and future success of language use. This can be divided into integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. The former focuses on being part of the culture of the language we want to learn, the latter puts the importance on language as a tool for career building or income generating.

For the preparation of English lessons for vendors selling rice products, the researcher employed suggestions on motivation for language learning to encourage the learners and perceive its benefits. Regarding data collection, the researcher attached question items about motivation for language learning to design proper English lessons for the target learners.

Choomthong and Chaichompoo (2015) conducted a study on the motivation for English language learning at higher education level. It was found that higher education students had instrumental motivation. This means they believed that competency in English communication helped them find a good job and a better life. The finding supported the

study of Wudthayagorn (2021) that in light of job opportunities, a good command of English among Thais is considered to have a value-added asset. Nowadays, globalization, together with technological advancement, has spurred greater competitiveness. Such competitiveness has become more evident since the promotion of the Asian Economic Community (AEC), promoting transnational cooperation among ten nations in Southeast Asia. The flow of workers and tourists among the ten nations can be seen as a result of instrumental motivation to learn English. Being able to communicate in English is believed to bring great job opportunities and better standards of living.

Research on needs analysis can be related to instrumental motivation and the creation of ESP. It was found that the different groups of entrepreneurs had different needs depending on the learning topic. Nomnian (2014a) conducted a study on the needs of raft rental entrepreneurs who had to use English for communication in Kanchanaburi. It was found that they needed English for real-life communication. Furthermore, it was found that the need for oral communication was a priority. This was because they must communicate with foreigners and wished to be fluent in speaking rather than grammatical accuracy. This supported what Kaewpet (2009) proposed that the priority should be given to communication needs. Communication needs are considered vital when what learners are taught is specific to what they will use. This should thus give direction to the content of ESP courses. Specific knowledge concerning the English language alone may not be enough. Learners also require the ability to communicate which involves understanding the discourse practices where the language is situated and in which learners must become skilled. Communication needs analysis is particularly necessary in the Thai context due to the obscure role of English use in Thailand, learners' lack of exposure to English, the lack of basic English knowledge and the lack of English communication provided in school.

Nomnian (2014b) utilized the needs of raft rental entrepreneurs in Kanchanaburi province to create a language manual to help communicate better in spoken English. It was found that they needed additional topics such as asking and giving directions and providing information about tourist attractions. Although these studies contained quite a lot about English language needs for English language learning, English language needs and motivation for people aged between 50-65 years was limited. Therefore, results and data gained from the current study is hoped to reveal English language learning needs of people of this age group and their motivation to learn English for selling rice products in the form of Thai desserts and health products at a local market.

Jhaiyanuntana and Nomnian (2020) studied the needs of Thai undergraduate hotel interns' intercultural communication challenges and strategies while undertaking their internships at an in-house hotel training center located at a university. The study employed questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The study found that the interns needed proficiency in foreign languages and cultures, problem-solving skills, and cross-cultural and interpersonal understanding. This study contributed to awareness and the need to incorporate intercultural communicative competence into the hospitality programs that can produce graduates who are well-equipped and prepared for multilingual and multicultural working environments.

A recent work on ESP is needs Analysis of English for Specific Purposes for Tourism personnel in Ayutthaya conducted by Namtapi (2022), who explored the necessities, lacks, and wants of the tourism personnel who use English at work. It was revealed the participants' language necessities were mostly related to communicative tasks, such as greeting, giving directions, providing information, and offering and asking for help. Their lack of relevant skills were chiefly concerned with listening and speaking, such as being unable to understand foreign English accents, failing to keep up with the tourists' fast pace of

speech, having a limited range of vocabulary to engage with in a conversation, and lacking grammar knowledge to maintain a conversation. Their wants were to improve cross-cultural competence, be exposed to the target language, both inside and outside the classroom, and be equipped with knowledge of Ayutthaya's history and technical terms related to Buddhist architecture.

The Roles of English Needs Analysis for Innovation in English Language Teaching

According to Darasawang, Reinders and Waters (2015), an innovation is something that is new in a specific context. Innovation is usually thought of as a process of research and implementation to achieve tangible benefits. Innovation in this view is not only the result of a development but also includes the process towards achieving that development as well as its successful integration into its intended context. Innovation is also implemented to solve problems and design courses.

