



**FOREIGN TOURISTS' SATISFACTION  
TOWARDS ENGLISH ORAL COMMUNICATION  
WITH THAI VENDORS IN BANGKOK**

**BY**

**SITTISAK LEELAVIRIYAWONG**

**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL  
FULFILLMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH FOR CAREERS  
LANGUAGE INSTITUTE  
THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY  
ACADEMIC YEAR 2015  
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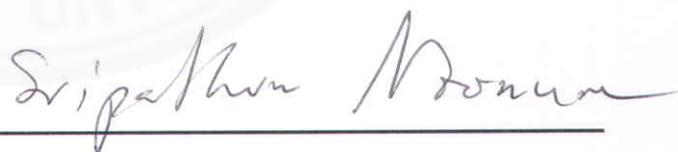
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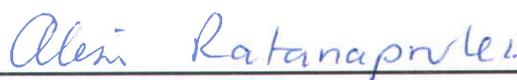
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## **ABSTRACT**

This study investigated the degree of foreign tourists' satisfaction towards English oral communication with Thai vendors in Bangkok.

The main objective of this study is to survey the foreign tourists' satisfaction towards English oral communication with Thai vendors in Bangkok and to find out the main problems when foreign tourists communicate in English with Thai vendors.

The research instrument in this study was a questionnaire asking about general information, foreign tourists' satisfaction towards English oral communication with Thai vendors, and problems when foreign tourists communicate in English with Thai vendors.

The sample size of this study was 100 foreign tourists who visited Khaosan Road between 23 and 30 April 2016. The participants were selected by the accidental sampling method and were asked to complete the questionnaires with 28 questions each. The data received from the respondents was analyzed by SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science).

The findings showed that most foreign tourists were male from non-English-speaking countries, aged between 26-30 years old, came to Bangkok for holidays. Overall, the respondents were moderately satisfied with English speaking skills of Thai vendors with a 2.62 mean score, and they were moderately satisfied with English listening skills of Thai vendors with a 2.69 mean score.

**Keywords:** Foreign Tourists' satisfaction, English Oral Communication, Thai Vendors.

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# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Tourism industry is one of the major sources of income in Thailand, as it can be seen from the steady increase of foreign visitors traveling to Thailand every year. This causes the circular flow of income which benefits the overall economy of the country. However, the formal establishment of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015 will result in an increasing number of tourists visiting Thailand and more intense competition between ASEAN member states. Thus, Thai entrepreneurs should be ready by improving and developing themselves so as to have sufficient potential to survive in the near future. In addition, foreign language skills are considered as a major weakness of Thai people that need to be strengthened urgently.

In Thailand, English is used as the main medium of communicating with foreign tourists. Nonetheless, Thai people still have difficulties in speaking and listening to foreigners. In order to eliminate misunderstanding in English oral communication, Thai people need to improve and develop their English language skills, especially those who have to contact with foreigners on a regular basis. In the business sector, effective oral communication with foreigners can promote international trade and investment. Moreover, it creates a positive image of Thailand and plays an important role in domestic tourism development.

Khaosan Road was chosen to conduct a survey, because this road is one of the most popular tourist attractions that foreign visitors to Bangkok visit. There are many restaurants, budget hotels, massage shops and souvenir shops along the road. Since the majority of the customers are foreigners, oral communication in English is considered as an essential part of exchanging goods or services between buyers and sellers. To communicate with foreigners effectively, vendors should have a good background of English. If they can fully understand what the foreign customers want, they can serve them smoothly and the level of foreign customer satisfaction will increase.

Quantitative research was selected to quantify the degree of foreign tourists' satisfaction towards English oral communication with Thai vendors, to identify the main problems when Thai vendors communicate in English with foreign tourists, and to generalize results from a sample which is foreign tourists on Khaosan Road to the population of interest which is foreign tourist in Bangkok. Questionnaires were used as a research instrument in this study.

To overcome communication barriers, vendors should know their strengths and weaknesses, and attempt to develop their English skills continuously, because effective oral communication can minimize misunderstandings and increase the level of foreign tourists' satisfaction.

