

Needs Analysis of English Language in Thai Performing Arts Profession

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Abstract

This study investigates the English language needs of Thai classical dance teachers in their professional context. The research objectives were to investigate the English language competencies required for effective international cultural exchange in Thai classical dance instruction and 2) identify the specific English language skills that Thai classical dance teachers lack in professional contexts. The researchers used a mixed-methods approach to collect quantitative data from 113 Thai classical dance teachers through questionnaires and qualitative data through open-ended questions. The research analyzed their necessities, lacks, and wants related to English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The quantitative findings revealed that cross-cultural communication skills were rated as most important ($\bar{x} = 3.80$, $SD = 1.03$), followed by speaking ($\bar{x} = 3.60$, $SD = 1.07$), listening ($\bar{x} = 3.57$, $SD = 0.98$), and writing skills ($\bar{x} = 3.51$, $SD = 0.96$). Notably, knowledge of social etiquette was identified as extremely needed ($\bar{x} = 4.12$, $SD = 1.09$). Regarding needs for specific English skills, vocabulary related to general workplace communication ($\bar{x} = 4.14$, $SD = 1.00$) and Thai dance terminology ($\bar{x} = 4.00$, $SD = 0.99$) were rated as most needed. Key competencies needed for international cultural exchange included knowledge of social etiquettes across cultures ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 1.09$), ability to explain Thai cultural concepts ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 0.97$), and vocabulary for workplace communication ($M = 4.14$, $SD = 1.00$). The qualitative analysis yielded significant English issues and challenges for Thai classical teachers, particularly emphasizing oral communication skills and pronunciation as critical areas for professional development. They strongly desired to improve their English proficiency, recognizing its importance in effectively managing classroom interactions, particularly in a performing arts context. The study recommends developing a specialized ESP curriculum in performing art context emphasizing cross-cultural communication and practical language skills in international cultural exchanges.

Keywords: Need analysis, English for specific purposes, English as a Lingua Franca, Performing arts, Thai classical dance

Introduction

English has become a pivotal linguistic bridge in an increasingly interconnected world, transcending national boundaries and facilitating intercultural communication across diverse academic and professional domains. As a global lingua franca, English is critical for knowledge dissemination, professional collaboration, and cultural exchange (Baker, 2021; Franco & Roach, 2018). Communicating effectively in English has become a fundamental competency across

various professional fields as nations increasingly engage in global economic and cultural networks (Fleming, 2021; Pachova & Carbó, 2019).

English has emerged as a crucial lingua franca within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), especially as regional integration strengthens. In Thailand, English functions as a practical communication tool and a strategic gateway for cultural exchanges, international tourism, and professional development (Education Ministry of Thailand, 2023).

Thailand's ongoing socio-economic development and global integration have elevated English to a vital communicative medium among non-native speakers. This facilitates cross-cultural exchanges across diverse linguistic backgrounds, essential for economic collaboration within the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) (Snodin et al., 2024; Thammakhan, 2024). For performing arts professionals, ASEAN integration creates numerous opportunities through regional cultural showcases, collaborative performances, and international festivals (Pachova & Carbó, 2019). These opportunities require practical cross-cultural communication skills, further highlighting the importance of English proficiency in the interplay between arts, language, and intercultural education (Fleming, 2021; Pachova & Carbó, 2019).

The intersection of linguistic diversity and contextual differences creates specialized educational challenges, particularly in multicultural interactions. This recognition has given rise to the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), a targeted approach to language education that tailors linguistic instruction to the precise communicative needs of specific professional and academic environments in distinct cultural contexts (Basturkmen, 2022). ESP research has expanded into various specialized domains. However, performing arts remain underrepresented in the literature. In particular, traditional cultural forms have received minimal attention in ESP studies.

Despite the recognized importance of English in professional contexts, performing arts professionals, particularly those involved in Thai classical dance, face significant challenges in mastering the language skills necessary for effective international engagement. The complex cultural context of Thai society, characterized by distinct linguistic and cultural norms, further complicates language learning in a multicultural world (Seidlhofer, 2011; Watcharakaweesilp, 2017). As a result of these challenges, a lack of intercultural communicative competence limits their ability to participate fully in multicultural interactions and professional development opportunities (Baker, 2021; 2022).

