

A Course Evaluation of Foundation English Courses taught at the Language Institute Thammasat University

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Abstract

This research paper aims to examine students' and instructors' opinions towards the 3 levels of foundation English courses taught at the Language Institute, Thammasat University in the academic year 2009. Statistical results yielded from instructors and students through the means of a questionnaire will be a valuable resource for the Language Institute to further develop foundation courses of use for all. Instructors and students were observed (observed how?) in the area of their opinions towards the physical learning, teaching environment and learning equipment, course content, textbook and supplementary worksheets, assessment and evaluation, benefits of the course and their satisfaction of the course. The population of this research involved all students taking foundation English courses conducted at the Rangsit campus in the 2009 academic year and 98 instructors. Results revealed that EL070, EL171 and EL171 students and instructors have high opinions on the physical and teaching environment and equipment, the textbook/ supplementary worksheets as well as assessment and evaluation. However, it is important to note that the students rated the opinion scale to be higher than the instructors in nearly all of the aspects.

Keywords: students' opinions, instructors' opinions, foundation English courses

1. Introduction

Established in 1985, the Language Institute of Thammasat University (LITU)'s mission is to provide quality English language education for students of all faculties in the Tha Prachan, Rangsit and Lampang campuses. Each semester, LITU accommodates thousands of freshmen required to take foundation courses the beginning (EL 070), intermediate (EL171) to the advanced level (EL 172). Lessons focus on the four language skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking, which provides the groundwork for the students to further develop their language skills in ESP courses and other elective English courses in their upper years.

1.1 Background

EL 070 English Course 1 is the remedial course, designed especially to review and prepare first-year students for more advanced courses. Although it is a non-credit course, students are evaluated through exams, assignments, and active participation in class

EL 171 English Course 2 is the intermediate course which aims to develop the four English skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Students are required to have more practice in listening comprehension, reading various printed materials, and writing short paragraphs.

EL 172 English Course 3 is the advanced course aimed to develop students' English skills. Students are required to listen to news and dialogues, speak, read more complex passages, and write various types of paragraphs.

As these foundation English courses have been taught for many years, suggestions on ways to upgrade the courses are very valuable for the new curriculum planning and development process. Both students' and teacher's opinions provide insight on the area which need to be updated.

1.2 Objectives of the study

The purposes of this study were as follows:

1. To obtain students' opinions towards EL 070, 171, 172 in various aspects of the courses regarding the physical learning and teaching environment and equipment, course content, the textbook/supplementary worksheets, course lecturers, assessment and evaluation, and benefit of the courses.

2. To obtain instructors' opinions towards EL 070, 171, 172 in various aspects of the courses: physical learning and teaching environment and equipment, course content, the textbook/supplementary worksheets, assessment and evaluation, and benefit of the courses.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are the students' opinions towards EL 070, 171, 172 concerning the aspect of physical learning and teaching environment and equipment, course content, the textbook/supplementary worksheets, course lecturers, assessment and evaluation and benefit of the courses?

2. What are the instructors' opinions towards EL 070, 171, 172 regarding the physical learning and teaching environment and equipment, course content, the textbook/supplementary worksheets, assessment and evaluation, and benefit of the courses?

1.4 Scope of the study

The subjects of this study consist of two groups of participants. 4,431 undergraduate students taking one of the three levels of foundation English courses offered by the Language Institute, Thammasat University, Rangsit campus in the academic 2009 represent the student group. In addition, the instructors group consists of 98 full-time foundation English course teachers.

2. Review of the Literature

Several studies on course evaluation have been conducted in different contexts for various courses during the past few years so as to find ways to improve curriculum. A number of factors have contributed to effectiveness of language teaching and learning. Some of the main factors include teachers, materials, teaching methodology, and the learning environment.

Sinlarat (1988) states that teaching and learning need to be improved and developed in accordance with social changes, the needs of the learner, and academic growth. Curriculum reform and instruction improvements are consequently emphasized to enhance educational quality.

2.1 The physical learning and teaching environment

The physical learning and teaching environment or the classroom plays an important role in the language learning process. This idea is supported by Wald (2000), mentioning that "Classroom setup can dramatically affect students' attitudes toward the habits of learning. Students need an environment that is organized, stimulating, and comfortable in order to learn effectively. Creating such an environment entails arranging a practical physical layout, supplying diverse materials and supplies, and encouraging students to have a sense of belonging and ownership".

2.2 Course Content

The Language Institute has put continuous efforts in designing and upgrading foundation course contents and the syllabus to meet the goals of the university and at the same time the needs of students. LITU's course content design complies with

Richard (2006)'s belief that "Meaningful communication results from students processing content that is relevant, purposeful, interesting and engaging".

