

# THE EFFECT OF EXPLORING A TARGET NEEDS ON DECISION MAKING ON THE JOB TRAINING OF BUSINESS ENGLISH STUDENTS

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**Abstract** - One of the difficulties that several fourth-year undergraduates have to face occurs when they have to make a decision where to do their job training. One possible reason might be due to a lack of exploring their prospective careers in the real world. Due to such lack, it might be difficult for the students to make a proper decision on the career, position, and organization which are really appropriate for them. To fulfill the gap, Business English program at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University has invited current and experienced workers from several different careers to give the students some overviews of the job descriptions and the required qualifications in those particular jobs. However, many students still think that they had made a wrong decision after they completed their job training. This study then aims to act as a guideline to allow the students explore the real working world so that they can eventually make their decision on the job training more properly. To achieve it, the students were assigned to survey the needs of English in the careers which they are interested in joining on their job training by interviewing. Then, they need to write their reflections toward their decisions on job training. From the findings, it is not clear if learning the target needs helps the students make their decisions on where to join the job training easier since there seem to be many factors affecting their decisions. However, what they gain is the positive attitudes toward English language practice, and the significance of using English in the real world of working.

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**Index Terms** - Business English, Job training, Needs analysis, Target situation needs

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## I. INTRODUCTION

English subject is one of the subjects that have been included in Thai curriculum for a long time [1]. However, due to the establishment of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) since 2015 which has affected every aspect of Thailand [2], English skills become more important than ever, especially in business settings.

Therefore, curricula of Business English Program of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, has been improved to serve the current situation and fulfill the needs of entrepreneurs in both local and international business. One of the attempts that have been made is adding a course for job training. The goal is to strengthen the abilities of Business English students to be ready to enter the real working world after graduation. All of the fourth-year Business English students are required to attend 450-hour job training in any workplaces but the basic requirement is that the job description must be related to the application of English language which is the major focus of the curriculum.

Examples are such as tourism business, airline business, hotel business and logistic business. The problem is that, in the past few years, many students admitted that they are disappointed with their own decisions on the training places. That is, while some students think that their experiences were as superb as they expected, many think that they have chosen the wrong fields of work, positions, or organizations for their job trainings. This raises the program the

question how the students select where to do their job training. In fact, Business English program has already tried to establish guidelines for choosing workplaces for students in order to help the students make the right decisions for their job trainings that really match their preferences, skills and qualifications.

Still, it seems that the provided guidelines are probably insufficient to help the students make the right and suitable decisions. Since the choices of the training places depend on the students themselves, we think it is necessary to find an effective way to help them choose their training places that are truly suitable for them. We think that it is urgent to find the solutions in order to help the students make appropriate decisions on their job training to improve the course and strengthen the curriculum.

This study argues that one possible way to solve this problem is finding a way that allows students to directly involve their future careers. To achieve it, there are several ways; however, this study argues that one possible way is conducting a needs analysis.

This is because needs analysis has been acknowledged by several scholars (e.g. [3], [4], and [5]) that it has a vital role in the process of designing and carrying out any language course [6]. In the 1970s that needs analysis first entered the literature on ESP as a formal concept and during this decade was largely defined in terms of the target situation analysis (TSA). TSA can be referred to what learners are required to do with the foreign or second language in the target situation [7]. According to Iwai et al. cited in Songhori [6], it is

stated that needs analysis usually refers to the activities that are involved in collecting information. This information then will become the resource for developing a curriculum in order to serve the needs of a particular group of students. In other words, the collected information might then be the main resource for developing courses for particular groups.

## II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to investigate the preferable qualifications and job descriptions of the Business English students' prospective careers for their job trainings. This study then aims to act as a guideline for the students to make their decision more properly and carefully by exploring the real working world.

## III. METHODOLOGY

First, each student surveys needs of English in his/her prospective career by interviewing three current workers. The interviews were differently designed to investigate the needs of English in different fields of business settings such as hotel, airline, tourism, and logistics. Each student had to interview three workers working in the careers s/he intends to work after graduate.

Then, each of them had to write a reflection on what s/he had learned from the interviews and indicate with reasons whether s/he would like to change where to attend the job training or not. The students' reflections were content-analyzed for recurring themes and categories. This study focuses on only 65 undergraduates who are fourth-year students majoring in Business English program at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

## IV. RESULTS

After having the interviews with the current workers, the 65 students were asked to write their reflections towards decision making on where to attend their job training. Their reflections have been quantified and presented in Figure 1. The results demonstrate that 82% (53 students) confirm their prior ideas about the fields and prospective workplaces whereas 18% (12 students) of the students had reconsidered other alternative workplaces and fields of careers and finally made the other decision.

It is also worth noticing that within 53 students who still decide to do their job trainings at the same place they have predetermined, a large numbers of 51 students are determined to attend the job training in the workplace and in the exact field they had already chosen earlier while there were two students willing to choose the same field of career, yet heading towards larger organizations.