This study, recognizing these distinctive needs in professional cultural contexts, this study applies a needs analysis framework, a comprehensive approach to ESP needs assessment, to investigate the specific language

requirements of Thai performing arts professionals. Building on previous research on ESP in the global trends, this study targets explicitly the English language necessities. It identifies particular areas of difficulty regarding English language use among Thai classical dance teachers in performing arts contexts. By examining these specialized needs, this research aims to develop targeted pedagogical approaches that address this unique professional community's linguistic and intercultural communicative requirements.

Research questions:

1. What English language competencies are required for effective international cultural exchange in Thai classical dance instruction?
2. What specific English language skills do Thai classical dance teachers lack in professional contexts

Objectives:

1. To investigate the English language competencies required for effective international cultural exchange in Thai classical dance instruction.
2. To identify the specific English language skills that Thai classical dance teachers lack in professional contexts.

Literature review

Globalization and English as a Lingua Franca

Processes of globalization and international connectivity have driven the emergence of English as a global language. As societies worldwide become increasingly interconnected through trade, technology, and cultural exchange, English has become a common communication medium across diverse linguistic communities (Galloway & Rose, 2021). This phenomenon, often described as English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), refers to the use of English between speakers who do not share a native language (Jenkins, 2015). Furthermore, the spread of English reflects broader patterns of global integration, where communities previously isolated by geographic and linguistic barriers now participate in transnational communication networks (Baker & Ishikawa, 2021). Rather than representing mere linguistic imperialism, contemporary scholarship views ELF as a complex adaptive system that is shaped by its users worldwide (Seidlhofer, 2021). This perspective acknowledges how

English has been adopted and transformed according to local needs and contexts.

Within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), English is a primary medium for regional collaboration, cultural diplomacy, and professional mobility (Kirkpatrick, 2012). As an ASEAN member, Thailand has recognized English proficiency as a crucial for professionals engaging in global cultural and economic exchanges (Jindapitak, 2019; Thammakhan, 2024). Indeed, in professional domains ranging from business and science to arts and entertainment, English proficiency has become associated with access to international opportunities and resources (Kirkpatrick, 2012). This relationship between globalization and English serves pragmatic communication needs and influences cultural production, identity formation, and knowledge exchange across borders (Fleming, 2021; Pachova & Carbó, 2019).

Moreover, English in cultural exchange settings necessitates linguistic proficiency and understanding cultural nuances, including etiquette, symbolism, and performance-specific terminologies (Watcharakaweesilp, 2017). In this regard, researchers have emphasized that ELF in cultural sectors requires sensitivity to varying communication styles. This is especially relevant when high-context cultures, such as Thailand, interact with low-context cultures predominant in Western countries (Baker, 2021; Seidlhofer, 2011). While Western cultures often rely on direct verbal communication, Asian cultures like Thailand emphasize indirect communication and contextual understanding (Watcharakaweesilp, 2017). Therefore, this cultural dimension highlights the need for English language education explicitly specifically tailored to the demands of cultural professionals.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has emerged as a significant branch of English language teaching that focuses on meeting the particular linguistic needs of learners in specific professional or academic contexts. Unlike general English instruction, ESP is characterized by its targeted approach to language learning, addressing the precise communicative requirements of distinct professional domains (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Unlike general English instruction, ESP focuses on the language, skills, and genres required in specific

professional or academic contexts. Experts commonly categorize ESP professional contexts into three main branches: English for Academic Purposes (EAP), English for Occupational Purposes (EOP), and English for Vocational Purposes (EVP). These branches focus on meeting the specific language needs of learners in various disciplines within higher education and vocational training (Woodrow, 2018).

At the core of effective ESP curriculum development is the needs analysis process, which serves as the foundation for designing relevant and effective language programs (Basturkmen, 2010; Brown, 2016). Through this systematic process, educators identify the specific linguistic demands, communicative tasks, and cultural knowledge required in particular professional settings. Furthermore, needs analysis examines not only target language situations but also learners' current proficiency levels, learning preferences, and perceived challenges (Basturkmen, 2022).