2.3 Textbook, supplementary worksheets and materials

The main textbook used in all foundation courses are in-house textbooks which are written by a team of Language Institute staff. Since the textbook will serve students from all faculties and majors, the authors attempt to incorporate different themes and topic areas which will be of interest to everyone. To name a few, there are units on the impact of music, (a topic in which all students are interested in) plastic surgery, (a current fashion trend) and preparing for job interviews (which will be useful for them in the future). The variety of topics included in the textbook coincides with Kitao (1997) stating that "Content English textbooks should be useful, meaningful and interesting for students. While no single subject will be of interest to all students, materials should be chosen based, in part, on what students, in general, are likely to find interesting and motivating".

2.4 Evaluation

The evaluation of the Foundation courses at Thammasat University is done through various means to get a clear and accurate feedback of the students' progress such as through the speaking, listening, reading, writing vocabulary and grammar test. Spandel & Stiggins (1990) suggested that "Observation, conferencing, oral and written product assessment, and process (or performance) assessment may be used to gather information about student progress".

2.5 Benefits of the course

Learning a second language does not only involve acquiring the language itself, but it is believed that it leads to other areas of developments such as the understanding of the new target language culture, gaining new knowledge which is indirectly taught through the language and proven by many research studies to aid in the learner's cognitive development.

2.6 Relevant research

Suwandecha, et al. (2002) conducted a research study to evaluate the syllabus of the foundation English courses at Sripatum University, Chonburi campus. Three major areas were studied: goals and objectives; teaching and learning process; and student assessment and their course effectiveness. Data were collected using two sets of questionnaires distributed to English teachers and students to find their opinions towards the three areas mentioned. Results suggested that most students had a "high" opinion on the sub element of "teachers" in the actual situation. Overall, the teachers' opinions towards the sub element "teaching methods and activities" were rated "high" on both actual and expected situations.

Thompson (2011) did a study to evaluate an English for Tourism program at Payap University. The participants included students taking an ESP course, university

officials from the international college, and the instructors of the course. Four types of instruments were used in this research: a questionnaire, interviews, a teacher's log, and learning materials. Results revealed that the learners responded positively to in-class listening and speaking tasks that they felt manageable and relevant to their future ambition. However, there were negative responses towards textbook and outside readings; the learners viewed these as non-essential towards their goals. In addition, the stakeholders viewed the program as a vital part of the curriculum, but felt that the learners' backgrounds were hindering the overall program development.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Tool

This study used the questionnaire with the 5-point Likert scale to gather information on participants' opinions towards the different aspects of each of the foundation courses. The questionnaire distributed to the participants consists of two parts. Part 1 consists of questions asking for the subjects' personal information and Part 2 consists of students' and instructors' opinions on the five aspects of the courses being studied.

3.2 Population and Samples

The samples of this study included the whole student population studying the foundation courses and instructors teaching the courses in both the first and second semesters in the academic year 2009. EL 070 participants consisted of 606 students and 6 instructors, whereas those from EL 171 consisted of 2,138 students and 48 instructors. EL 172 participants comprise 1,687 students and 44 instructors.

3.3 Data collection

Two separate forms of questionnaire were distributed to the students and the instructors in the first and second semesters of the academic year 2009. Students asked to complete the questionnaire and handed in the copies to their instructor during their classes.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed using the SPSS program version 11.5 for Windows. Statistical devices that were used to analyze the responses to the questionnaires concerning the subjects' opinions on each course aspects are the mean average. As for the subjects' personal information, the percentage and frequency distribution were used as the means for data analysis.

To assess the subjects' opinions on each detailed item of each of the aspects of the foundation courses, the 5-point scale was utilized. The following is the 5-point scale evaluation criteria and its interpretation.

Rating scale of opinions

- 1 = Not at all
- 2 = Not really
- 3 = To some extent
- 4 = A lot
- 5 = Very much

Interpretation of the mean range in relation to the scale value is portrayed as follows:

Mean ranges	Interpretation (Level of satisfaction)
4.50 - 5.00	highest
3.50 - 4.49	high
2.50 - 3.49	medium
1.50 – 2.49	low
below 1.49	lowest

4. Findings

The findings of this study are divided into three parts: (1) demographic characteristics of students and instructors; (2) students' opinions on various aspects of the courses; and (3) instructors' opinions on various aspects of the courses.

4.1 Demographic characteristics of students and instructors

The tables below show the characteristics of the surveyed students, consisting of gender, year of study, faculty, attendance and type of course taken.