Nuemaihom (2016) surveyed and analyzed the needs of the local vendors at Phnom Rung Sanctuary in Buriram Province to create an innovative course design. He found that needs analysis helped him gain a comprehensive understanding of the requirements, desires, and deficiencies of learners. This knowledge is crucial in developing an appropriate and innovative English course. Additionally, identifying the specific English for Specific Purposes (ESP) needs of learners can provide a measure of their English proficiency. Conducting needs analysis can also motivate learners as they feel their needs are being addressed and help them find what they need in the English course. In his research, an innovative course was designed based on the needs and wants of the learners, including English topics relevant to their jobs and daily use. This course captured the attention and interest of the learners, leading to better English learning outcomes and higher satisfaction. The innovation of this ESP course was that priority was given to listening and speaking skills,

which focused on the specific phrases and dialogues commonly used by the local vendors and led to the production of an audio CD along with a booklet as innovations from the study.

Moreover, Nuemaihom (2017) discussed how the role of needs analysis is a significant process that leads to innovation in English language teaching. The process of needs analysis is employed to evaluate the particular requirements of learners to help design the course and contents matching the learners' needs. At present, this method is applied to scrutinize the learners' requirements for studying English for specific purposes. He concluded that needs analysis is the technique of analyzing the specific needs of a particular group, which serves as a prelude to ESP course design.

Research Methodology

Research Setting

This study took place in Luang Neua sub-district, Doi Saket district, Chiang Mai province, Thailand. There are 6,163 people living in Luang Neua sub-district (2,998 males/3,165 females) with an average density of 50 person/km². Luang Neua comprises 2,484 households and more than one-half (65%) are engaged in agriculture. The rest are merchants, government officials, and hired workers (5, 10, and 20%, respectively). Luang Neua is an organic rice production sub-district in Doi Saket. There are 30 groups of organic agriculture from which more than ten would shift to organic agriculture. The group members had experiences in organic farming and selling for more than 10 years. However, they expressed a desire to increase sales volume and organic rice promotion. Since Luang Neua is a semi-urban, semi-rural area that supports the expansion of the city of Chiang Mai, it has a lot of tourist attractions as well as economic development with the added value of organic rice and its processed products such as local northern desserts and health products made of Thai rice.

Participants

A total of 52 participants were purposively selected for the current study. Their jobs are organic rice farmers, housewife groups, hired workers in the organic farms and vendors selling rice products in the local market of Luang Neua sub district. Of the fifty-two participants who were asked to complete the survey, twenty-four were further selected for semi-structured interviews. These twenty-four participants were selected based on their exposure to foreign customers both in the organic rice farms and the local market.

Research Instruments

Focus groups were established prior to this study to enable a comprehensive assessment of the group's perspective and experience because they are beneficial in understanding perspectives of specific experiences or incidents and the reasons behind the needs of learning English. The data gained from focus groups were used for designing the questions items in the survey. The survey in the current study was therefore divided into five parts: (1) basic information of the participants and their perceived English language skills and English needs, (2) the participants' perceived English skills, (3) the participants' English language needs, (4) topics for English language training based on needs analysis, (5) motivation for English language learning. The five-point Likert rating scale was employed to quantitatively assess the English learning needs. The survey administered was translated into Thai to ensure intelligibility and avoid ambiguity. All items in the survey were validated by a panel of three experts, consisting of a university lecturer specialized in English for Business, a university lecturer specialized in English of Specific purpose, and an experienced Thai language teacher. The Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) was employed to judge the congruence between the questionnaire items and the objectives on which they were based, using a score range from -1 to 1. The items with scores lower than 0.5 were excluded, while

the items with scores greater than 0.5 were retained. The question items were revised based on the three experts' suggestions.