Approaches of need analysis in ESP

Needs analysis forms the cornerstone of effective ESP program development, providing systematic insights into learners' requirements and professional demands (Long, 2005). The needs-oriented approach in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) emphasizes tailoring language education to the specific requirements of learners, particularly in professional and academic contexts. This approach is grounded in thorough needs analysis, which identifies learners' necessities, lacks, and wants, ensuring that the curriculum is relevant and effective. This systematic approach categorizes needs into target and learning needs, ensuring that curriculum and materials align with learners' professional and academic objectives. The ESP approach enhances the relevance and applicability of English language education by focusing on the real-world context in which learners will use the language (Brown, 2016).

Consequently, this methodical approach ensures that language instruction aligns with professional objectives and learner capabilities (Basturkmen, 2022; Long, 2005). Experts have developed several key approaches to needs analysis:

1. Target Situation Analysis (TSA), introduced by Munby (1978), focuses on identifying language requirements in the target professional context.

2. Present Situation Analysis (PSA) examines learners' language abilities and challenges (Richterich & Chancerel, 1980).

3. Learning Situation Analysis (LSA) considers learning preferences, strategies, and environmental factors affecting the learning process (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

Several studies have explored the role of English in the Thai tourism industry, emphasizing its impact on cultural exchange and economic development (e.g., Kaoian et al., 2024; Namtapi, 2022). However, limited research has focused specifically on the intersection of ELF and Thai performing arts education. The present study employs a comprehensive needs analysis framework that combines multiple approaches. Following Munby's (1978) Target Situation Analysis (TSA), it examines Thai classical dance teachers' specific English language requirements in their professional context. Additionally, it incorporates Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) Learning Situation Analysis (LSA) to investigate current challenges and desired outcomes. The mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative open-ended questions, aligns with Long's (2005) recommendations for thorough needs assessment in ESP contexts.

Research method

This current survey research study combined mixed-methods with quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. The study incorporated surveys and open-ended questions, which followed Long's (2005) and Brown's (2016) methodological framework for English language needs analysis, allowing for in-depth exploration of participants' experiences and needs.

Furthermore, the questionnaire was designed based on a comprehensive needs analysis framework that combines multiple approaches for ESP needs analysis, ensuring that both target situation needs (what learners need to do in the target situation) and learning needs (how learners might best acquire the language and skills required) were addressed.

Participants

The participants comprised 113 Thai classical dance teachers selected through convenience sampling

techniques from colleges across Thailand working under the Bunditpatanasilpa Institute of Fine Arts. The sampling criteria ensured representation across different age groups, educational backgrounds, teaching experience levels, and dance specializations (Khon and Lakorn). The researchers took this approach to capture the diversity of perspectives within the Thai classical dance teaching profession.

Research instruments

The researchers employed the needs survey questionnaire to investigate the English language necessities and needs of Thai Classical teachers. The questionnaire consisted of three parts: 1) the participants' general information, 2) the necessities regarding the English language in the professional areas of Thai performing arts, and 3) the lack of the English language in the target situation of performing arts areas. The researchers used a conceptual framework for needs analysis to design the questionnaire and open-ended questions combining approaches: Target Situation Analysis (TSA) for the necessities of the target language in the target situations (Munby, 1987), and Situation Analysis (LSA) for lacks, and wants of language (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

In the second part, the researchers arranged the items concerning language necessities on a five-point scale, ranging from 'not important' to 'most important'. The researchers designed the third part to identify language lacks using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from *least needed* to *extremely needed*. At the end of each part of the questionnaire, the researchers included four open-ended questions to explore additional suggestions and comments on the specific English language needs and challenges of Thai dance teachers in professional settings.