Table 1: Students by gender

Gender	EL070		EL171		EL172	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Male	231	38.1	666	31.2	510	30.2
Female	375	61.9	1,472	68.8	1,177	69.8
Total	606	100	2,138	100	1,687	100

As shown in Table 1, there were more female students than male students studying all of the three levels of English Foundation Courses, namely EL070 (Remedial English 1), EL171 (English Course 2) and EL172 (English Course 3).

Table 2: Students by year of study

Year of study	EL070		EL171		EL172	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	595	98.2	2,093	97.9	1,632	96.7
2	5	0.8	32	1.5	26	1.5
3	3	0.5	6	0.3	4	0.2
4	3	0.5	6	0.3	15	0.9
5	0	0	1	0	10	0.6
Total	606	100	2,138	100	1,687	100

As shown in Table 2, the majority of students taking all three levels of English foundation English courses were first-year students. The remainders were sophomores, juniors, seniors and fifth-year students.

Table 3: Students by faculty

Faculty	EL070		EL171		EL172	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Law	29	4.8	270	12.6	286	17
Commerce and Accountancy	21	3.5	110	5.1	284	16.8
Politics	28	4.6	113	5.3	88	5.2
Economics	6	1.0	91	4.3	176	10.4
Social Administration	50	8.3	85	4.0	38	2.3
Liberal Arts	11	1.8	259	12.1	197	11.7
Journalism and Mass communication	8	1.3	26	1.2	141	8.4
Sociology and Anthropology	7	1.2	107	5.0	46	2.7
Science and Technology	24	3.9	405	18.9	78	4.6
Engineering	95	15.7	224	10.5	22	1.3
Medicine	0	0	60	2.8	119	7.1
Allied Health Science	17	2.8	116	5.4	28	1.7
Dentistry	0	0	8	0.4	41	2.4
Nursing	0	0	74	3.5	10	0.6
Fine Arts	54	3.9	45	2.1	62	3.7
Architecture and Urban Planning	18	3.0	85	4.0	69	4.1
Public Health	13	2.1	60	2.8	2	0.1
Total	606	100	2,138	100	1,687	100

According to Table 3, EL070 students were from fourteen faculties, whereas both EL 171 and EL172 students were from seventeen faculties. While some EL 171 and EL 172 students were from the Faculty of Medicine, the Faculty of Dentistry and the Faculty of Nursing, none of the students from those three faculties studied EL070.

Table 4: Students by attendance

Attendance	EL070		EL171		EL172	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Full Attendance	291	48	26	1.2	21	1.2
1-3 absences	293	48.3	53	2.5	44	2.6
4-6 absences	18	3.0	109	5.1	48	2.8
More than 6 absences	4	0.7	333	15.5	150	8.9
Not indicated	0	0	1,308	61.2	1,424	84.4
Total	606	100	2,138	100	1,687	100

As shown in Table 4, many students who studied EL171 and EL172 did not mention how frequently they attended the class. On the other hand, every student studying EL070 gave his/her response on this matter.

Table 5: Students by type of courses taken.

Attendance	EL070		EL171		EL172	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Requirement	593	97.9	1,173	54.9	1,016	60.2
Minor	7	1.2	928	43.4	647	38.4
Elective	3	0.5	32	1.5	22	1.3
Required elective	3	0.5	5	0.1	2	0.2
Total	606	100	2,138	100	1,687	100

The majority of the students studied foundation English courses as their requirement, while only a small number of them studied foundation English courses as their minor, elective or required elective.

In addition, the tables below record the characteristics of the surveyed instructors, consisting of gender, age range, the highest level of education, academic position and teaching experience.

Table 6: Instructors by gender

Gender	EL070		EL171		EL172	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Male	6	37.5	11	22.9	8	18.2
Female	10	62.5	37	77.1	36	81.8
Total	16	100	48	100	44	100

As shown in Table 6 there were more female than male instructors teaching each English Foundation Courses.

Table 7: Instructors by age range

Age range	EL070		EL171		EL172	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
21-30	2	12.5	7	14.6	8	18.2
31-40	6	37.5	19	39.6	11	25.0
41-50	3	18.8	9	18.8	13	29.5
51-60	2	12.5	12	25.5	6	13.6
60+	3	18.8	1	2.1	6	13.6
Total	16	100	48	100	44	100

In terms of age range, as shown in Table 7, most instructors who taught EL070 and EL171 were between 31-40 years old, while most instructors who taught EL172 were between 41-50 years old.

