

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH RESULTS

In this chapter the data collected from the instruments is discussed. First of all there is a discussion of the results of the perceived needs analysis. Following this, the results of the classes are discussed, firstly by looking at each individual component, how the participants responded to them, and their attitudes towards the classes. Then there is a discussion of the final class questionnaire and discussion. Then there are conclusions to the study and implications for future ESP courses in chapter five. There are also suggestions for further research. Lastly there are my final comments of the research.

Students' Perceived Needs Analysis Results

As was discussed in the instrument section, before the actual period of instruction started a small perceived Needs Analysis (NA) questionnaire was handed out to the participants (Appendix B). They were required to answer 13 items using a Likert scale. The format of each item was presented in typical fashion using five ordered response levels. Namely:

- 1) Strongly agree
- 2) Agree
- 3) No opinion
- 4) Disagree
- 5) Disagree strongly

The rationale behind giving out the NA to the participants was that indisputably NA is vital in the modern communicative classroom. An NA helps the instructor before the course starts by giving information about the students' perceived wants and needs. The instructor of course can choose to take these into account or ignore them. Much has been written about the importance of NA especially in ESP (see literature review).

My study was motivated by evidence that a proper NA of ESP students was frequently not carried out by stakeholders and instructors (Wright, 1992; Jasso-Aguilar, 1999; Kaur, 2007). I have also been employed to teach 'ESP' courses where there was no evidence of an NA having been carried out. This lack of preparation can lead to disagreement amongst the teaching triangle of students, stakeholders and instructor as to how effective a course was. It can also result in a lot of time, money, and energy being wasted for little purpose (Wright, 1992), which is in the interest of no one.

I will now outline the results of the student's perceived NA (Table 1.). It should be noted that the training manager of the hotel translated all items into Thai, to avoid problems of miscommunication. The training manager's level of English is high, so I am confident she translated the statements well. Participants were also told all individual answers were confidential and would not be disclosed to anyone. It was further stressed that participants answer as honestly as possible to avoid acquiescence bias.

Table 1. Perceived Needs Analysis Results

No	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
1	I need to learn more hotel vocabulary.	6	4			
2	I need to practice hotel role plays to become better at conversation.	3	4	2	1	
3	I want to learn general English for myself.	3	6		1	
4	I need general English to improve my spoken grammar.	5	4	1		
5	The materials I need to study are general English.	3	6	1		
6	The materials I need to study are Hotel English.	3	5	2		
7	I want the class to focus 50% on Hotel English and 50% on general English.	6	4			
8	Learning general English will help me more in my life.	5	3	1	1	
9	Learning Hotel English will help me more in my life.	3	5	2		
10	I want to learn about topics in English outside of the Hotel situation.	3	4	3		
11	I want this course to enable me to speak about myself in English.	6	4			
12	This course will match the hotels wants.	4	3	3		
13	I will like the Hotel English classes more than general English.	2	1	3	3	1

Item 1: The participants responded favorably to this statement with six strongly agreeing and four agreeing, therefore it is fair to say that the participants' attitudes towards hotel English is positive and they do feel that they can benefit from further instruction in this area. It also shows that the participants value their jobs and careers enough to learn more vocabulary even if they have mastered functional language needed for their day-to-day jobs.

Item 2: This item showed more variation than item 1, showing that indeed some participants felt they did not really need hotel role plays (2 had no opinion and 1 disagreed) and perhaps felt that typical hotel role plays were of limited usefulness in normal social conversation. This then shows that participants realize that hotel role plays are for a limited target situation and especially if not designed specifically for their job roles are not so useful. For example the negative answers were likely to have been given by the Audio/Visual staff.

Item 3: This item had similar results to item 1, in that three strongly agreed and six agreed. It does appear at this stage that the participants' perceive they need hotel English more than general English. One participant even disagreed that they wanted general English. However, the results were still positive for the belief that participants view general English as a positive factor for their lives. It also supports the premise that it is wise to include general English in a course.

Item 4: Again it appears that participants' value the teaching of general English with regards to their linguistic competence. Clearly ESP courses do not focus usually on grammar, a point made in the literature review. Therefore, it is further evidence to support including general English within an ESP course. Of course it could also be seen as evidence that the participants felt that their spoken grammar needed improving and not

necessarily by just general English. Clearly there is practice of correct grammatical structures within ESP as well.

Items 5 and 6: The response to these items clearly held no bias towards hotel or general English. It should be mentioned at this point that the participants may also be displaying acquiescence bias which is a common distortion when using Likert scales. However, the results still show the perceived need for general English is at least as strong as the need for hotel English. The training management at the hotel had a distinct bias towards hotel English; viewing the teaching of general English in the course as superfluous to their perceived needs (see later).

Item 7: All the participants' showed a positive response to this item, again supporting the use of the general English component alongside the specific English hotel component. This supports the results from items 3-6.

Items 8 and 9: These items were included to see if participants' thought that general English was of more use in their lives and is similar to item 3. The results are not as positive as item 3, perhaps because the participants' view their current jobs as integral part of their lives and hence perceive a contradiction between supporting one component more than another. It can be perceived that there is a slight acknowledgment in favor of general English versus hotel English. Also some participants' might view 'life' as synonymous with work. Although I believe there is a distinction.