The questionnaire was conducted in Thai to avoid misunderstandings among the participants. To determine the content validity of all items, three experts in the field of English teaching evaluated the questionnaire using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) (Rovinelli & Hambleton, 1977). A score of ≥ 0.5 indicated valid content, with IOC values ranging from 0.78 to 1.00. Before data collection, the researchers conducted a pilot test with a sample of 15 Thai classical dance teachers who were not included in the main study, and they refined the questionnaire based

on the feedback from experts and pilot test. The total reliability of the questionnaire, calculated by Cronbach's Coefficient, was found to $\alpha = 0.97$. The

results of the inter-item reliability analysis were as follows:

Table 1 Inter-Item reliability (Cronbach's Alpha)

Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Language and Knowledge Necessities	0.92
Purposes for the Needs of Specific Listening Skills	0.80
Purposes for the Needs of Specific Speaking Skills	0.91
Purposes for the Needs of Specific Reading Skills	0.85
Purposes for the Needs of Specific Writing Skills	0.90
Purposes for the Needs of Specific Pronunciation Skills	0.86
Purposes for the Needs of Specific Cross-cultural Skills	0.81
Purposes for the Needs of Specific Grammatical Skills	0.81
Purposes for the Needs of Specific Vocabulary Skills	0.95

Data collection

The survey took place during the 2024 academic semester. The research employed an online survey approach (Google Forms) to facilitate the data collection procedure. The researchers distributed the survey through institutional coordinators at the Bunditpatanasilpa Institute of Fine Arts. Data collection procedures included: 1) obtaining institutional permission and ethical consideration. 2) distributing participant information. 3) sending questionnaire links to the participants. The number of retrieved questionnaires was 113.

Data analysis

The quantitative data obtained from the participant's responses to the Likert scale items were analyzed quantitatively using the method of Class Interval (Dean & Illowsky, 2008) to interpret the participants' levels of necessities and difficulties in the English language in professional areas of Thai performing arts as shown in Table 2. Descriptive statistics including, means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions, were calculated using SPSS statistic software for data analysis.

Table 2 The mean scores for interpretation

Mean Range	Interpret Necessity	Interpret Lacks
4.21 – 5.00	Most importance	Extremely needed
3.41 – 4.20	Very importance	mostly needed
2.61 – 3.40	Importance	moderately needed
1.81 – 2.60	Less importance	Slightly needed
1.00 – 1.80	Not importance	Least needed

For qualitative data from open-ended questions, thematic analysis techniques using a deductive approach were employed, with responses coded and categorized according to Braun & Clarke's (2021) six-phase approach to emerging themes (the necessities and lack of the English language). Two researchers independently coded the qualitative data to ensure

reliability, with discrepancies resolved through discussion. Integrating quantitative and qualitative findings employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018), where both data types were analyzed separately. Then, it merged during interpretation to provide complementary perspectives on the research questions.

Results

General information

The data obtained from the first part of the questionnaire demonstrated the respondents' background information. According to Figure 1, the total number of participants was 113 Thai classical

dance teachers. Among the 113 Thai classical dance teachers, female teachers outnumber males ($N = 70$, 61.9%) and ($N = 42$, 37.2%) respectively. The highest number of Thai dance teachers aged between 20 to 30 ($N = 39$, 34.5%) and 51 to 60 ($N = 29$, 25.7%). 31-40 ($N = 24$, 21.2%), 41-50 ($N = 20$, 17.7%).

Table 3 Demographic profile of Thai Classical Dance Teacher ($N = 113$)

		N	%
Gender	Male	42	37.2
	Female	70	61.9
Age	20 – 30 years old	39	34.5
	31 - 40 years old	24	21.2
	41 - 50 years old	20	17.7
	51 - 60 years old	29	25.7
	61 - 70 years old	31	27.4
Education background	Bachelor's degree	48	42.9
	Master's degree	54	48.2
	Doctoral degree	10	8.9
	Other	1	0.9
Dance role specialization	Male Lakorn roles	37	33.0
	Female Lakorn roles	35	31.3
	Male Khon roles	11	9.8
	Monkey Khon roles	13	11.6
	Demon Khon roles	16	14.3
Teaching experience	Less than 1 year	14	12.5
	1-5 years	33	29.5
	6-10 years	13	11.6
	11-15 years	8	7.1
	Over 15 years	44	39.3
Teaching level	Secondary level	47	42.0
	Vocational level	29	25.9
	Undergraduate level	36	32.1

Note: Lakorn refers to Thai classical dance drama, while Khon refers to Thai masked dance drama performances. N = number of respondents.