Table 8: Instructors by the highest level of education

Highest level of education	EL070		EL171		EL172	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Bachelor's degree	0	0	2	4.2	5	11.4
Master's degree	16	100	42	87.5	33	75.0
Ph.D.	0	0	4	8.3	6	13.6
Total	16	100	48	100	44	100

As shown in Table 8, most instructors teaching EL 070, EL171 and EL172 obtained Master's degree as their highest level of education. The remainder obtained their Bachelor's degree or Ph.D.

Table 9: Instructors by academic title

Academic position	EL070		EL171		EL172	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Lecturer	14	87.5	29	60.4	30	68.2
Assistant Professor	0	0	16	33.3	8	18.2
Associate Professor	2	12.5	3	6.3	6	13.6
Professor	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	16	100	48	100	44	100

Most foundation English course instructors have not obtained their academic titles. Less than half of EL171 and EL172 instructors were associate professors and assistant professors. None of the foundation English Course instructors were professors.

Table 10: Instructors by teaching experience

Teaching experience	EL070		EL171		EL172	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Less than 5 years	4	25	12	25	8	18.2
5-10 years	4	25	8	16.7	16	36.4
11-15 years	5	31.3	17	35.4	6	13.6
16-20 years	0	0	2	4.2	1	2.3
More than 20 years	3	18.8	9	18.8	13	29.5
Total	16	100	48	100	44	100

Most EL 070 and EL171 instructors have 11-15 years of teaching experience, while most EL172 instructors have 5-10 years of teaching experience.

4.2 Students' opinions

Students' opinions on various aspects of courses, i.e. physical learning and teaching environment and equipment, course content, the textbook/ supplementary worksheets, course lecturers, assessment and evaluation, and benefit of the course are summarized in the following tables.

Table 11: Students’ opinions on physical and teaching environment and equipment

Item	Factors	EL070		EL171		EL172	
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
1	The classroom environment enhances teaching and learning	4.16	0.76	4.14	1.42	4.03	1.02
2	The classrooms and locations are appropriate	4.33	0.62	4.34	0.64	4.41	0.64
3	The classrooms have a high standard of cleanliness	4.38	0.65	4.43	0.61	4.51	0.60
4	The classrooms are sufficiently equipped with learning support devices such as computers, projectors, and stereos.	4.36	0.77	4.44	0.64	4.48	0.64
5	These learning support devices are up to date	4.26	0.74	4.33	0.66	4.37	0.68
Total		4.29	0.70	4.33	0.79	4.36	0.71

As reported in table 11, the findings clearly revealed that the mean for EL172 students’ opinion on physical and teaching environment and equipment is ranked as the highest among the three groups of students (M=4.36, S.D.=0.71), followed by that for EL171 students (M=4.33, S.D.=0.79), and that for EL070 students (M=4.29, S.D.=0.70). Overall, the mean regarding students’ opinions on all of the foundation courses on the aspect of physical and teaching environment and equipment is in the high level of satisfaction.

Table 12: Students’ opinions on course content

Item	Factors	EL070		EL171		EL172	
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
1	The course content is appropriate for the class schedule.	4.25	0.63	4.14	0.67	4.09	0.66
2	The course content is appropriate for credits awarded for the course.	4.01	0.83	4.10	0.68	4.13	0.70
3	The course content is consistent with course objectives	4.27	0.68	4.22	0.64	4.20	0.68
4	The course content is up to date and relevant to the current real-world situations.	4.15	0.70	4.03	0.75	3.92	0.79
5	The course content helps promote learners’ professionalism.	3.98	0.78	3.80	0.80	3.73	0.83
6	The course content is presented in a clear and systematic way.	4.13	0.73	4.08	0.72	3.98	0.77
7	The course content enhances learners’ ethics and morals	3.89	0.79	3.74	0.80	3.63	0.83

8	The course content supports knowledge and understanding in Thai and foreign cultures	3.98	0.80	3.85	0.81	3.71	0.82
Total		4.08	0.74	3.99	0.73	3.92	0.76

The findings in table 12 clearly showed that the mean for EL070 students' opinion on course content is ranked as highest among the three groups (M=4.08, S.D.=0.74), followed by that for EL171 students (M=3.99, S.D.=0.73), and that for EL172 students (M=3.92, S.D.=0.76). All students' opinion on the course content aspect can be considered as high.

