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A Study of Problems, Needs, and Language Skills of Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club Members

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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this research were 1) to study problems, needs and language skills of Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club members in three aspects: problems, needs and language skills 2) to compare the club members' problems, needs and language skills according to the club members' gender, age and career, and 3) to gather supplemental suggestions. Research samples were 180 club members in the second semester of 2015 academic year, derived through simple random sampling technique. The instruments used for gathering the data were the rating-scale and open-ended questionnaire. The statistics used for analyzing the data were frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test, F-test, and content analysis. The research findings were as follows: 1. Problems, needs and language skills of Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club as a whole was at high level ($\bar{x} = 3.62$). When considered in each aspect, it was found that their needs and language skills were at high level ($\bar{x} = 3.82$, $\bar{x} = 3.56$) respectively. For the rest aspect, it was founded that their problems were at moderate level ($\bar{x} = 3.49$). 2. The club members with different genders showed no significant differences in overall and in each aspect. 3. The students with different ages showed no significant differences in overall. When considered in each aspect, it was found that there were statistically significant differences at .05 level on languages skills. 4. The students with different careers showed statistically significant differences in overall at .05. When considered in each aspect, it was found that there were statistically significant differences at .05 level on needs and language skills. 5. Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club members had supplemental suggestion: public relation should be informed to enhance more club members, the club should have more various activities to motivate the new members, and the club members should participate in the club meeting regularly.

Keywords: Problems, Needs, Language Skills, Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club

Introduction

At present, Toastmasters Club in Thailand has been expanding more than 20 clubs around Bangkok and in other provinces, and the dates of the club meetings are arranged depending on each club such as Wednesday, Friday and Sunday at different places and environments. The club meeting is conducted either in English or Thai language.

In order to be fluent in studying English for Communication, students have to practice speaking to be successful in English communication, therefore they will have more confidence as well as they need to develop their speaking skill according to various situations or assigned tasks. Speaking is considered as an important skill since it is seen as fundamental for communication (Vaitayavanich.2002:1). In addition, Ur (1981:2) said that speaking skill is considered as the most important skill as well as important for every day's life.

Unwattanakul (1997: 167) also said that speaking is the most important and necessary skills in studying foreign languages because speaking is an act of passing on thought, understanding and feelings to the listeners in order to acknowledge the speaker' purpose for communication in everyday life. However, speaking skill is rather a complicated language causing by a long term practice, not by understanding or memorizing. Therefore, English for communication class at present should more focus on an importance of communication skill such as setting Toastmasters club meeting.

Thai-Nichi Institute of Techonology has started Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club supported by the President of TNI on April 2015 in order to bring more TNI students, lecturers and officers to participate for English public speaking for the benefit of their future study and career.

However, since Toastmasters Club has just been started for the first year, it causes many problems of managing the club as well as practicing English speaking such as finding more members from most of TNI students, co-operation of the club officers, regularity of participant of the club members, courage to speak in public of the club members. The researcher aims to study problems, needs and language skill of Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club members. The result of this research will be guidelined for improvement and development in teaching-learning and club managemnet for the next occasion.

Research purposes
1) To study problems, needs and language skills of Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club members in three aspects: problems, needs and language skills
2) To compare the club members' problems, needs and language skills according to the club member's gender, age and career
3) To gather supplemental suggestions.

Methodology

Population and Samples
This research was to study problems, needs and language skills of Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club members which consisted of population and samples as follows:

Population of this research was 500 TNI students in 3 faculties of Engineering, Information Technology and Business Administration in the first semester of 2015 academic year including TNI officers and lecturers. Samples of the research were 180 club members derived through simple random sampling technique. The instruments used for gathering the data were the rating-scale and open-ended questionnaire. The statistics used for analyzing the data were frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test, F-test, and content analysis.

Instrumentation
The instrument used in this study is a questionnaire. The questionnaire was constructed by the researcher, based on a study of problems, needs and language skills of Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club members

The first part (Part 1) of this questionnaire asks for the demographic information on their genders, ages and occupations. The participants were asked to report their information by ticking in only one box.

The second part (Part 2) concerns a study of problems, needs and language skills of Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club members. This part comprises 40 items of a study of problems, needs and language skills of Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club members in 3 major areas: 12 items of Problems, 13 items of Needs, and 15 items of Language skills. The participants were asked to check by ticking in only one box under the five levels of importance on each item in

Part 2 to indicate their problems, needs and language skills of Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club in each area listed in the questionnaire.