Item 10: If a target situation analysis (TSA) has been correctly carried out by textbook designers then a hotel textbook would concentrate mainly on target situations within the framework of the hotel. Therefore the participants will not encounter topics outside of the hotel in an ESP hotel textbook. So I included this item to see if the participants' were interested in studying topics not related to hotels. The results were

favorable although it can be seen that three participants had no opinion. Clearly the general English component will introduce topics outside of the hotel situation.

Item 11: This item was included as it strongly supports the use of general English and issues of empowerment; namely are participants' able to talk about themselves. Clearly the results back the use of general English. One of the main differences between ESP and general English is that general English often uses the self as a springboard for discussion and communicative purposes in the classroom. So I view these 10 positive results as evidence strongly in favor of including the general English component.

Item 12: It was interesting to see that three respondents had no opinion on this item. I included the statement because I wanted to see if participants' realized that teaching a course with a general English component may not be what the hotel management wanted or perceived to be necessary. Therefore there is some evidence that participants' realize this.

Item 13: I was relieved to see that the response to this item was not at all positive and this reduces the evidence for acquiescence bias which I mentioned earlier. Indeed the results show a fairly even distribution with no clear opinion as to whether hotel classes will be liked more than the general English classes.

I believe that the results of the students' perceived needs analysis fully support integrating a general English component within an ESP course. The participants' showed no clear bias toward hotel English despite their employment in the hospitality sector. Furthermore they expressed a desire to study about topics outside of the hotel situation and to be able to speak about themselves as individuals; clearly this would not happen during a normal hotel focused ESP course.

The participants also realized that general English materials often focus on teaching grammar, more directly than in ESP materials and that grammar instruction will improve their speaking competence in English.

As a simple NA, I felt that it performed adequately. Clearly, the general positive responses and for example the results of items 5 and 6 seem to contradict themselves. However, this may be because the participants' view hotel English as important for their present lives and jobs, and view general English as important for personal growth, communicating with guests day to day and being able to express themselves better.

In the next section I will examine how the results of this needs analysis tie in with the participants' attitudes towards the two teaching components.

The Classes

Following is a write-up of the two components, the general English classes and hotel classes. Some of the responses of the after class discussions are given; namely the participants' comments. It should be noted that due to the participants' level of English and perhaps for socio-cultural reasons the after class discussions were more akin to question and answer sessions as participants seemed uncomfortable with discussing the class naturally. One reason for this is that they had probably never had a chance to give feedback on classes before so were unsure of the format and what to say. I tried to impress on the participants that all comments and feedback were welcome and all results were anonymous.

The instructor's perception of the class and participants is also discussed. Also reported are the results of the class questionnaires which were handed out every two weeks. The format is a report of the first two weeks of class leading up to the class questionnaire. Thus there are four sections for each component.

The General English Classes (Lessons 1-2)

The first two weeks of general English classes from the textbook consisted of “Section 5A: Tourist Trail” which had a focus on the ruins of Machu Picchu in Peru. This section focused on compound nouns and future plans with ‘going to’.

The second section taught was “Section 3B: Another Country” which had a focus on Scots living abroad, a choice perhaps influenced by the nationality of the instructor. The grammar area covered was some, many, and most. Appendix G is the result of the class questionnaire for this class. It should be noted that both sections have connections to travel and tourism and hence would appeal to the participants for work reasons as well as general or topic interest.

The instructor noticed a high level of motivation and positive attitude for these classes. One reason was that the classes had just started. It is common from my own observations of students over eight years that motivation declines as a course continues. The participants were especially happy with the warm-up activities which were provided in the material, they especially liked asking questions about Scotland (section 3B). I was impressed with the participants’ level of English, and despite two large reading sections they coped with the material very well. I did have to teach them to ask and answer questions in English and work meaningfully together. It was observed that with practice pair-work improved and less Thai was spoken.

In the after class discussions Participant B talking about section 3B said ‘*I like asking questions about other countries.*’ Participant H liked the grammar practice in 3B because ‘*I forget grammar quickly.*’ The class as a whole thought the two sections improved their reading skills. Before reading the texts, they were required to skim them for information. In section 5A the participants particularly liked the role-play exercise in

which they had to think of six ways to improve Chiang Mai for tourists. It was observed the participants approached this task with real enthusiasm and gave a very good set of suggestions in the after task discussion. Section 5A also appealed to the participants because the use of 'going to' was practiced. Participant I liked this because '*I can ask questions more easily now*'. Participant K reported feeling '*happy to speak*'. All the participants responded positively to item three (Appendix E) on communicating with foreigners, especially with section 5A. The participants I have noted, like tasks where real communicative input and output is required. However, at this stage of the course I still had to work with them on meta-language (the language used in class) because frequently when working in pairs the amount of actual spoken English they produced was not sufficient for the task given. This maybe because they are not used to a communicative classroom environment; where it is expected to talk with your partner more than one on one with the instructor.

In week two a class questionnaire was given to the participants to gain information on the class. The results (Appendix G) are summarized below.

The participants enjoyed the class and thought it helped their speaking skills although some of them perceived it did not help them to speak to hotel guests. There was also less positive attitude with regards to speaking more easily. This might be because there were less speaking activities than in section 5A. It also might be due to the grammar practice from the section of some, many, and most. This does not have the same immediate communicative significance as practicing 'going to.'