Table 2 presents the educational background of Thai classical dance teachers. The results of the questionnaire demonstrated that most of the Thai teachers held a master's degree ($N = 54$, 47.8% and a bachelor's degree ($N = 48$, 42.5%), and around 8% of the Thai dance teachers held a doctoral degree ($N = 10$, 8.8%). Researchers divided the 113 Thai dance teacher participants into five groups based on the dance characteristics in professional areas. Most of the participants were male Lakorn characters in the

performance ($N = 37$, 32.7%), followed by female Lakorn roles ($N = 35$, 31.0%), demon roles ($N = 16$, 14.2%), and monkey Khon roles ($N = 13$, 11.5%), respectively. The rest included those who had specific roles of Male Khon roles ($N = 11$, 9.7%).

Thai dance teachers' teaching experiences are varied. As shown in Table 3, a significant portion of Thai dance classical teachers had over 15 years of teaching experience ($N = 44$, 38.9%) and 1 to 5 years of teaching experience ($N = 33$, 29.2%). About 14% had

less than 1 teaching experience ($N = 14$, 12.4%), and 6 to 10 years of teaching experience ($N = 13$, 11.5%), respectively. Only a small percentage relative to the number of Thai classical dance teachers had 11-15 years of teaching experience ($N = 8$, 7.1%). The teaching distribution revealed that most of them taught at the undergraduate level ($N = 36$, 31.9%) with 41.6%

teaching at the secondary level ($N = 47$, 36%), followed by the vocational level ($N = 29$, 25.7%).

English language knowledge and skills needs in professional areas

The results obtained from the questionnaire investigated the need for English language knowledge and skills in professional areas.

Table 4 English language knowledge and skills needs in professional areas

Language and Knowledge Necessities	Mean	SD	Level of Necessity
Cross-cultural communication	3.80	1.03	Very importance
Speaking	3.60	1.07	Very importance
Listening	3.57	0.98	Very importance
Pronunciation	3.54	0.93	Very importance
Writing	3.51	0.96	Very importance
Vocabulary related to performing arts	3.48	0.86	Very importance
Grammar	3.41	0.94	Very importance
Reading	3.28	0.89	Very importance
Vocabulary related to general usage	3.17	0.81	Importance

Note: M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

As indicated in Table 4, Thai classical dance teachers most needed cross-cultural communication ($\bar{x} = 3.80$, $SD = 1.03$), speaking ($\bar{x} = 3.60$, $SD = 1.07$), listening ($\bar{x} = 3.57$, $SD = 0.98$), pronunciation ($\bar{x} = 3.54$, $SD = 0.93$), and writing ($\bar{x} = 3.51$, $SD = 0.91$) English language skills for development in professional areas. This mostly needed English knowledge and skills extended to vocabulary ($\bar{x} = 3.48$, $SD = 0.86$) and grammar ($\bar{x} = 3.41$, $SD = 0.94$). However, the Thai dance teachers considered reading ($\bar{x} = 3.28$, $SD = 0.89$), writing ($\bar{x} = 3.60$), and cross-cultural communication ($\bar{x} = 3.57$) as the most problematic aspects of the English language, followed by speaking, English vocabulary

used in Thai classical dance ($\bar{x} = 3.51$, $SD = 0.96$), listening, pronunciation, reading, vocabulary in daily life use. Vocabulary was also still needed by the two groups of teachers despite the least demand among other skills.

English Language needs of Thai classical dance teachers in listening skills

Based on the data in Table 5, the Thai classical dance teachers rated the for English language knowledge and skills in their professional areas for all specific purposes.