## **1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- 1.2.1 What is the degree of foreign tourists' satisfaction towards English oral communication with Thai vendors in Bangkok?
- 1.2.2 What are the main problems when foreign tourists communicate in English with Thai vendors?

## **1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- 1.3.1 To survey the foreign tourists' satisfaction towards English oral communication with Thai vendors in Bangkok.
- 1.3.2 To find the main problems when foreign tourists communicate in English with Thai vendors.

## **1.4 DEFINITION OF THE TERMS**

- 1.4.1 **Tourists' satisfaction** refers to the degree of foreign tourists' satisfaction when they communicate orally with Thai vendors in Bangkok.
- 1.4.2 **Foreign Tourist** refers to a visitor from any country except Thailand who travels to Bangkok and communicates in English with Thai vendors.
- 1.4.3 **Vendor** refers to a person offering something for sale on the street, such as food, drinks, clothes and souvenirs.
- 1.4.4 **English oral communication** refers to the ability of Thai vendors to listen and speak English in order to serve foreign customers efficiently.

### **1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

This study is limited to examine 100 foreign tourists visiting Khaosan Road. They can be either male or female, native English speakers or non-native English speakers. The participants were chosen accidentally by using Convenience Sampling method. The research instrument in this study is a questionnaire providing closed-ended questions open-ended questions and a five-point Likert weighted scale.

### **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The significance of this study is to determine whether English oral communication skills of Thai vendors can satisfy foreign tourists or not, and find out the main problems when foreign tourists communicate with Thai vendors. The results of this study will encourage the vendors to improve their English language skills and eliminate their weaknesses in speaking and listening English so as to be able to communicate effectively with foreigners and also be able to compete with neighboring countries after the formal establishment of the ASEAN Community in 2015. Otherwise, Thai vendors might lose their jobs to our neighbors and it might result in increasing the unemployment rate of Thailand.

Furthermore, the results from the study will be presented to state agencies, such as Office of the Education Council, Ministry of Education or Department of Skill Development that have the power to encourage Thai vendors to realize the importance of English language. And, if the results of this research show that foreign tourists are not satisfied with English skills of Thai vendors, they will encourage the state agencies to provide English training courses by focusing on eliminating their main problems or other effective solutions to develop English skills of Thai vendors.

### **1.7 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY**

The research study of foreign tourists' satisfaction towards English oral communication with Thai vendors in Bangkok is divided into five chapters as follows:

Chapter One introduces the background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, definition of the terms, scope of the study and significance of the study.

Chapter Two covers the review of literature which includes customer satisfaction, effective oral communication, and other relevant research.

Chapter Three describes the research methodology which includes: participants, materials, procedures and data analysis.

Chapter Four presents the results and data analysis of the study.

Chapter Five provides a summary of the study, a summary of findings, a discussion, the conclusion and recommendations for further research.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

This chapter reviews the literature in four main areas:

- (1) Customer Satisfaction
- (2) Effective Oral Communication Skills
- (3) Previous related studies
- (4) Summary

#### **2.1 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

In the tourism industry, customer satisfaction plays an important part in the success of the business. If foreign tourists are satisfied with the products of Thai vendors, it will be easier for them to return and repurchase the products. In order to deeply understand customer satisfaction, we need to know the definition of satisfaction.

Satisfaction is a person's feelings of pleasure or disappointment when comparing a product's perceived outcome to expectations. If the performance falls short of expectations, the customer is dissatisfied. On the other hand, if it matches or exceeds their expectations, the customer is satisfied (Kotler, 2000). Nevertheless, it is quite difficult to examine whether the product or service can satisfy the customer or not, so asking the customers directly is the easiest way to find out how they feel and what they want (Agbor, 2011).

Even though there are many studies about customer satisfaction, no one has ever studied foreign tourist satisfaction concerning English oral communication with Thai vendors before. Consequently, it will be a good start to examine this seriously so as to see the level of satisfaction of foreign tourists.