Table 13: Students' opinions on the textbook/ supplementary worksheets

Item	Factors	EL070		EL171		EL172	
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
1	The textbook and supplementary worksheets cover the course objectives.	4.20	0.70	4.14	0.68	4.11	0.71
2	The textbook and supplementary worksheets encourage learning.	4.17	0.72	4.13	0.70	4.09	0.73
3	The textbook and supplementary worksheets are reliably referenced.	4.13	0.71	4.15	0.69	4.18	0.72
4	The textbook and supplementary materials are attractive in appearance.	4.09	0.75	4.01	0.82	3.88	0.86
Total		4.14	0.72	4.10	0.72	4.06	0.75

As reported in table 13, the findings clearly revealed that the mean for EL070 students' opinion on the textbook/ supplementary worksheets is ranked highest (M=4.14, S.D.=0.72), followed by that for EL171 students (M=4.10, S.D.=0.72), and that for EL172 students (M=4.06, S.D.=0.75). Students from the entire foundation course group consider the textbook/ supplementary worksheets to be at the high level of satisfaction.

Table 14: Students' opinions on course lecturers

Item	Factor	EL070		EL171		EL172	
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
1	The lecturer teaches the course content as mentioned in the course outline	4.44	0.60	4.44	0.62	4.39	0.67
2	The lecturer uses teaching methods which suit the course content.	4.37	0.69	4.30	0.94	4.12	0.77
3	The lecturer arranges the course content in an appropriate order.	4.30	0.71	4.30	0.70	4.20	0.74
4	The lecturer uses suitable teaching materials.	4.26	0.69	4.26	0.72	4.24	0.73
5	The lecturer uses technology in teaching properly.	4.28	0.71	4.23	0.73	4.21	0.77

6	The lecturer questions and involves students in activities which enhance their thinking skills.	4.28	0.69	4.30	0.73	4.10	0.82
7	The lecturer gives students opportunities to participate in activities.	4.39	0.68	4.45	0.73	4.33	0.75
Total		4.33	0.68	4.32	0.66	4.22	0.75

Indicated in Table 14, the findings clearly revealed that the mean for EL070 students' opinion on course lecturers is ranked highest (M=4.33, S.D. =0.68), followed by that for EL171 students (M=4.32, S.D. =0.66), and that for EL172 students (M=4.22, S.D. =0.75). Similar to the aspects already mentioned, all students' opinion towards the lecturer is also high.

Table 15: Students' opinions on assessment and evaluation

Item	Factors	EL070		EL171		EL172	
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
1	Assessment is in line with course objectives.	4.17	0.61	4.13	0.63	4.12	0.67
2	The scores in assessment and evaluation are allocated in appropriate proportions.	4.14	0.69	3.96	0.73	4.00	0.73
3	The approaches to assessment and evaluation are appropriate	4.15	0.70	4.02	0.72	4.04	0.73
4	The length of the examination is compatible with the time allowed to sit the exam	4.10	0.75	3.86	0.87	3.94	0.83
5	Evaluation includes assessment of students' thought processes.	4.16	0.64	4.04	0.71	3.98	0.74
6	Evaluation includes a focus on assessing the students' application of knowledge.	4.14	0.68	4.03	0.73	3.94	0.79
Total		4.14	0.67	4.00	0.73	4.00	0.74

The findings in table 15 clearly showed that the mean for EL070 students' opinion on assessment and evaluation is ranked highest (M=4.14, S.D.=0.67), followed by that for EL171 students (M=4.00, S.D.=0.73) and that for EL172 students (M=4.00, S.D.=0.74). The students' levels of satisfaction on the assessment and evaluation aspect for all of the groups are once again reported to be at a high level.

Table 16: Students' opinions on benefit of the course

	Factors	EL070		EL171		EL172	
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
1	The course provides students with language knowledge and skills according to the course objectives.	4.24	0.63	4.14	0.65	4.12	0.68
2	The knowledge from this course is applicable to students' further study.	4.25	0.71	4.19	0.69	4.12	0.76

3	The knowledge from this course enables continuous self-development.	4.26	0.69	4.18	0.71	4.12	0.76
4	The knowledge from this course can be utilized to assist other people in society.	4.05	0.72	3.89	0.79	3.81	0.85
5	The knowledge from this course can be utilized efficiently in daily life.	4.12	0.76	4.02	0.78	3.95	0.81
6	The knowledge from this course can be utilized efficiently in professional life.	4.14	0.73	4.04	0.78	3.98	0.81
Total		4.17	0.70	3.92	0.65	4.01	0.77

As shown in table 16, the findings clearly revealed that the mean for EL070 students' opinion on benefit of the course is ranked as the highest ($M=4.17$, $S.D.=0.70$), followed by that for EL172 students ($M=4.01$, $S.D.=0.77$), and that for EL171 students ($M=3.92$, $S.D.=0.65$). Students from all the course levels had a "high" level of satisfaction on the aspect of benefit towards the foundation courses.