Table 5 Purposes for the needs of specific listening skills

Purposes for the Needs of Specific Listening Skills	Mean	SD	Level of Need
Understanding and following English conversation at workplace	4.01	1.02	Mostly needed
Understanding lectures in conferences, symposiums, and seminars related to performing arts	3.81	1.00	Mostly needed
Understanding and following instruction and explanation in performing arts	3.62	1.22	Mostly needed

Note: M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Regarding listening skills, the results from the questionnaire showed that they perceived all purposes for English listening skills as mostly needed, including understanding and following English conversation at the workplace ($\bar{x} = 4.01$, $SD = 1.02$), understanding lectures

in conferences, symposiums, and seminars related to performing arts ($\bar{x} = 3.81$, $SD = 1.00$), and understanding and following instruction and explanation in performing arts ($\bar{x} = 3.62$, $SD = 1.22$).

Table 6 Purposes for the needs of specific speaking skills

Purposes for the Needs of Specific Speaking Skills	Mean	SD	Level of Need
Oral participation in English conversation at works place	4.02	1.09	Mostly needed
Speaking in public in performing arts topics	3.99	1.01	Mostly needed
Discussing and giving opinions on performing arts topics	3.90	1.07	Mostly needed
Giving instructions in performing arts	3.54	1.13	Mostly needed
Giving advice and giving information related to preferring arts work.	3.77	1.08	Mostly needed
Giving explanations related to preferring arts work	3.72	1.04	Mostly needed

Note: M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

According to Table 6, the Thai classical dance teachers perceived English as being purposed specific speaking skills. They mostly needed to improve their skills in oral participation in English conversation at works place ($\bar{x} = 0.4.02$, $SD = 1.09$), speaking in public on performing arts topics ($\bar{x} = 0.3.99$, $SD = 1.01$), discussing and giving opinions on performing arts topics

($\bar{x} = 0.3.90$, $SD = 1.07$), followed by giving instructions in performing arts ($\bar{x} = 0.3.54$, $SD = 1.13$), giving advice and giving information related to preferring arts work ($\bar{x} = 0.3.77$, $SD = 1.08$), respectively. Giving explanations related to preferring artwork ($\bar{x} = 0.3.72$, $SD = 1.04$) is an additional area that the Thai classical teachers mostly needed to master.

Table 7 Purposes for the needs of specific reading skills

Purposes for the Needs of Specific Reading Skills	Mean	SD	Level of Need
Reading materials related to preforming arts	3.98	1.01	Mostly needed
Reading research and articles related to performing arts	3.90	1.00	Mostly needed
Reading textbooks related to performing arts	3.84	1.08	Mostly needed

Note: M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

The data indicated that the Thai classical dance teachers considered reading skills the most needed. The needs for developing specific skills were reading materials related to performing arts ($\bar{x} = 0.3.98$,

$SD = 1.01$), reading research and articles related to performing arts ($\bar{x} = 0.3.98$, $SD = 1.01$), and reading textbooks related to performing arts, ($\bar{x} = 0.3.84$, $SD = 1.08$), respectively.

Table 8 Purposes for the needs of specific writing skills

Purposes for the Needs of Specific Writing Skills	Mean	SD	Level of Need
Writing research and articles related to performing arts	3.95	1.05	Mostly needed
Descriptive writing related to performing arts work topics	3.86	1.02	Mostly needed
Narrative writing related to performing arts work topics	3.84	1.04	Mostly needed

Note: M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

The Thai classical dance teachers viewed writing research and articles related to performing arts as mostly needed skills to develop ($\bar{x} = 0.3.95$, $SD = 1.05$), descriptive writing related to performing arts work

topics ($\bar{x} = 0.3.86$, $SD = 1.02$), and narrative writing related to performing arts work topics ($\bar{x} = 0.3.84$, $SD = 1.04$) for specific writing purposes.

Table 9 Purposes for the needs of specific pronunciation skills

Purposes for the Needs of Specific Pronunciation Skills	Mean	SD	Level of Need
Standard English pronunciation	3.60	1.03	Mostly needed
Global English pronunciation	3.35	1.21	Moderately needed

Note: M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Table 9 depicts specific pronunciation development needs for Thai classical dance teachers ($\bar{x} = 3.60$, $SD = 1.03$). Thai classical dance teachers

rated Standard English pronunciation as mostly needed, while they rated Global English pronunciation as moderately needed ($\bar{x} = 3.35$, $SD = 1.21$).