Semi-structured interviews consisting of four open-ended questions were employed in this study. The first question asked the importance of English and the situation when using English. The second question dealt with attitudes and motivation for learning English. The third question concerned vocabulary for describing products from Thai rice. And the last question asked why they wanted to learn English. The interviews were conducted in Thai, each of which took approximately seven minutes. The interviews were not digitally recorded because the participants did not provide consent; however, there were three research assistants who took notes in Thai during the interview. The notes were then proofread and translated into English for content analysis.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection was conducted in two phases. The first phase was a pilot study where the survey was administered to fifteen participants in Luang Neau sub district. This was to ensure that every question item was not ambiguous to the participants. The pilot survey was then revised and reformatted. The second phase involved distributing the survey to 80 participants who lived in Luang Neau sub district. However, only 52 surveys were returned to the researcher. The in-depth interviews were subsequently conducted to gain qualitative data.

The data derived from the survey was analyzed using descriptive statistics to present the obtained data in frequencies and percentages. The mean scores of the survey were interpreted based on the following criteria.

Table 1

Mean Range Interpretation

Mean Range	Interpretation
4.50 – 5.00	Very high
3.50 – 4.49	High
2.50 – 3.49	Moderate
1.50 – 2.49	Low
1.00 – 1.49	Very low

For data from the in-depth interview, the researcher employed the software, HyperResearch 2.8 to produce frequencies of the topics and themes, as well as English needs from the respondents.

Findings

Basic Information of the Participants and Their Perceived English Language Skills and English Needs

Table 1 shows that most of the participants in Luang Neua sub-district, Doi Saket district, Chiang Mai province were elementary school graduates (37 persons), female (33 persons), and their age range was 56-65 years. Fewer than half of the participants were hired workers (19 persons), vendors/merchants (9 persons), organic rice farmers (8 persons), and organic fruit/vegetable farmers (7 persons). According to an analysis of existing English language skills of the participants, it was found that they perceived they had a very low level of English proficiency in grammar ($\bar{x} = 1.27$) and writing ($\bar{x} = 1.48$), as shown in table 2.

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviation, and Perceived Opinions of the Organic Rice Participants about Their English Language Skills.

	Participants Basic Information	Number	Percentage
Age	25 - 35	3	5.77
	36 – 45	3	5.77
	46 – 55	9	17.31
	56 – 65	27	51.92
	66 – 75	6	11.54
	76 – 85	4	7.69
	Total	52	100.00
Education	Primary	37	71.15
	Bachelor’s degree	12	23.08
	High school	1	1.92
	Vocational school	2	3.84
	Total	52	100.00
Gender	Female	33	57.58
	Male	19	42.42
	Total	52	100.00
Occupation	Hired workers	19	36.54
	Vendors/ Merchants	9	17.3
	Organic rice farmers	8	15.38
	Organic farmers	7	13.46
	Government officers	2	3.85
	Farmers	2	3.85
	Housewives	2	3.85
	Weavers	1	1.92
	Non-specify	2	3.85
	Total	52	100.00
Organic produce grown in an area	Organic rice	14	26.92
	Vegetables	13	25
	Fruits	13	25
	Animals	12	23.07
	Total	52	100.00

Table 3

Means (\bar{x}), Standard Deviation (S.D.) of the Participants' Perceived English Skills

Perceived English Skills	(\bar{x})	S.D.	Description
Listening	1.69	0.92	Low
Speaking	1.65	0.99	Low
Reading	1.54	0.94	Low
Vocabulary	1.54	1.00	Low
Pronunciation	1.56	1.00	Low
Writing	1.48	0.96	Very low
Grammar	1.27	0.70	Very low
Total	1.53	0.94	Low

Although the participants perceived that they had a low level of English language skills, it was found that they had a high level of needs for English language skills particularly in speaking (\bar{x} =4.08) and listening (\bar{x} =3.79) as shown in Table 3.

Table 4

Means (\bar{x}), Standard Deviation (S.D.) of the Participants' English Language Needs

Needs for English Language Skill Development	\bar{x}	S.D.	Description
Speaking	4.08	1.01	High
Listening	3.79	0.94	High
Pronunciation	3.52	1.23	High
Writing	2.83	1.52	Moderate
Vocabulary	2.67	1.61	Moderate
Reading	2.60	1.52	Moderate
Grammar	2.48	1.42	Low
Total	3.14	1.46	Moderate

An Analysis of Topics for English Language Training Based on Needs Analysis

It was found that the participants in Luang Neua sub-district, Doi Saket district, Chiang Mai province were interested in an English language training program which aimed to develop and improve speaking and listening skills as well as pronunciation, at a high level. Based on its details, they were interested in the following topics:

- Listening to questions about product prices and bargaining
- Describing the medical properties of Thai rice, fruits and vegetables
- Talking about oneself
- Explaining the process of making Thai desserts
- Describing ingredients of processed products from rice

In addition, the participants were interested in vocabulary development at a high level. This was especially true regarding vocabulary concerned with various Thai desserts, organic rice, and processed products from Thai rice.