The material level appears to be pitched just about right with five participants thinking it was too easy and three participants had no opinion and two disagreed. Surprisingly eight thought the grammar was easy. This could be due to the fact that Thai students receive a lot of grammar instruction in their school studies. Clearly then the

reading section was perceived by some of them as quite hard. Most of the participants answered they would like to study this area/topic more. Similar to the results of the perceived needs analysis, there was not much difference given to whether the section was good for their job or life. Bizarrely however, there was a slight weighting towards the class being good for their job. I did not expect this result. There was evidence that participants realized that the class was not 'hotel' English with their answers to item 14. But seven participants still responded positively. This might be because the class had a foreigner/travel theme. Finally all ten participants were positive the class met their learning needs (item 15). It appeared at this stage the perceived needs analysis was a good indicator of their attitudes, and the students appeared to both enjoy and appreciate the general English classes.

The Hotel English Classes (Lessons 1-2)

The first two weeks of hotel English classes consisted of two units from the textbook. "Unit 13: Describing Dishes" this had a focus on food vocabulary and the grammar structure using the present simple passive (i.e., Pancakes are made from eggs, milk, and flour) and "Unit 14: Dealing with complaints", which focused on functional language used to express a complaint and expressions to use when replying to a complaint. The past simple grammar structure was practiced. Appendix H is the result of the class questionnaire for this class.

These two units received a high evaluation from the participants before the course started so they studied these units first from the hotel textbook. On appearance they seem to be very connected with the Food and Beverage employees and thus I expected the results to be very positive.

The first part of Unit 13 was devoted to food dishes, participants had to look at photographs of dishes and separate them into categories, this task went well and the participants seemed to enjoy looking at the photographs. The listening exercise was also a success although the class had to listen three times before they were satisfied. Participant F said *'they speak too fast to listen.'* At this stage I got the impression despite wanting listening practice as stated in their student questions/interview, the participants did not particularly like the listening exercises. This might be due to the speed of talking in the listening exercises and the relatively passive nature of the exercises. I think the participants preferred listening practice from real spoken communication in class.

The second part of Unit 13 focused on the present simple passive and laying a table. Participants had to match items laid out on a dining table with the words. The participants performed this task very quickly, and upon the researcher commenting that, the participants replied they *'already knew this'* (Participant C). In the discussion that followed, the participants thought the first part of the lesson was best, looking at photos of dishes and describing them. Participant K said *'I like pictures and photos in the book.'* This is of course universal; students' dislike textbooks with no visual input. Participant D said *'it was good to learn new food words.'* Of course the employees who were directly concerned with food should have appreciated this class the most. In my observations however, I did not see any lack of motivation from the Audio/Visual employees.

As mentioned above, as this was the first week of teaching, I fully expected participants to have high motivation and good attitudes toward all the material, but when practicing the grammar structure for this unit I observed participants were less enthusiastic. As was found in the students' questions and short interviews, grammar was not seen as enjoyable. Also the grammar practice was not communicative in nature which could be a reason for a lack of enthusiasm. In general, I observed the participants thought

the unit was adequate. Participant B described it as *'quite good'*; Participant G said *'it was Okay, but I know table words.'*

"Unit 14: Dealing with Complaints" was very communicative in nature so I expected an active talkative class. I observed the class went well with participants practicing a lot of spoken English. The unit dealt with a variety of situations within a hotel setting. Participant A said *'I liked this unit a lot.'* In general I thought all the participants' received the lesson well. Functional expressions were practiced a lot and as Participant I said *'I can say sorry to guests now.'* Eight participants agreed the class was enjoyable (see Appendix H). All ten thought they could speak to hotel guests more easily, and nine thought the class was good for their job. Indeed there were not many surprises in their answers to the class questionnaire (Appendix D). There were only five negative answers in total to the 15 items on the class questionnaire. In fact the results bore a remarkable similarity to those retrieved from the first questionnaire on the section from the general English book, so it seems at this stage that there was not a lot of difference in how individual classes were perceived by the participants.

In the class discussion, the participants thought the units had been good for their speaking skills and met the need for employees to respond to guests' complaints or requests. Participant G said *'it is good for my job.'* Participant B said of tasks *'they were like real conversation'*. I interpreted this as meaning the tasks had an authentic feel to them, requiring real spoken communication between a hotel 'guest' and an 'employee'.

At this stage I concluded there was not a big difference between the hotel and general English classes, a result I would have expected from looking at the answers to the perceived needs analysis results (Table 1).

The General English Classes (lessons 3-4)

Weeks three and four of the general English classes from the textbook consisted of “Section 5D: Holiday Heaven” which had a focus on different types of holidays. There was a pronunciation section on silent letters. Also verb patterns were examined namely the use of the infinitive or gerund form (i.e., “I’m looking forward to swimming with dolphins”).

The second section taught was “Section 6C: Coffee Break.” The first part looked at coffee. There was a grammar focus on superlatives (i.e., “Finland is the biggest coffee drinking country in the world.”) in the second part of the section. It should be noted that similar to weeks one and two, both sections have a hotel and tourism connection, a reason participants might have evaluated these sections well before classes started, also the themes are universal, which is what you would expect from a general English textbook. The participants completed the class questionnaire for section 6C and the results are noted (Appendix I).

“Section 5A: Holiday Heaven” was especially filled with new vocabulary items, which I was worried might affect the participants attitude toward the class but there was no perceived lack of enjoyment, with the instructor being asked several times to explain new lexical items on the board. The class started with participants matching holiday photographs to descriptions of holidays, an activity which the participants enjoyed. Later participants had to ask and answer questions to each other on their ideal holiday; this task was very successful with participants practicing the vocabulary they had learnt.