Table 10 Purposes for the needs of specific cross-cultural skills

Purposes for the Needs of Specific Cross-cultural Skills	Mean	SD	Level of Need
Social etiquette knowledge (e.g., greeting protocols and formalities)	4.12	1.09	Extremely needed
Understanding of different cultural value systems	3.90	1.10	Mostly needed
Understanding of intercultural communication	3.42	1.25	Mostly needed

Note: M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

As indicated in Table 10, among all other skills development needed by the Thai classical teachers, social etiquette knowledge was extremely needed ($\bar{x} = 3.98$, $SD = 1.01$), followed by understanding of

different cultural value systems ($\bar{x} = 3.90$, $SD = 1.10$), and understanding of intercultural communication ($\bar{x} = 3.42$, $SD = 1.25$), respectively.

Table 11 Purposes for the needs of specific grammar skills

Purposes for the Needs of Specific Grammatical Skills	Mean	SD	Level of Need
Grammatical structures used in specialized academic writing (e.g., present participles passive, conditionals)	3.86	1.03	Mostly needed
Common grammatical structures (e.g., tenses, aspects, modality)	3.78	1.07	Mostly needed

Note: M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Regarding grammatical skills, Thai classical dance teachers reported they mostly needed grammatical knowledge and skills for structures used in specialized

academic writing ($\bar{x} = 3.86$, $SD = 1.03$) and common grammatical structures ($\bar{x} = 3.78$, $SD = 1.07$).

Table 12 Purposes for the needs of specific vocabulary skills

Purposes for the Needs of Specific Vocabulary Skills	Mean	SD	Level of Need
Vocabulary related to general usage at workplace	4.14	1.00	Mostly needed
Vocabulary related to Thai dance terminology	4.00	0.99	Mostly needed
Vocabulary related to movement in Thai dance performances	3.94	0.99	Mostly needed
Vocabulary related to Thai dance and drama's costumes and ornaments	3.88	1.06	Mostly needed
Vocabulary related to theater, light, and stages	3.82	1.10	Mostly needed
Vocabulary related to custom and rite of paying homage to Thai dance teachers	3.65	1.17	Mostly needed

Note: M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

As regards the need for vocabulary development, Table 12 shows that Thai classical dance teachers need all specific vocabulary needs. The participants ranked vocabulary related to general workplace usage as mostly needed compared to other areas in their professional context ($\bar{x} = 4.14$, $SD = 1.00$), followed by vocabulary related to Thai dance terminology ($\bar{x} = 4.00$, $SD = 0.99$), and vocabulary related to movement in Thai dance performances ($\bar{x} = 3.94$, $SD = 0.99$). Other additional areas in vocabulary skills mostly needed by Thai classical dance teachers are vocabulary related to Thai dance and drama's costumes and ornaments ($\bar{x} = 3.88$, $SD = 1.06$), vocabulary related to theater, light, and stages, respectively ($\bar{x} = 3.82$, $SD = 1.10$), and vocabulary related to custom and rite of paying homage to Thai dance teachers ($\bar{x} = 3.65$, $SD = 1.17$), respectively.

Findings from open-ended questions

The researchers analyzed the data obtained from the open-ended questions to explore additional comments or suggestions and to gain more detailed insights. Regarding English language needs, the Thai classical teachers stated that all English language skills are critical for their professional context. However, based on the findings, most Thai classical teachers emphasized the importance of oral communication skills. For instance, respondent number 42 reported that:

"English language is important for our profession. However, among all English skills, English oral communication is the skill that I would like to

improve the most. In the performing arts context, we must communicate orally in our practical dance and drama teaching."

Adding to this finding, one of the Thai classical dance teachers highlighted the issues for English pronunciation development.

"I would like to improve my English pronunciation skills. Good English pronunciation can make me feel more confident when I speak or communicate with others. Therefore, I think we should master both English pronunciation and communication skills." (Respondent number 19).

Therefore, the respondents claimed that Thai classical dance teachers value interactive and communication-oriented language skills more than receptive ones.