The five levels of problems, needs and language skills used in the questionnaire are "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Neither agree nor disagree", "Disagree" and "Strongly disagree". Responses from the student questionnaires were subsequently coded. The data of the students' coded responses were statistically calculated and analyzed. The computation of Cronbach's Alpha as a measure of reliability was employed to indicate how reliable the research questionnaire results are. Reliability is defined as the proportion of the students' responses to each item in the questionnaire and the reliability coefficient or calculated alpha is a lower bound of the true reliability of the research instrument, or the questionnaire. The descriptive statistics is also used to determine the individual summary statistics for each of the 40 items in the questionnaire.

The third part (Part 3) asks for more opinions and suggestions of Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club members about a study of problems, needs and language skills which based on open-ended questions.

Data collection

A study of problems, needs and language skills of Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club members were accessed through the questionnaire in the first semester of 2015 academic year.

The administration of the research questionnaire was conducted in Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club. Part 1 concerns the demographic variables about their genders, ages and faculties. The 40 items of Part 2 cover problems, needs and language skills of Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club members. Therefore, the participants were requested to consider each item carefully and indicate how important each item was for their study. A total of 180 Club members completed the questionnaire. The club members' responses from the questionnaire were subsequently coded using computer program as follows: "1 = male and 2=female" for genders; 1 = 18-25 year, 2 = 26-34 year, 3 = 35-40 year, 4 = 40 and over for ages; "1 = students, 2 = TNI officers and 3=TNI lecturers for occupations and "1=strongly disagree, 2 =disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree" for each of the five levels of importance on 40 items in Part 2.

The analyses of the research data were conducted by means of descriptive statistics. The descriptive statistical analyses of the frequencies and percentages of the club members' responses were employed to report their demographic variables and to indicate the rank order of the items in each area of problems, needs and language skills of Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club members listed in the questionnaire. The frequency distributions were analyzed to determine the proportions of the students' responses to the five levels of importance on the 40 items in 4 majors area: 12 items of Problems, 13 items of Needs and 15 items of Language skills. Process analysis was conducted with the second research question in determining the associations of the participants' problems, needs and language skills of Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club to each of these demographic variables: genders, ages and occupations.

Data Analysis from Questionnaire

Data analysis from questionnaire both single item and whole questionnaire which presented a form of rating scale. These rating scales were calculated to find out mean and standard deviation and then translated based on criteria developed by Best (1981) as follows:

$1.00 <= \bar{x} < 1.50$ refers to the club members strongly disagree on problems, needs and language skills of Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club

$1.51 <= \bar{x} < 2.50$ refers to the club members disagree on problems, needs and language skills of Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club

$2.51 <= \bar{x} < 3.50$ refers to the club members neither disagree nor agree on problems, needs and language skills of Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club

$3.51 <= \bar{x} < 4.50$ refers to the club members agree on problems, needs and language skills of Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club

$4.51 <= \bar{x} < 5.00$ refers to the club members strongly agree on problems, needs and language skills of Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club

The statistics used for analyzing the data

The collected data was analyzed using a computer program. The statistics used for analyzing the data were frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test, f-test, and content analysis.

Results

Results of Data Analysis

Phase 1 The results of demographic variable of Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club members

The analysis of the data from the club members' questionnaire reported by the club members in the 2015 academic year is presented in the first section deals with the demographic variables from the club members' responses to Part 1 of the questionnaire: genders, ages and careers as following table.

Table 1

Table of the results of demographic data of respondents

Demographic data of respondents	n=180	Percentage
1. Genders		
1.1 Male	120	66.70
1.2 Female	60	33.30
Total	180	100
2. Ages		
18-25 Year	160	88.90
26-34 Year	7	3.90
35-40 Year	7	3.90
40 Year and over	6	3.30
Total	180	100
3. Occupations		
Students	162	90.00
Officers	4	2.20
Lecturers	14	7.80
Total	351	100

Table showed that percentages of Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club respondents in genders ranged from 66.70% for male and 33.30% for female; in ages ranged from 88.9% for 18-25 year, 3.90% for 26-34 year, 3.90% for 35-40 year and 3.30% for 40 year and over; in occupations ranged from 90.00% for students, 2.20% for officers and 7.80% for lecturers.

Phase 2 Problems, needs and language skills of Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club members

Table 2
Table of mean and standard deviation of problems, needs and language skills of Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club members in total

Components	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level
Problems	3.49	0.68	moderate
Needs	3.82	0.60	high
Language skills	3.56	0.65	high
Total	3.62	0.64	high

The table above indicated that the club members had a high level of needs and language skills in overall (=3.62). When considered in each aspect, it was found that the club members had a high level of needs and language skills. For problems area was at moderate level.

Phase 3 The results of the comparison of problems, needs and language skills according to genders, ages, and occupations

Table 3
Table of mean and standard deviation of problems, needs and language skills according to genders

Components	Male (M) n=120		Female (F) n=60		t	p
	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	$\bar{x}$	S.D.		
Problems	3.42	0.66	3.61	0.71	0.20	0.65
Needs	3.78	0.62	3.88	0.57	0.39	0.53
Language skills	3.52	0.64	3.64	0.68	1.24	0.26
Total	3.57	0.64	3.71	0.65	0.61	0.48

The table showed that the club members with different genders had no statistically significant differences in total and in each aspect.