Table 17: Students' level of satisfaction with each course

Item	Factor	EL070		EL171		EL172	
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
1	Satisfaction with the course	4.08	0.65	3.92	0.65	3.93	0.65

As reported in table 17, the findings clearly revealed that the mean for EL070 students' satisfaction with the course is ranked the highest, ($M=4.08$, $S.D.=0.65$), followed by that for EL172 students ($M=3.93$, $S.D.=0.65$), and that for EL171 students ($M=3.92$, $S.D.=0.65$). Generally, students from all the groups have high satisfaction levels concerning the courses.

4.3 Instructors' opinions

Instructors' opinions on various aspects of courses, i.e. physical learning and teaching environment and equipment, course content, the textbook/ supplementary worksheets, assessment and evaluation, and benefit of the course are summarized in the following tables.

Table 18: Instructors' opinions on physical and teaching environment and equipment

Item	Factors	EL070		EL171		EL172	
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
1	The classroom environment enhances teaching and learning.	3.37	0.88	4.18	0.73	4.13	0.79
2	The classrooms and locations are appropriate.	4.06	0.57	4.45	0.71	4.18	0.62
3	The classrooms have a high standard of cleanliness.	4.12	0.50	4.47	0.87	4.20	0.73
4	The classrooms are sufficiently	4.12	0.50	4.47	0.71	4.47	0.59

	equipped with learning support devices such as computers, projectors, stereos, etc.						
5	These learning support devices are up to date.	3.50	0.96	4.27	0.84	4.38	0.72
Total		3.83	0.68	4.36	0.77	4.27	0.69

As reported in table 18, the findings clearly revealed that the mean for EL171 instructors' opinion on physical and teaching environment and equipment is ranked highest ($M=4.36$, $S.D.=0.77$), followed by that for EL172 instructors ($M=4.27$, $S.D.=0.69$), and that for EL070 instructors ($M=3.83$, $S.D.=0.68$). In general, the mean of instructors' opinions on physical and teaching environment and equipment is in a high level.

Table 19: Instructors' opinions on course content

Item	Factors	EL070		EL171		EL172	
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
1	The course content is appropriate for the class schedule.	3.75	0.57	4.00	0.71	3.72	1.04
2	The course content is appropriate for credits awarded for the course.	3.93	0.68	4.25	0.60	4.00	0.74
3	The course content is consistent with course objectives	4.06	0.68	4.06	0.56	4.00	0.77
4	The course content is up to date and relevant to the current real-world situations.	4.00	0.63	3.85	0.77	3.47	0.84
5	The course content helps promote learners' professionalism.	3.25	1.12	3.85	0.61	3.47	0.97
6	The course content is presented in a clear and systematic way.	3.75	0.57	4.06	0.66	3.68	0.90
7	The course content enhances learners' ethics and morals	3.06	0.99	3.31	0.87	3.40	0.97
8	The course content supports knowledge and understanding in Thai and foreign cultures	3.62	0.61	3.70	0.84	3.52	1.04
Total		3.67	0.73	3.85	0.70	3.65	0.76

Results from table 19 clearly suggested that the mean for EL171 instructors' opinion on course content is ranked as the highest ($M=3.85$, $S.D.=0.70$), followed by that for EL070 instructors ($M=3.67$, $S.D.=0.73$), and that for EL172 instructors ($M=3.65$, $S.D.=0.76$). Instructors from all the groups considered the course content to be at a high level of satisfaction.

Table 20: Instructors' opinions on the textbook/ supplementary worksheets

Item	Factors	EL070		EL171		EL172	
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
1	The textbook and supplementary worksheets cover the course objectives.	4.12	0.34	4.08	0.57	4.06	0.75
2	The textbook and supplementary worksheets encourage learning.	3.56	0.81	3.91	0.76	4.04	0.80
3	The textbook and supplementary worksheets are reliably referenced.	3.62	0.50	3.97	0.69	4.00	0.86
4	The textbook and supplementary materials are attractive in appearance.	3.81	0.75	3.93	0.75	3.81	0.65
Total		3.77	0.60	3.97	0.69	3.97	0.76

As reported in table 20, the findings clearly revealed that the mean for EL171 instructors' opinion on the textbook/ supplementary worksheets (M=3.97, S.D.=0.69) is the same as the mean for EL172 lecturers' (M=3.97, S.D.=0.76), followed by that for EL070 instructors (M=3.77, S.D.=0.60). In general, the mean regarding instructors' opinions on all of the foundation courses on the textbook and supplementary worksheet is in a high level.