Discussion

The exploration of this study focuses on Thai classical dance teachers' needs and the lack of English language knowledge and skills required in the performing arts context. This study also included purposes for the needs of specific skills in professional areas. Regarding necessities, the findings indicated a high level of Thai classical dance teachers' awareness of English language knowledge and skills development. This awareness reflects the growing recognition among specialized professionals of the role of English in accessing international opportunities and networks, aligning with Basturkmen's (2020) observation that ESP awareness often precedes formal language training in

professional contexts. The results also showed that the Thai classical dance teachers perceived cross-communication skills as the most important skill at a very important level. This finding extends previous research on ESP for cultural professionals by highlighting the primacy of interpersonal communication skills over more technical linguistic competencies. This pattern diverges from findings in other professional ESP contexts where technical language often takes precedence (Bocanegra- Valle, 2016). The remarkable results are consistent with previous studies that specific English language skills have their own necessary and important in different professionals' specialized fields of study (Changpueng & Pattanapichet, 2023; Durongtham, Chusanachoti, & Iramaneerat, 2024; Namtapi, 2022; Sa-idi & Pittpant, 2024)

Considering the current challenges of specific English skills and functional language, the participants ranked knowledge of social etiquette as extremely needed among all items. They also expressed a desire to develop nearly all English skills and knowledge at the mostly needed level. This prioritization of social etiquette knowledge contrasts ESP needs analyses in other domains, where technical vocabulary and discipline-specific discourse patterns typically dominate (BI Pratiwi, 2022; Woodrow, 2018). The finding suggests that in performing arts contexts, particularly those involving traditional cultural forms like Thai classical dance, intercultural pragmatic competence may function as a gateway skill that enables other forms of professional communication (Fleming, 2021; Pachova and Carbó, 2019). Global English pronunciation had the lowest need at moderately needed level in real-world scenarios in the field of performing arts. This unexpected finding challenges dominant assumptions in ESP literature about pronunciation priorities and aligns with more recent sociolinguistic perspectives on English as a Lingua Franca that emphasize intelligibility over native-like pronunciation (Jenkins, 2015; Seidlhofer, 2021). This reflects that Thai classical teachers realized the significance of cultural differences or diversity (e.g., race, class, gender, age, ability, etc.). This aligns with Sa-idi and Pittpant (2024), who suggest that educators should consider cultural diversity should be considered when developing English curricula and materials that

focus on the practical applications of language skills in real-world contexts.

Suggestions

Recommendations and limitations for further research are concerning in this study. Based on the findings from the study on the English language needs and challenges of Thai classical dance teachers, the researchers propose pedagogical implications to enhance their language proficiency and professional effectiveness. First and foremost, curriculum developers should prioritize the integration of cross-cultural pragmatics and social etiquette into ESP courses for performing arts professionals, moving beyond the traditional focus on vocabulary and grammar. This approach should include explicit instruction in pragmatic features of intercultural communication, such as politeness strategies and register variation. Additionally, implementing targeted professional development training programs that emphasizing interactive learning and real-world scenarios can provide performing arts professionals with the necessary tools to improve their language abilities. Fostering collaborations with language institutions can further enhance the quality of these training programs while creating networking opportunities with English-speaking professionals in the arts can facilitate cultural exchange and practical language application. These recommendations aim to equip Thai classical dance teachers with the essential English language skills to thrive in their professional environments and engage effectively in international dialogues within the performing arts.

The researchers acknowledge several limitations in this study that should be addressed. The study primarily relied on quantitative data from questionnaires, with limited qualitative data from open-ended questions. Furthermore, the study did not include perspectives from other stakeholders, such as international collaborators, students, or administrators with different views on the English language needs in performing arts education. The narrow focus on Thai classical dance excluded other performing arts disciplines that might have different language requirements and challenges. For future research, a more extensive qualitative component through in-depth interviews or focus groups could provide deeper insights

into participants' needs and challenges. Expanding the scope to include diverse stakeholders and additional performing arts disciplines would create a more comprehensive understanding of English language needs in this specialized context.

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