Overall the class was a success. In the after class discussion Participant A thought the whole class had been good *‘because I can know many interesting things, I didn’t know before.’* Participant H thought on the class *‘everything is good.’* Interestingly the

participants had different ideas on what skills had been most practiced. Participant I thought listening skills had improved because the instructor read a lot of material. Participant C perceived reading skills had been practiced.

Also in the after class discussion the participants once again talked about the general English versus hotel English component. Several participants agreed that a 75% weighting toward the general English component was ideal. Again it seems that general English classes are perceived to be better than the hotel English classes. This is evidence that student attitudes toward the general English component were very positive. I shall discuss this later in the discussion section.

“Section 6C: Coffee Break”, involved a fairly large reading on coffee in the first part then a focus on superlatives with a quiz and a speaking activity using superlatives. It appeared that motivation was beginning to wane at this stage of the course; only seven participants were present for this class. The most successful activity appeared to be a quiz on amazing food facts; the participants had to guess the answers and then listen to the correct answers on a recording. The warm up activity was also well received with students mingling and asking each other questions on their drinking habits. Participant B liked *‘doing quiz because it is fun.’* Participant F thought reading had been a skill practiced because *‘it took me long time and was hard.’* As was mentioned previously it appeared the participants were not so motivated. This might have been due to the long reading. In the results of the class questionnaire (Appendix J) the participants’ responses were still, however, mainly positive. Of note only one participant strongly wanted to study this section at home (item 9). Three participants had no opinion on whether the class matched the hotel’s wants. Again I was worried that acquiescence bias might have been skewing the results towards positive answers because the actual class performance suggested more negativity but this might have been the instructor’s perception only.

The Hotel English Classes (Lessons 3-4)

Weeks three and four of the hotel English classes consisted of “Unit 15: Jobs and Workplaces”. This had a focus on different job roles within a hotel and grammar practiced was this/that, these/those, and here/there. Week four was “Unit 20: Giving Directions Indoors”. This had a focus on functional language for giving directions and the use of prepositions of location and direction. Appendix K is the result of the class questionnaire for this class. I expected the class to enjoy and appreciate Unit 20 as it concentrated on communicative language and practice the most.

Unit 15 was in my opinion a reasonably successful class, although not as well received as Unit 14. The first part consisted of a listening exercise which as I have said above does not appear to engage participants’ interest. The second part of the lesson where the participants practiced the use of this/that, these/those, and here/there was more popular. The participants appeared to enjoy this activity with a lot of practice using the whole classroom as an example. Participant B said of the activity *‘I like to see what I’m talking about.’* Indeed in the after class discussion most participants thought this was the best thing about the class. Still a couple of participants thought their listening skills had been practiced as well. An activity matching kitchen roles to functions was also popular because as Participant G said *‘I can know different jobs in kitchen.’* The participants did not state they wanted to study this more at home, so I presume the class and topic did not really capture their interest. This might be because the participants’ have been assigned roles already and the focus on the jobs was on the front room staff and kitchen staff, areas the participants did not work in. Participant A thought the class was good for communicating with guests because *‘we can make less mistakes,’* presumably referring to the use of this/that, these/those, and here/there.

Unit 20 involved a lot of speaking which was good for the participants' needs. It also involved a straightforward type of transaction; asking for and receiving directions. Therefore the class was observed to have been successful. There were eight participants attending this class. The participants responded well to the tasks in this unit, it seemed they were familiar with the functional language, a fact seen in the results of the class questionnaire (Appendix K). Overall all the tasks were seen as good and as Participant H said, '*it was useful.*' Vocabulary was seen as a main factor of the class (by several of the participants) because one task involved a hotel bedroom. As none of the participants were in house-keeping this was a new area for them to study. Participant D thought it was good for communicating with guests because '*sometimes they ask where to go.*'

In the questionnaire results all the participants enjoyed the class. A clear majority also thought it had been good for spoken communication (items 2-5). There was some evidence the class had repeated earlier classes or training as most of the participants thought the class materials and grammar had been easy. Also there was no real difference as to whether the class had been good for their lives or jobs but nearly all responded positively. Finally three participants did not have a positive response to whether they needed to study the class. This maybe because they felt the class was too easy and did not require them to learn anything new. The higher English level participants were probably responsible for these answers.

The General English Classes (Lessons 5-6)

Week five of the general English classes consisted of "Section 6D: Class Meal", which had a focus on dining out at a restaurant and functional language involved with that. In week six the participants studied "Section 7C: Job Selection", the title is a bit

misleading as the focus of the lesson is on astrology and horoscopes. There was a vocabulary focus on personality adjectives and nouns.

Once again it was perceived by physical presence alone (five participants in week five, seven participants in week six) that the motivation to continue studying the course was declining. I spoke to the training manager about this and she responded that perhaps the participants were busy in their jobs or had a scheduled day off. One other possible reason for absenteeism could be that Food and Beverage staff believed they had nothing new to learn from section 6D. I was disappointed though with the participants' numbers as classes are more dynamic with more participants.

Section 6D is a fairly typical lesson on restaurants, tasks included examining a restaurant bill, listening to a restaurant booking, listening to a man making a reservation and practicing waiter/guest role plays. As was to be expected the participants seemed familiar with the vocabulary. The exception was Participant J who works in the Audio/Visual department. The class was split on what aspect of the lesson was best. In the after class discussion roughly half thought the listening activities had been best, the others thought speaking. All agreed that listening and speaking had been practiced and that the class had been good for reasons of communication with guests. Participant B also pointed out that *'if I go restaurant abroad I can speak to people.'* The participants' seemed to realize that the unit was very close to hotel English. Participant F said *'this is same as hotel class.'* I reminded them that there are indeed overlaps between general and hotel English due to the universal nature of the subjects.