Other English language skills which the participants were interested in at a moderate level included reading and writing, whereas grammar was found to be at a low level. As a result, the researcher did not include all of the lessons about grammatical structures of English in the design of communicative innovation in English for Thai rice farmers. It was also found that although the participants perceived they had low levels of listening and speaking skills as well as limited vocabulary knowledge, their needs to learn these skills were high, as shown in Table 4.

Table 5

Means (\bar{x}), Standard Deviation (S.D.) Showing Perceived English Knowledge and Needs for English Language Use

Forms of English Language Training	Perceived English Knowledge			English Language Needs		
	\bar{x}	S.D.	Description	\bar{x}	S.D.	Description
Listening skill						
Asking price	1.29	1.38	Low	4.10	0.75	High
Bargaining	1.21	1.39	Low	3.90	0.85	High
Organic rice growing	1.35	1.19	Low	3.54	1.06	High
Livelihoods	1.31	1.11	Low	3.52	1.13	High
Fruits/vegetables	1.38	1.23	Low	3.08	0.97	Moderate
Asking directions	1.38	1.27	Low	2.94	1.06	Moderate
Speaking skill						
Explaining fruits/vegetables/organic rice	1.29	0.62	Low	4.02	0.92	High
Talking about oneself	1.37	1.24	Low	3.90	0.96	High
Explaining process of making Thai desserts	0.90	1.14	Lowest	3.54	0.94	High
Greetings	1.48	1.24	Low	3.52	1.09	High
Grammar						
Preposition (e.g. above/under)	0.83	1.04	Lowest	1.21	1.56	Lowest
Prefix (e.g. im-,in-,un-)	0.77	1.05	Lowest	1.15	1.55	Lowest
If clause	0.73	0.99	Lowest	1.15	1.53	Lowest
Vocabulary						
Thai desserts made from Thai rice	0.96	1.25	Lowest	3.98	0.98	High
Organic rice	1.04	1.31	Low	3.90	1.21	High
Various processed products from Thai rice	0.98	1.26	Lowest	3.87	1.12	High
Number	1.29	1.43	Low	3.71	1.16	High
Adjective (e.g. good/bad)	0.79	1.04	Lowest	3.65	0.90	High
Ingredients of processed products from Thai rice	0.83	1.10	Lowest	3.52	1.13	High
Vegetables	1.12	1.34	Low	3.08	1.17	Moderate
Thai fruits	1.12	1.32	Low	1.81	1.55	Low
Pronunciation						
Near native	0.90	1.21	Lowest	3.21	1.04	Moderate
Pronouncing questions	0.87	1.14	Lowest	2.94	1.06	Moderate
Sentence level	1.00	1.25	Low	2.69	1.20	Lowest
Total	1.02	1.20	Low	2.60	1.59	Moderate

Motivation for English Language Learning of the Participants

The study found that the participants had instrumental motivation rather than integrative motivation. They believed that competency in English communication helped increase income, as shown in table 5. This was consistent with the two topics in which they were interested at a high level: price asking and bargaining.

Table 6

Means (\bar{x}), Standard Deviation (S.D.) and Opinions of the Participants Regarding Motivation for English Language Learning.