Table 21: Instructors' opinions on assessment and evaluation

Item	Factors	EL070		EL171		EL172	
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
1	Assessment is in line with course objectives.	3.81	0.40	4.14	0.58	4.04	0.71
2	The scores in assessment and evaluation are allocated in appropriate proportions.	4.00	0.00	3.95	0.68	3.84	0.98
3	The approaches to assessment and evaluation are appropriate	4.00	0.51	3.87	0.76	3.93	0.97
4	The length of the examination is compatible with the time allowed to sit the exam	3.93	0.25	4.22	0.59	4.11	0.75
5	Evaluation includes assessment of students' thought processes.	3.12	0.61	3.83	0.72	3.61	1.01
6	Evaluation includes a focus on assessing the students' application of knowledge.	3.43	0.51	3.91	0.61	3.70	0.82
Total		3.71	0.38	3.98	0.65	3.87	0.87

The findings in table 21 clearly revealed that the mean for EL171 instructors' opinion on assessment and evaluation is ranked highest (M=3.98, S.D. =0.65), followed by that for EL172 instructors (M=3.87, S.D.=0.87) and that for EL070 instructors (M=3.71, S.D.=0.38). Instructors from all the groups considered assessment and evaluation to be high.

Table 22: Instructors' opinions on benefit of the course

Item	Factors	EL070		EL171		EL172	
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
1	The course provides students with language knowledge and skills according to the course objectives.	4.06	0.44	4.06	0.63	4.11	0.65
2	The knowledge from this course is applicable to students' further study.	3.93	0.99	3.79	0.74	3.86	0.97
3	The knowledge from this course enables continuous self-development.	3.50	0.81	3.45	0.68	3.77	1.03
4	The knowledge from this course can be utilized to assist other people in society.	3.43	0.96	3.12	0.84	3.34	1.03
5	The knowledge from this course can be utilized efficiently in daily life.	3.62	0.71	3.62	0.63	3.54	0.87
6	The knowledge from this course can be utilized efficiently in professional life.	3.31	0.79	3.41	0.64	3.50	0.90
Total		3.64	0.78	3.57	0.65	3.68	0.90

As shown in table 22, the findings clearly revealed that the mean for EL172 instructors' opinion on benefit of the course is ranked the highest (M=3.68, S.D.=0.90), followed by that for EL070 instructors (M=3.64, S.D.=0.78), and that for EL171 instructors (M=3.57, S.D.=0.65). All instructors' opinions on the benefit of the course can be considered as having a high level of satisfaction.

Table 23: Instructors' satisfaction with each course

Item	Factors	EL070		EL171		EL172	
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
1	Satisfaction with the course	3.62	0.61	3.62	0.70	3.65	0.64
2	Satisfaction with the students	3.56	0.51	3.47	0.71	3.79	0.55
3	Satisfaction with the textbook	3.75	0.77	3.56	0.64	3.45	0.69

Results in table 23 suggested that the mean for EL172 instructors' satisfaction with the course is ranked the highest, (M=3.65, S.D.=0.64), followed by that for EL171 instructors (M=3.62, S.D.=0.70) and EL070 instructors (M=3.62, S.D.=0.61). Regarding satisfaction with the students, the mean for EL172 instructors is ranked the highest as well and is followed by the mean for EL070 and EL171 instructors. The mean for EL070 instructors' satisfaction with the textbook is ranked the highest, (M=3.75, S.D.=0.77), followed by that for EL171 instructors (M=3.56, S.D.=0.64) and EL172 instructors (M=3.45, S.D.=0.69). As a conclusion, we can say that in general, all instructors' have high levels of satisfaction toward the courses they are teaching. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that while EL070 and EL172 instructors' satisfaction with the students are in a high level, EL171 instructors' satisfaction with the students is in a medium level only. Similarly, EL172 instructors' satisfaction with the textbook is medium, whereas EL070 and EL171 instructors' satisfaction with the textbook is in a high level.

Table 24: The summary of course evaluation from students' and instructors' opinions on different course evaluation aspects

Item	Factors	EL070		EL171		EL172	
		students	Instructors	students	instructors	students	instructors
1	Physical environment	4.29	3.83	4.33	4.36	4.36	4.27
2	Course content	4.08	3.67	3.99	3.85	3.92	3.65
3	The textbook/ supplementary worksheets	4.14	3.77	4.10	3.97	4.06	3.97
4	Course lecturers	4.33	-	4.32	-	4.22	-
5	Assessment and evaluation	4.14	3.71	4.00	3.98	4.00	3.87
6	Benefits of the course	4.17	3.64	4.07	3.57	4.01	3.68

As summarized in Table 24, the students from all the three groups, namely EL070, EL171, and EL172 agreed that all aspects of the course evaluation were appropriate at the high level. Likewise, the instructors from all three groups, namely EL070, EL171 and EL172 had a high opinion level towards all of the course evaluation aspects except that EL171 instructors had the medium level of satisfaction towards their students. Moreover, EL172 instructors' satisfaction towards the textbook is at the medium level only.