Section 7C: Job Selection focused on horoscopes, the participants did not respond well to the reading in the first part of the section. Participant C said it was *'confusing'*. Participant H said it was not *'interesting.'* They responded much better to the second half of the lesson which looked at Star Signs and involved reading personality descriptions for

their own star sign. Clearly the personal nature of this task appealed to them. The instructor also brought in an authentic horoscope reading for that day for them to read. Participant C said '*this was much better than reading*' referring to the first part of the class. Participant E '*liked reading my horoscope.*' Participant A said of the second part '*I don't believe this, but it is interesting.*' The reading section was quite hard and this may have affected the participants' perception of it. It was five paragraphs long and contained a lot of new lexical items for them.

In the results for the class questionnaire (Appendix L) there were less positive opinions than from all other classes. There were a large amount of no opinions, and if we view previous results as being affected by acquiescence bias then clearly this class was perceived by the participants to be less useful for communicative purposes. For example there were only nine positive answers to items 3-5 out of a possible total of 21 on speaking skills. Only one participant thought the material was easy, perhaps because of the large amount of new vocabulary within the lesson. However, the participants clearly thought the topic was new to them with their response to item 10. The participants also thought the topic did not have immediate communicative relevance with only one participant thinking it was strongly good for their life. Perhaps horoscopes and star signs do not play a large part in Thai lives. Or at least the men in the class did not find this topic interesting. Finally the participants all thought the lesson did not match the hotel's wants.

This lesson was interesting as the results were the first negative ones overall. Clearly the participants viewed the lesson as reasonably interesting; five out of seven expressed an interest (item 8) in studying this topic more so clearly some aspects of the lesson were interesting but compared with previous results the class could be viewed as a failure with regards to the participants' and hotel's wants and needs.

The Hotel English Classes (Lessons 5-6)

Week five of the hotel English classes was “Unit 21: Giving Directions Outdoors”. This unit once again had a focus on functional language. Vocabulary of places within a city and the London Underground was also covered along with vocabulary found in road signs and street terms. Week six “Unit 22: Facilities for the Business Traveler”, concentrated on facilities within a hotel and conference booking.

Seven participants attended the lesson for unit 21. I expected the participants to enjoy and appreciate the lesson as it had a very functional and communicative focus similar to unit 20 which has been discussed above. Tasks and activities included listening and following directions, asking and receiving direction, and working with a map of the London Underground. The participants worked well in class and were seen to be enthusiastic during the activities. They were particularly interested in the London Underground and asked the instructor several difficult questions about it. Similar to unit 20 the participants did not find the lesson too hard. Participant D said ‘*I have practiced this many times.*’ Participant H liked the class ‘*because guests want to know where things are.*’ In the after class discussion participants were positive about all the activities. Participant A said ‘*it was interesting to see London Underground.*’ The participants thought the class had been good for their speaking skills, and some also thought their listening skills had improved as well. All of them thought it was useful for communicating with foreigners and hotel guests. Overall the class was a success with a positive view of the materials and activities. Clearly it met their needs. Interestingly this class could easily have come from a general English textbook. Once again an overlap is clearly seen between perceived (on the part of the authors) hotel English and general English.

“Unit 22: Facilities for the business traveler” was taught in week six. There were eight participants, a good turnout as attendance had been lacking in previous classes. This class had a very intensive vocabulary focus with a large number of facilities and services which could be found in a hotel. The instructor had to pre-teach a number of terms. The participants appeared to be interested in the class but some struggled with the vocabulary.

In the after class discussion there was disagreement on what was best about the class. Some participants thought vocabulary (learning new lexical items) was best, and some thought listening and some speaking (the instructor included a realistic role play about their hotel). All stated that it was good for their jobs, and appeared to realize it had real communicative purpose when talking with business people. Participant B said ‘*business guests are important.*’ Participant J one of the Audio/Visual employees said ‘*this unit was very good.*’ Participant D thought that ‘*learning new vocabulary is hard but good.*’

In the results from the questionnaire, the participants were split as to whether the class was fun, this may be due to the amount of new vocabulary in the class and the ‘official’ feel of the class. Clearly the participants have a good idea of how important business guests are especially in a five-star hotel. They viewed the class as being very good for communicating with hotel guests as was to be expected. Perhaps because of their hotel roles only half the class wanted to study more in this area at home. All of them believed the class was good for their job and matched the hotel’s wants. There was less belief it was good for their life or matched their wants. Overall it was seen as beneficial to have studied the unit.

Overall this unit was viewed positively and can be seen as a success, it seemed to match the hotel’s wants and participants thought it was good for their communicative ability especially within the hotel, but not so much outside.

The General English Classes (Lessons 7-8)

In Week seven the participants studied “Section 8B: Space Tourists”. This section looked at people going into space, it had a vocabulary focus on compound nouns with numbers and predictions using maybe, probably, certainly, and definitely. Seven participants came to this class. The last class taught used “Section 12A: Around The World”. This section had a focus on famous explorers/travelers (i.e., Christopher Columbus and Neil Armstrong). It also looked at prepositions of movement and phrasal verbs. The participants probably expressed an interest in these sections because of the topics/themes. Eight participants came to this class.