Motivation for English Language Learning	\bar{x}	S.D.	Description
Instrumental motivation for English language learning			
1. Help increase sales volume	4.25	0.56	Agree
2. Help increase family income	4.12	0.88	Agree
3. Help understand printed media and signs in English	4.00	0.63	Agree
4. Help increase business opportunities	3.92	0.95	Agree
5. Help me better communicate in English	3.88	0.90	Agree
6. English language in workplace	3.42	1.24	Strongly disagree
7. Travel abroad	3.02	1.60	Strongly disagree
Total	3.66	1.04	Agree
Integrative motivation for English language learning			
8. Able to communicate with native speakers.	3.73	1.09	Agree
9. Think and believe like native speakers.	2.46	1.63	Disagree
10. People think I am well- educated if I can communicate in English.	3.23	1.39	Strongly disagree
11. Deep understanding of native speakers' culture and traditions.	2.90	1.59	Strongly disagree
12. More native speaker friends around the world.	2.88	1.60	Strongly disagree
13. More understanding of native speakers' way of life.	2.73	1.62	Strongly disagree
14. Understand and appreciate English literature.	2.50	1.59	Strongly disagree
15. It is a beautiful language and fun to learn.	3.17	1.46	Strongly disagree
Total	2.95	1.49	Disagree

Interview Data about English Language Learning Needs

Aside from quantitative data gained from the survey, the researcher analyzed quantitative data gained from the interview. This aimed to gain insight about the specific needs for learning English by the participants. Data gained from the interview were analyzed and coded by data analysis using HyperResearch 2.8, as shown in table 6. This program, however, could not process Thai language information. Hence, the researcher converted the information extracted from the Thai interview into English to obtain data from input decoding to analyze frequency.

The researcher inquired about the importance of English language learning and found that the data was consistent with the quantitative data gained from the survey. That is, the participants in Luang Neua sub-district, Doi Saket district, Chiang Mai province were aware of the importance of English language learning focusing on merchandising. They believed that English knowledge could help with buying, selling, and *doing business with foreigners*.

“I want to communicate in English.”

“I want to talk with foreign customers.”

“I want to explain my products to foreign customers.”

“English is very important, especially when you have to communicate with foreign customers. It is sad when the foreign customers come and look at the products in your shop, but all you can do is just smile at them and fail to communicate with them.”

Although most of the interviewees were old, they had good attitudes towards English. In other words, they believed that the English language was an asset, and everyone could learn it regardless of age. Interestingly, they liked and were confident to use English for communication with foreigners. Regarding Thai desserts and products made from Thai rice, they wanted to identify and explain them in English to foreigners because they sold them in

the local market. Examples of Thai desserts and products made from Thai rice sold in the flea market were Khao Tom Mud, Nam Nom Khao, Khao Mun Ping, Kanom Tian, and so on.

“There are some foreign customers in the local market. I don’t know how to explain my products to them. It would be nice if I could explain my products to them in English. They might buy my products.”

“I want to learn about numbers and price negotiation.”

“Learning a new language is fun, especially when you know that it can help you have more income.”

“I want to be more confident communicating in English with the foreign customers in the area.”

“Being able to speak English with the foreign customers could increase the sales.”

“I want to learn the vocabulary for describing Thai rice products.”

Table 7

Analysis of Interview Data

Topics	Frequencies
1. Importance of English and situation when using English	
<i>Business purposes</i>	
Buying and selling	18
Doing business with foreigners	7
Increase sales	2
Increase selling channels	2
Better standard of living	1
<i>English for Specific Purposes</i>	
English for agricultural products and agriculture	16
English for agricultural products	3
<i>Communicative purposes</i>	
For speaking and listening	20
For communication with foreigners	13
For daily communication	10
Greetings	7

Topics	Frequencies
2. Attitudes and motivation for learning English	
<i>Positive</i>	
English is an asset.	13
Age and gender don't matter	8
Better standard of living	2
<i>Express confidence using English</i>	
Not shy when using English	11
Love communicating other languages	6
<i>Negative</i>	
Don't want to use and communicate in English	3
Age matters	1
English is not important	1
3. Vocabulary for describing products from Thai rice	
Boiled rice in banana leaf	12
Rice cracker	4
Rice milk	3
Grilled rice	2
Stuffed dough pyramid	2
Grilled sticky rice in coconut milk	1
Sticky rice and coconut	1
Sticky rice in coconut milk and egg custard	1
4. English learning needs	
Improve pronunciation	7
Tell local wisdom of northern Thai desserts	5
Describe food properties	4
Describe products from Thai rice	4
Tell local story and wisdom	3
Tell the story of Doi Saket purple rice	2
Ask for direction	1
Price negotiation	1
Ask direction	1

Discussion

Interesting issues found in this study involved needs analysis, English for specific purposes (ESP), skills needed for communicative English, and language motivation and attitudes towards ESP.