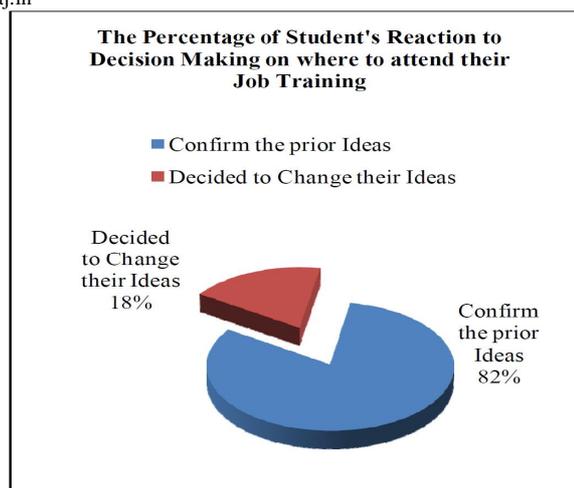


Figure 1 Percentage of Student's Reaction to Decision Making on where to attend their Job Training

In the students' reflections, the students also gave their reasons why they want to change the workplaces to attend. Their reasons are shown in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1: Student's reasons to change the workplace to attend the job training.

| Reasons   | Percentage |
|---|------------|
| 1. The job should be suitable with their personalities.                                 | 66.67      |
| 2. The job descriptions do not match with the schema or background knowledge they have. | 33.33      |

From this table, there are only two reasons for the students to reconsider and change their decisions. The first one is related to their own personality. The students think that the job should be suitable with their personalities, which stands at 66.67%, while the others think that the job descriptions do not match with the schema or knowledge they have, which is at 33.33%. The students' reasons why they still desire to do their job trainings at the same fields, positions, and organization they have intended are presented in Table 2 as follows:

Table 2: The Percentage of Student's reasons to continue choosing the same workplace as intended earlier to attend the job training.

| Reasons  | Percentage |
|--|------------|
| 1. There is an opportunity to be employed after graduation.  | 3.77       |
| 2. There is an opportunity to use and practice their English skills while training.                          | 11.32      |
| 3. There is an opportunity to experience the real world of working which unexpected circumstances may occur. | 11.32      |
| 4. The impression of the job   | 16.98      |
| 5. Their English competency meets the requirements of the jobs.  | 11.32      |
| 6. The job descriptions match with their personalities.  | 33.96      |

|  |      |
|--|------|
| 7. The commute is convenient.  | 1.89 |
| 8. They want to try.   | 5.66 |
| 9. Their interest in the careers remains, but they're heading towards larger organizations | 3.88 |

As can be seen in Table 2, the highest percentage of student's reasons to continue choosing the same workplace as intended stays at 33.96%, which mentions about the job descriptions that match with their personalities. The second highest percentage of the reasons for the issue is the impression of the job, which stands at 16.98%. Three reasons gain the third rank at 11.32%, which are an opportunity to use and practice their English skills while training, an opportunity to experience the real world of working which unexpected circumstances may occur and the English competency meeting the requirements of the jobs. Surprisingly, the convenient commute is also considered the lowest percentage of the students' reasons in decision making. It's worth noting that 3.88% of students have no intention to change their decision, yet they're heading towards larger organizations instead.

## DISCUSSION

After conducting a needs analysis by interviewing three workers whose careers are involved in the fields the Business English students are aiming to attend their job training, it is not quite clear whether acknowledging the target needs assists the students in making decision on choosing the workplaces. There are only a few students had changed the decisions. They mentioned only two reasons affecting them; one is their own personalities and the other is the background knowledge they have. The students commented that after exploring each job in which they are interested they are aware that the job descriptions are more detailed than they expected. They realized that their qualifications of both personality and knowledge of that specific areas particularly the English proficiency may not meet the standards of the requirement; therefore, they decided to change to other fields of work.

On the other hand, after knowing the job descriptions in details a large number of students insist on working at their ideal workplaces instead of changing. The main reason was that the job descriptions match with their personalities, which is similar to those who changed their mind. In this case, the research helps to confirm the guidelines Business Program had provided earlier for the students so they believe that they are on the right tracks.

The impression of the job is another factor that keeps students choosing the ideal workplace. Their ideas of the ideal job encourage how they decide the place for their job training no matter how difficult it would be. This shows the good sign of breaking through their

own comfort zones; they need to be well prepared and learning a lot of new things for these challenges, which finally benefit them anyhow. They also hope to be able to have an opportunity to get employed at the organizations after graduation or at least in the same area of work, for they believe that their experience in that kind of work might be an advantage against other applicants when time comes.

Another factor affects their decision focuses on their abilities; opportunity to use and practice their English skills while training, an opportunity to experience the real world of working which unexpected circumstances may occur and an opportunity to use their English competency which meets the requirements of the jobs. The students concern about the English competency. They are ready to use the language skills and simultaneously having a chance to practice and improve the language competency. Working in the real situation helps increase their experience in every aspect such as the prompt decision making, dealing with unexpected circumstances, etc. The students want to use what they have learned –English, and what they are going to learn in the future – working experience, to strengthen their abilities in order to work for good organizations with high salary, which is possibly challenging for new graduates in the competitive working atmosphere.

There is one interesting point from the findings which is their interest in the careers remains, but they're heading towards larger organizations. They realized that the organizations they chose may not highly benefit them the most, they, then, pondered and finally change towards another organization. They believe that the latter will be able to provide much information, more workloads, etc. for them to receive much more experience than the former one in all aspects. They agree that larger organizations sometimes present greater opportunity to learn the real life working.

The entrepreneurs themselves commented some useful information for the program to improve the curriculum. The suggestions are such as the students need to be more eager to learn new things, the program should provide a variety of subjects for students to choose, etc.

## CONCLUSION

This study aims to survey the preferable qualifications and job descriptions of the Business English students' prospective careers for their job training in order to create useful guidelines for the students to carefully make decisions for their job training. From the findings, it is not quite certain that learning the target needs helps the students make their decisions easier since there seems to be many factors affecting their decisions. However, they gain some positive attitudes

toward English language practice, and the significance of using English in the real world of working. The students realized that it is significant prepare themselves in advance so that if their abilities and English proficiency meets the required standard, they have higher opportunity to be employed. This is what they should concern. In addition, they have a chance to analyze and evaluate themselves in the aspect of their own personalities and abilities in order to make decision on their future job training. Further study might conduct on creating guidelines or suggestions from the direct experience of the Business English forth year students which they had gained after accomplishing their job training.

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