Section 8B’s class went well. The participants had to be pre-taught a number of vocabulary items as the listening was quite hard. The exercise on compound nouns with numbers went well. A fair amount of talking took place in a class survey using predictions. Also the participants wrote sentences about themselves using predictions and gave the results to the class, this exercise was seen to be highly motivating and amusing for them.

In the after class discussion, Participant C said that the class was ‘*good because I can use different words now*’ referring to the predictions exercise and tasks. Participant G thought vocabulary had been learnt while Participant A thought the class had improved her speaking skills. Most of the students thought the class had given them useful skills in communicating with foreigners. Participant H said ‘*I can use probably and definitely with guests.*’ They enjoyed the topic with several of them expressing a wish to travel in space one day. The instructor had told them about possible developments in technology, so that airplanes that might be able to travel in space for a short period.

Section 12A’s warm up activity was not successful as the participants were not that familiar with the famous travelers’ in the textbook. However, they showed some interest in

reading about famous explorers from the past. The most successful activity from this section was a speaking activity where the participants had to choose five stop-overs on a round the world plane ticket. The personalized nature of this activity clearly appealed to them. They then had to work together in pairs to decide jointly a plan for their trip. As this was the last class the instructor finished the class early. In the after class discussion the participants were reasonably positive about the activities. All of them enjoyed the speaking and writing activity with the round the world trip. Participant D said *'I like speaking about traveling.'* Participant B thought the review of prepositions was good because *'I sometimes forget those words.'* In summary it was quite a successful class especially the second half of the lesson where students felt more involved.

The Hotel English Classes (Lessons 7-8)

In Week Seven, the hotel English component was "Unit 23: Offering Help and Advice". This was a very practical unit with a focus on health and safety within the hotel. It had a grammar focus on the present perfect. Week eight was "Unit 28: The Interview." This unit prepared learners for job interviews. The participants expressed an interest in studying this unit, perhaps for future plans. Expressions for talking about the future were the vocabulary/grammar focus.

As Unit 23 was so practical I believed the participants would respond well and be enthusiastic in class. The results were true to my prediction. The participants' enjoyed the role play exercise where one played a guest who was sick and one employee helping. They also asked several questions about more vocabulary items for being sick (i.e., headache, stomachache, pain in my neck/chest/back). The participants also liked the activity from the textbook about giving advice and help.

In the after class discussion most responses were positive. All the participants' thought they could communicate with guests more easily if a guest was sick/ill or had an accident. They all thought the class had been good for their speaking skills and also vocabulary. Participant D said *'if guest is sick we must help.'* Participant H thought that *'learning this (the class) was good.'*

Once again it was observed that when activities are personal and communicative in nature the participants enjoyed the class and were more positive in their evaluation of it. Clearly this is a theme running throughout all the classes, and it does seem that their attitudes are much more positive when they have the chance to speak in class rather than passively learn.

Unit 28 was a unit basically preparing students to have an interview in English. They enjoyed the starter activity which involved them deciding on what was important for a good interview. The class brainstormed ideas and the ten most popular were written on the whiteboard. They listened to an interview and after this the instructor handed out question sheets and the participants asked each other interview questions. They enjoyed practicing the job interviews.

In the after class discussion Participant B said *'I can be nervous if speaking in English but practice is good.'* She sums up what I have been trying to get participants to do in class and outside of class. Participant E said *'I liked the practice but I want interview in Thai.'* Clearly this is not surprising. Overall the participants' seemed to appreciate the class and thought it helped their communicative speaking skills. Therefore I perceived this class to be a success. This was the last class and I was pleased that the participants had done so well in their studies.

Once the class was over the participants were given the final class questionnaire to fill in. From my observations of the participants and from the previous class

questionnaires I did not expect results to differ widely. It seemed that the participants took each class and assessed it individually and their attitudes towards a class differed according to their own wants, needs, and interests.

Comparison of Class Questionnaires

For purposes of comparison the results from the six previous class questionnaires (Appendices H,I,J,K,L, and M) were collated and compared together. Table 2 shows the results of this. Before examining the results it should be noted that there were 26 responses for hotel English and only 24 for general English, so hotel English enjoys a slight 'point' advantage. Results are given overleaf (Table 2). The hotel classes are in bold parentheses.

Table 2. Comparison of Class Questionnaires

No	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
1	This class was fun and enjoyable.	(10) 8	(12) 10	(4) 4	(2) 2	
2	This class helped my English speaking skills.	(12) 7	(11) 10	(3) 7		
3	I can speak to hotel guests more easily in English.	(15) 3	(9) 10	(2) 8	2	1
4	I can speak to anyone more easily in English.	(9) 5	(10) 10	(7) 5	4	
5	The materials helped me to speak more English.	(8) 6	(14) 14	(4) 4		
6	The materials were too easy.	(6) 2	(11) 8	(6) 10	(3) 4	
7	The grammar used in the lesson was familiar and easy.	(9) 7	(12) 9	(3) 7	(2) 1	
8	I would like to study more in this area/topic	(5) 11	(8) 8	(11) 5	(2)	
9	I want to study this unit more at home.	(4) 8	(8) 11	(12) 4	(1) 1	(1)
10	This class gave me a wider choice of topics to discuss.	(4) 10	(11) 12	(9) 2	(2)	
11	This class was good for my job.	(12) 5	(12) 10	(2) 8	1	
12	This class was good for my life.	(8) 7	(13) 12	(4) 4	(1) 1	
13	This class matches my wants.	(7) 10	(12) 9	(5) 3	(2) 2	
14	This class matches the hotels wants.	(14) 5	(11) 7	(1) 9	3	
15	I needed to study this class.	(8) 11	(12) 9	(4) 3	(2) 2	

For item one there was no discernable difference between components. There was a slight bias for hotel English; this was probably because the long readings in some of the general English classes detracted from the participants' enjoyment of the class. This is then a strong indicator that although the participants expressed a desire for general English in terms of general attitude there was not a real difference between the two components.