Needs Analysis from a Learning-Centered and Learner-centered Approaches

The researcher was able to design English for communication lessons to explain products from organic rice based on the participants' needs analysis and English teaching/learning theory by Nunan (1998). Data were collected formally, using a survey. In addition, there was the consideration of suggestions provided by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) that the teacher must not overlook data analysis in needs for using English and needs of the target group. Thus, the four basic English skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) of the target group must be explored in order to facilitate learning. This research also explored the needs of the learners to perform in the target situation and found the lacks, wants and necessities for the learners. These consisted of language skills and vocabulary knowledge about the rice products that the learners must know to communicate effectively in a target situation.

The findings are also in line with Brindley (1989) that objective needs can be obtained from information about learners, their real-life language use situations, their current language proficiency, and difficulties, and should be explored before the course starts. The researcher found that the target group had a low level of English proficiency, but they needed improvement at a high level. Thus, the needs analysis of the target group was beneficial to the design of classroom activities and lessons. Data gained from needs analysis was useful in that it made the researcher realize that the designed lessons should not be too complicated because the participants in Luang Neua sub-district, Doi Saket district, Chiang Mai province had low English proficiency.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and Skills Needed for Communicative English

Data from this study supported Hutchinson and Waters (1987) who claimed that English for Specific Purposes (ESP) needs to select learning contents mainly based on needs of the learner (Learner-centered approach). Moreover, Richards and Rodger (2001) revealed that learning ESP is to be responsive to the needs of the learner to acquire English knowledge

for a specific occupation such as physician, nurse, engineer, and so on. That is, these people want to use English for specific purposes in their actual workplaces. This study collected data from people in organic rice production such as rice farmers and their siblings, district agricultural officers, housewives and merchants selling products from rice. The researcher designed the English lessons specifically to meet the needs and satisfaction of the learner in order to develop their English language skills and increase their incomes.

According to this study, it was found that the participants in Luang Neua sub-district, Doi Saket district, Chiang Mai province wanted to learn speaking and listening skills the most . This supported research related to English for Specific Purposes (ESP) which found that most learners want to develop speaking and listening for effective English for communication in an actual workplace (Nomnian, 2014a; Nomnian, 2014b; Namtapi, 2022). This also confirmed Hutchinson and Waters (1987) findings that ESP education used to focus mainly on the language's linguistic features but has shifted towards the development of communication skills and teaching tailored to the individual needs of learners in order to master the language. As a result, needs analysis is a crucial step in designing ESP courses as it provides the basis for teachers to create syllabi, curriculum content, teaching materials, activities, and instructional methods that can enhance learners' success in learning English.

The Role of English Needs Analysis for Innovation in English Language Teaching and Learning

The data from the needs analysis were able to benefit local vendors in Luang Neua sub-district, Doi Saket district, Chiang Mai province in the form of innovation, namely designed lessons, booklets and applications which served as convenient and portable means of self-learning following the training. These tools were easily accessible and could be used at any time, free of cost. Moreover, by making use of the lessons from the application, they could practice their listening skills, improve pronunciation, and familiarize themselves with

the English accent of native speakers. This approach aligns with the concept that the direction of learning is determined by the learning needs, while considering factors such as how learners approach language learning, their reasons for doing so, and the resources available to facilitate their learning, as stated by Hutchinson and Waters (1987). To cater to the individual preferences of learners, learning materials, modes of learning, and time allocations were customized accordingly. This study confirms that English language needs analysis plays a crucial role in fostering innovation in Thailand. Conducting a needs analysis allows policymakers, educators, and stakeholders to identify the specific language skills and competencies needed to drive innovation forward. By examining the need for linguistic abilities and skills of the learners, it becomes possible to design a tailored English language lesson. This study also proves that a comprehensive needs analysis can uncover potential gaps and challenges, leading to the development of a language course design and innovation.