Table 25: The summary of students' and instructors' satisfaction towards the main features of the course evaluation

Item	Factors	EL070		EL171		EL172	
		students	Instructors	students	instructors	students	instructors
1	Satisfaction with the course	4.08	3.62	3.92	3.62	3.93	3.65
2	Satisfaction with the students	-	3.56	-	3.47	-	3.79
3	Satisfaction with the textbook	-	3.75	-	3.56	-	3.45

As summarized in Table 25, the students from all the three groups, namely EL070, EL171, and EL172 showed high levels of satisfaction for all of the main features of the course evaluation. Likewise, the instructors from all three groups, namely EL070, EL171 and EL172 had the high level of satisfaction towards almost all of the main features except that EL171 instructors had the medium level of satisfaction towards their students and EL172 instructors' satisfaction towards the textbook is at the medium level only.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion

In this section, summative discussions of results for the student and instructor populations will be presented. Significant results regarding the samples' opinions in some aspects of the foundation courses will be examined in comparison to previous research findings.

4.2.1 Discussion of results for the student sample group

Results of the study on the aspect of students' opinion on the lecturers showed that they had a high level of satisfaction. This coincided with Suwandecha et al.'s study in 2002 that the majority of English foundation students at Sripatum University, Chonburi campus had a "high" opinion on the sub element "teacher" of the main element "teaching and learning process. Students stated that the teachers prepared well for each teaching session, made opportunities for students to ask questions, and made the subjects interesting.

Students in this study also showed that they had a high level of satisfaction for the course content and textbook and supplementary worksheet aspect. In comparison to the same study conducted by Suwandecha et al. (2002), there is a difference in the results for this aspect. While Thammasat students were satisfied with the course content and materials, Sripatum students were not satisfied as they had higher expectations. Students wanted the contents to be focused more on the listening and speaking skills and they mentioned that there should be sufficient materials for students that matched their needs. On the other hand, Thompson (2011)'s study on ESP English course complies with the case of Thammasat University's students. Results revealed that the majority of learners reacted favorably to most materials in the course, with exception to some outside readings and textbooks.

4.2.2 Discussion of results for the instructor sample group

The outcome of the study on instructors' opinions showed that for all aspects, foundation English course instructors at Thammasat University had high levels of satisfaction. On the other hand, Suwandecha et al.'s study in 2002 revealed that teachers were not satisfied with the sub elements of "content", "materials and resources", "assessment" and "course effectiveness" This may result from their belief that the four communicative language skills were not clearly specified and that the textbook was inappropriate for the students and the learning resources were insufficient. Instructors from both universities share a medium level of satisfaction towards their students.

5.2 Conclusions

5.2.1 Students' opinions

Students taking foundation English courses had high levels of satisfaction regarding physical learning and teaching environment and equipment, course content,

the textbook/supplementary worksheets, course lecturers, assessment and evaluation, and the benefit of the courses. They mentioned that all the aspects of the evaluation were appropriate and that they agreed with the benefits of the course. Generally, all students had high levels of satisfaction with the courses.

5.2.2 Instructors' opinions

Foundation English course instructors had high levels of opinions concerning physical learning and teaching environment and equipment, course content, the textbook/supplementary worksheets, assessment and evaluation. All aspects were at the appropriate level and instructors agreed with the benefit of the courses. While EL070 instructors had high satisfaction with the course, the textbook and also the students, EL171 instructors had a high level of satisfaction with the course and the textbook but had a medium level of satisfaction with the students. EL172 instructors were highly satisfied with the course and the students, but showed a medium satisfaction level on the textbook aspect.

5.3 Recommendations for further studies

Since this course evaluation was carried out with only foundation English course students and instructors at the Language Institute, Thammasat University, Rangsit Campus, future research could be conducted at the Tha-Phra Chan and Lampang campus in order to represent the entire Thammasat University population. Future research of a similar nature to find out the needs of specific groups of students on each aspect of the course for other courses provided by the Language Institute, Thammasat University is recommended. For detailed analysis, future research could be conducted to find out the opinions of students from different faculties on various aspects of the course as well. For in-depth information on how to improve the foundation courses, means of qualitative data should be included in the study to portray detailed suggestions through class observations and interviews.

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