Table 4
Table of comparison of problems, needs and language skills according to ages

Components		SS	df	MS	F	p
Problems						
	Between groups	3.204	3	1.068	2.340	.075
	Within groups	80.315	176	.456		
	Total	83.519	179			
Needs						
	Between groups	2.678	3	.893	2.488	.062
	Within groups	63.159	176	.359		
	Total	65.838	179			

Components		SS	df	MS	F	p
Language skills						
	Between groups	4.751	3	1.584	3.839	.011
	Within groups	72.610	176	.413		
	Total	77.362	179			

* Statistical significance at 0.05 level

The table showed that the club members with different ages had no differences at 0.05 level in total and in each aspect.

Table 5
Table of comparison of problems, needs and language skills according to occupations

Components		SS	df	MS	F	p	Sheffe'
Problems							
	Between groups	.041	2	.020	.043	.958	
	Within groups	83.478	177	.472			
	Total	83.519	179				
Needs							
	Between groups	2.736	2	1.368	3.837	.023	
	Within groups	63.102	177	.357			
	Total	65.838	179				
Language skills							
	Between groups	3.986	2	1.993	4.807	.009	Students-
	Within groups	73.376	177	.415			Lecturers
	Total	77.362	179				

* Statistical significance at 0.05 level

The table showed that the club members with different occupations had no statistically significant differences in total. When considered in each aspect, it was found out that there were statistically significant differences at 0.05 level in Language skills.

Phase 4 The results of opinions and suggestions of problems, needs and language skills of Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club members
The club members had supplemental suggestions as following:
   1. Public relation should be informed to enhance more club members.
   2. The club should have more various activities to motivate the new members.
   3. The club members should participate in the club meeting regularly.

Conclusions
According to the study and data analysis, the results of this study were concluded as follows:

Phase 1: The results of demographic variable of Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club members
Percentages of Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club respondents in genders ranged from 66.70% for male and 33.30% for female; in ages ranged from 88.90% for 18-25 year, 3.90% for 26-34 year, 3.90% for 35-40 year and 3.30% for 40 year and over; in occupations ranged from 90.00% for students, 2.20% for officers and 7.80% for lecturers.

Phase 2: Problems, needs and language skills of Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club members

The club members had a high level of needs and language skills in overall ($\bar{x}$=3.62). When considered in each aspect, it was found that the club members had a high level of needs and language skills. For problems area was at moderate level.

Phase 3: The results of the comparison of problems, needs and language skills according to genders, ages, and occupations

1. The club members with different genders had no statistically significant differences in total and in each aspect.

2. The club members with different ages had no differences at 0.05 level in total and in each aspect.

3. The club members with different occupations had no statistically significant differences in total. When considered in each aspect, it was found out that there were statistically significant differences at 0.05 level in Language skills.

Phase 4: The results of suggestions of problems, needs and language skills of Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club members as following:

1. Public relation should be informed to enhance more club members.
2. The club should have more various activities to motivate the new members.
3. The club members should participate in the club meeting regularly.

Discussion

According to the study and data analysis, the results of this study can be discussed as follows:

1. Problems of Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club members were at moderate level in overall. This might be because the club members cannot think of anything to say and they have no motivation to express themselves which related to the idea of Rivers (1968) who believes that the learners have nothing to express maybe because they are not familiar with the speaking topics which is not suitable for the club members. Furthermore, it is difficult for many students to respond when the teachers ask them to say something in a foreign language because they might have little ideas about what to say, which vocabulary to use, or how to use the grammar correctly (Baker & Westrup, 2003).

2. Needs of Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club members were at high level. It might be because the club members required effective speaking skills and speaking development which related to Doff (1998) who states that speaking skills cannot be developed unless the listening skills are developed. Students must understand what is said to them to have a successful conversation. Moreover, Shumin (1997) shares the ideas of Doff (1998) by advocating that when one person speaks, the other responds through attending by means of the listening process.

3. Language skills of Thai-Nichi Toastmasters Club members were at high levels. It might be because the club members had self confidence and oral performance ability in using language for communication which related to the view of MacIntyre, et.al (1998) who study the effects of self-confidence on oral performance. The results of their study shows that the learners' willingness to communicate is determined partly by their self-confidence. Moreover, Park & Lee (2005) also examine the relationships between L2 learners' anxiety, self-confidence and oral performance. They reach a conclusion that self-confidence affects significantly on L2 learners' oral performance. If the learners are more confident, they might have better oral performance.

Acknowledgements

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