Again in item two, hotel English was slightly ahead of general English in terms of speaking skills; this was to be expected as the hotel units did focus more on communicative speaking than the general English textbook.

Item three of course received very positive points for the hotel English units. Again if this had not been the case there would have been surprise. It seems then that the hotel textbook was successful in giving students opportunities for meaningful spoken discourse.

Items four and five also showed a slight bias for the hotel English units. Again, it is seen that the general English sections with their long reading passages and listening exercises meant that the participants viewed the hotel English units as more of use for speaking. However, it should be said that there was not a great deal of difference. It should also be mentioned that there were no items on reading or listening skills, clearly here the general English sections would have scored higher.

The participants' found the hotel units easier, this might be due to previous English training at the hotel or for the reasons stated above, namely hotel English did not have long reading or listening sections. In terms of grammar the participants found hotel English easier, perhaps because there was less direct grammar taught in the units. This is one reason why combining general English can be good for a course because students receive a wider variety of English, in terms of grammar and lexis and skills practice.

Items eight, nine, and ten showed large positive differences for general English; the participants' wanted to study these sections more at home. Reasons for this could include,

a new topic or area for the participants, new vocabulary items, and continued grammar practice. These results are closely linked to attitude and motivation, evidence that inclusion of general English is beneficial to the course.

Hotel English was seen as very good for their job by the majority of the participants. Again this should come as no surprise with item 12; was the class good for their life showing no bias toward any component. I actually would have liked to have seen a higher rating for general English for item 12 but clearly the participants saw no real difference between the two components in terms of usefulness.

The general English classes also did not enjoy an advantage for item 13, did the class match their wants. I believe this shows that the participants' appreciated the hotel English classes as much as the general English classes. These results are similar to item 12. It can be hypothesized that as the hotel English classes contained several universal themes and over-lapped with the general English classes that participants had a hard time distinguishing the two components as distinctly different. It would be interesting to repeat this study with students from a more specialized area, for example nurses (see later).

Finally item 14 is of note as once again it reinforces the impression that the hotel English classes were viewed by the participants as positive for their jobs and matched the hotel's wants. There was no real difference between the two components for the last item, evidence again that even if the participants expressed a desire to study general English they still appreciated and learnt new things in their hotel classes as well.

Results of the Final Class Questionnaire

Following is a review of the results from the final class questionnaire (Tables 3 & 4). I expected these results to bare a striking similarity with Table 2 (collation of class questionnaires), as the questionnaires are very similar, indeed if the results had been much different I would have been surprised.

Item one results were exactly the same for both general and hotel English. One reason for this may have been that the style of instruction and teaching methodology was the same for both components. Item two again showed a slight advantage for hotel English, as I have said previously, the general English classes practiced all four skills with the hotel English classes focusing usually on just two (listening and speaking).

Items three, four, and five again showed the participants' thought the hotel English classes helped their English speaking skills more. This was true to the extent that they practiced speaking activities more in the hotel classes.

Item six was worded differently for the components in Appendix C (the final class questionnaire template). For general English the researcher asked if the materials were too hard. Three participants thought so. As I have said this might be due to the longer readings and more complex vocabulary items. Most of the participants' thought the hotel English classes were easy. The results indicate that the hotel English classes were perceived to be easier. However, in item seven the results were the same with the participants thinking the grammar was easy with only two participants not having a positive response.

Table 3. Hotel English Class Results

Hotel English Classes						
No	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
1	These classes were fun and enjoyable (motivating).	4	4	1		
2	These classes helped my English speaking skills.	5	3	1		
3	I can now speak to hotel guests more easily in English.	5	3	1		
4	I can speak to anyone more easily in English.	4	4	1		
5	The materials helped me to speak more English.	5	3	1		
6	The materials were too easy.	3	3	2	1	
7	The grammar used in the lessons was familiar and easy.	5	2	1	1	
8	I would like to study more hotel English	4	3	2		
9	I now want to study hotel English more at home.	4	3	2		
10	These classes gave me a wider choice of topics to discuss.	2	4	2	1	
11	The classes were good for my job.	5	3	1		
12	Hotel English is better than General English for me.	2	2	5		
13	These classes matched my wants and needs.	3	4	1	1	

Table 4. General English Results

General English Classes						
No	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
1	These classes were fun and enjoyable (motivating).	4	4	1		
2	These classes helped my English speaking skills.	3	5		1	
3	I can now speak to hotel guests more easily in English.	2	5	1	1	
4	I can speak to anyone more easily in English.	4	3	2		
5	The materials helped me to speak more English.	4	4		1	
6	The materials were too hard.	1	2	2	4	
7	The grammar used in the lessons was familiar and easy.	5	2	1	1	
8	I would like to study more general English	4	4	1		
9	I now want to study general English more at home.	3	4	2		
10	These classes gave me a wider choice of topics to discuss.	5	2	2		
11	The classes were good for my job.	3	3	2	1	
12	General English classes were better than Hotel English	4	3	2		
13	These classes matched my wants and needs.	5	2	1	1	

Items eight and nine again showed no clear distinction between hotel and general English. The participants again thought the general English component gave them a wider range of topics to discuss in item 10. Also once more the hotel classes were viewed as good for their jobs.