Language Motivation and Attitudes for Elderly Learners

The researcher found that the participants in Luang Neua sub-district had instrumental motivation. This aligned with the findings of Choomthong and Chaichompoo (2015) which indicated that the learners had good attitudes towards learning English and believed that English could be a useful tool for earning a living and improving their livelihood. In this study, it was also found that although the target group's age range was 50-65 years, they had a high level of instrumental motivation and wanted to develop their English proficiency for commerce and increased incomes.

In a society in which the population is aging, Luang Neua sub-district, the setting of the current study, is no exception, it is crucial to examine the motivation behind learning English among middle-aged and elderly individuals. Elderly learners may have different motivations for learning English compared to younger learners, as they may not necessarily be seeking language proficiency for career advancement or education purposes. This

corresponds to Ma (2022) who studied 140 Chinese English learners aged between 45 to 70 by combining the document analysis and questionnaires. It was discovered that the main language motivations of the participants of Luang Neua sub-district were the demand for communication, social responsibility, and self-improvement. Thus, teaching activities for middle-aged and elderly learners here should include the communicative function of English and provide opportunities for practice. The findings from the current study is congruent with Ma (2022) in that elderly learners' language learning motivation should be taken into account when designing a course particularly when the motivation to learn a language is for communication. It can be said that the older learners' English language motivation may stem from a desire to communicate successfully with foreign customers to sell more products. Although some elderly learners aged between 50-65 may experience a decline in cognitive abilities, their motivation to learn English is high.

Conclusion

The current study completed only the three pillars of ESP which are the needs analysis, learning objectives and materials and methods although it was suggested by Anthony (2018) and Mobashshernia (2020) that there should be the four pillars of ESP for a course design. The evaluation process was not completed for the current study. However, the findings revealed that the local Thai Rice product vendors in Luang Neua sub-district, Doi Saket district, Chiang Mai province, Thailand had a high demand to learn English, regardless of their age, in order to communicate with the customers who don't speak Thai. Their main learning objective is to improve speaking and listening skills on topics such as asking about prices, describing processes of making Thai rice desserts and describing health properties of the products they sell at the local market in Luang Neua sub-district. They were also found to have instrumental motivation to learn English, believing that knowing English and being able

to communicate in English could help better their standard of living because they could sell more products in a local market to customers who don't speak Thai.

Results of the needs analysis from this study were used to design learning methods in the form of innovative English training to Thai desserts vendors around Luang Neua sub-district, Doi Saket district, Chiang Mai province. The types of innovation included designed lessons, a booklet and an application. English lessons were prepared for basic English communication at a local market as needed. An application for self-learning following the training was provided to the participants. This can be regarded as integrated research work to serve society.

Findings of this study are able to constitute the design of lessons for training the local Thai rice product vendors in Luang Neua sub- district to communicate with foreign customers at the local market. Following the training, they can use a booklet and application designed by the researcher based on needs analysis for self-study. This study involves organic rice farmers and vendors who sell products from Thai rice, Thai desserts and other healthcare products made from Thai rice. Added value of these products or increased incomes of the participants and interested groups are main objectives aside from the development of English proficiency in terms of speaking and listening for basic communication.

The researcher perceives that knowledge about communicative English should not only be limited to the English teachers and the students but also interested parties such as the farmers, merchants, vendors, and housewives, regardless of their age. These groups of individuals expressed a desire to learn English to communicate with their customers about the properties of organic rice, the process of making Thai desserts, the ingredients of Thai desserts, and so on.

Limitations and Suggestions of the Study

The researcher did not administer pretests and posttests since the sample group had assessed and perceived themselves at a low level of English. The researcher only conducted participatory observation and note-taking during the training. It was found that the target group had a moderate level of communicative English skills related to the topic of organic rice, products from Thai rice and Thai desserts. It is recommended that pretests and posttests be conducted. These can be in the form of an interview or systematic observation. Finally, there should be periodic monitoring and evaluation of English language use based on the English lessons, booklet, and application as proposed by Anthony (2018) and Mobashshernia (2020) on the four pillars of ESP. Note taking of strong and weak points as well as actual benefits from concerned parties could be conducted and evaluated to ensure efficacy of the course design and its innovation.

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