Item 12 was of note in that seven participants' thought the general English classes were better than the hotel English classes. Only four said the same for the hotel classes, so again a slight advantage for the general English classes. There is also the possibility that one of the Audio/Visual employees rated general English classes negatively because of his English level (they were harder to study because of numerous new language items). Finally item 13 showed no advantage with seven positive responses for both hotel and general English components.

Again these results were in line with the previous questionnaires and support the view that the participants perceived no real difference between classes individually or as a whole. It seems that the participants' perceived general English to be more interesting but harder than hotel English with hotel English being perceived as better for their speaking skills.

The Interview with the Training Manager

The training manager of the hotel was interviewed in week eight once the results of the classes were known. One of the sub-problems of this research paper was to find out management attitudes toward the instruction of general English. Appendix P contains the list of the questions asked during the interview. The interview took place in the manager's office and was recorded. The two videos making up the complete interview can be viewed on YouTube at:

- 1) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SqgxmqqBBf-M>
- 2) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ggq-OIX2qw>

The first question was; do you want employees to have a 100% focused course on hotel English? The manager's answer was a straightforward 'yes'. The follow up question

asked why is that and her reply was because 80% of customers are from North America and Europe. Therefore they need employees who can speak English.

I asked question three; 'What about the low level employees, do you think they can learn hotel English without general English?' The reply '*yes because normally the guests may ask 'Where is the toilet?' 'May I have the bill please?' Not many words related to them, so it is faster to train them with a focus on the English for hotel.* I suggested that this functional language was easier than starting them with general English and the manager agreed.

The next question was; "do you take employees' wants and needs into account when planning English courses?" There seemed to be some difficulty with this question as it had to be repeated. The manager answered that they do '*training needs*' with the hotel employees. They have an evaluation twice a year about the courses that associates (low level employees in the hotel) need, and from those results they plan for the next year. I questioned the manager closely if the employees' wants were taken into account and the answer was negative, only employees' needs. This difference is very important as it has been shown that employees want to learn more general English and I am certain that employees' needs are those perceived by the hotel and not stated by the employees personally.

I asked the manager if the hotel would be willing to have courses of general English alongside courses of hotel English. The reply was that money was a major issue as they have '*a limited budget yearly....if we pay for general English...we start to grow a tree then we need to wait many years...to take apple. Then we normally focus on functional language.*'

Question seven was whether an employee whose English level was low would benefit from general English. The reply was that some general English would be included in the hotel course but it would be very basic.

I was very interested to hear the manager's answer for question eight. I told her the results of my interviews with employees and that many of them wanted general English. Was the manager aware of this? Her reply stated that it was not a surprise, *'but in the terms of hotel hospitality we need one who can work....so that's why we focus on functional English, because we see the benefit from the thing that we invest.'*

I was interested to see if the hotel had much feedback from guests staying at the hotel on the employee's English. The reply was that since the hotel had opened only two or three guests had commented on the employees' English. Not surprisingly these were in the form of complaints when employees failed to answer the guests' questions.

I asked the manager if the hotel had more money for its training budget, would the management be happy teaching them general English as well as hotel English. The reply was *'sure...we also plan if we have more money we would like to have English teacher work with us in hotel....like a permanent English teacher.'* The manager went on to say that hiring a full time native English speaker was beyond the hotel's budget at this time as the costs are too high.

The next question asked was whether the hotel's needs for hotel English are more important than employees' wants for general English. The manager replied that *'we can do win win situation in the hotel English we can teach them some general English which is related to work...to their area....we also teach some grammar from the textbook.'*

The next question related to materials and textbooks, I wanted to find out the manager's attitudes towards these as there are often integral parts of a course. The manager said that they designed the course as they have standard wording as part of their

standard operating procedures (SOP). They gave the SOP words to the instructor and *'he can do his homework and come up with the solutions for us. Then we can choose what we want, and for some wording, some sentences in the textbook is not aligned to the hotel hospitality then we can develop and revise it.'*

The manager said that they have standard wording to use as part of their brand, she gave as an example *'like when we pick up the telephone, we don't say 'hello'...we should say 'good afternoon, this is Ting how may I be of service?'* The manager then showed me large volumes of SOP's including standard wording which employees should use. I suggested that it would be hard to use normal textbooks in the hotel due to these SOP's and the manager agreed.

When asked if she had any other comments to make about the English classes and students the manager said that *'my associates work ten and half hours a day....then once they need to study something new, they need fun....I always tell my English teacher that if you need to provide English class for associate so make it fun.'*

I asked the manager if the student's attitudes towards their English studies were good. She replied *'yes...they like studying English.'* I also asked her if they were motivated to continue learning, her reply *'yes...they always ask me when can we start the English class but their working schedule doesn't match the time that they go.'*

The interview with the training manager brought up several issues relevant to ESP, and I shall discuss these fully in the next chapter. It seems that the management acknowledges the usefulness of general English classes but is constrained by both time and money. Also the stakeholder perceives general English to be secondary as the hotel wants employees to have a command of functional English directly related to their jobs. I also received the impression that the employees' wants for general English would not be met without a large influx of money into the training budget.