Customer satisfaction in this study refers to foreign tourists' pleasure or disappointment when communicating in English with Thai vendors.

#### **2.2 EFFECTIVE ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

In order to understand what foreign tourists need and want, effective oral communication skills are very important for Thai vendors. If Thai vendors lack oral communication skills, it is difficult for foreign tourists to be satisfied with products or services.

Oral communication (verbal communication) is the inter change of information or ideas between sender and receiver by word of mouth. According to Glenn (1981), effective oral communication is divided into three perspectives. Firstly, effective oral communication needs to be simple, and direct. Secondly, an effective communicator should have knowledge of the subject and have the ability to say it well. Finally, effective communication needs to be useful for both speaker and receiver.

Effective English oral communication in the workplace can be a problem for Thai vendors who are not native English speakers and have to communicate with foreign customers at work. According to Tipmontree (2007), the findings showed the main problems of Thai staff who communicated with foreign customers were lack of understanding the questions, long pauses during conversations, low fluency, poor English grammar, unfamiliarity with foreign accents, and low confidence when speaking.

Effective oral communication requires good listening and speaking skills.

### **2.2.1 Listening Skills**

Listening is one of the four fundamental skills for effective communication. Listening is the ability to understand words and language, and since the conversation should be understandable, the main focus is on meaning instead of language (Cameron, 2001). In short, “listening is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying” (Saricoban, 1999, p.1).

There are three basic steps of listening: Hearing, Understanding and Judging. Hearing is the process of listening so as to catch what the speaker is saying. Understanding is the next step when the listeners take what they have heard and understand it in their own way. Judging is the step when the listeners choose whether to believe what the speakers have said or not (Manoharan 2008). According to Kanu and Durham (2014), there are 7 techniques to become an effective listener.

1. Paying attention to the person who is speaking.
2. Trying to focus on the speaker’s words.
3. Replying after the speaker finishes talking.
4. Finishing listening before speaking.
5. Listening for main ideas which are the most important points.
6. Asking questions if the speaker has said something unclear.
7. Giving feedback to show understanding.

In business, English listening skills involve the following abilities: understanding what foreigners and colleagues are saying both in person and over the phone, understanding what the speaker is presenting in internal and external business meetings, and knowing foreign customer wants and needs during business negotiations (Pingyoad, 2005).

### **2.2.2 Speaking Skills**

Speaking is considered to be one of four main skills for effective communication. Effective speaking involves organizing and presenting information orally and expressing one's own ideas in words in a way that the meaning is transferred successfully to the listener (Nicholas, 1985).

According to Jamieson and Arnold (1985), there are 3 speaking skills that the speaker should pay attention to in order to become an effective speaker.

1. Speaking clearly - language should be direct and simple, and the words that the speaker uses should be well organized.
2. Speaking accurately - words that the speaker uses must convey the intended meaning.
3. Language should be polite and friendly.

In business, English speaking skills involve the following abilities: asking and answering questions to foreign customers and colleagues both in person and over the phone, sharing ideas in internal and external business meetings in English, and making a presentation in English (Pingyoad, 2005).

In this research, effective oral communication skills can reduce the misunderstandings or problems that might happen when foreign tourists communicate in English with Thai vendors.

## **2.3 PREVIOUS RELATED STUDIES**

The following are some previous research studies involving the foreign customer's satisfaction towards English language of non-native English speakers in different careers. The objectives are to see the degree of the foreign customer's satisfaction towards English language of non-native English speakers in each career and to identify the main problems of communicating in English with non-native English speakers in each career.

Ampaipisut (2007) studied communication problems of foreign tourists towards travel services in Thailand. The participants were 124 tourists from English speaking countries, both male and female, who stayed in Bangkok. The research instrument was a questionnaire containing open-ended questions, closed-ended questions, and a five-point Likert weighted scale.

The findings showed that the main area that needed to be improved for Thai service staff was inefficiency of language, because 42% of respondents did not understand Thai service staff when they spoke, and 43.1 % of them agreed that Thai service staff could not understand what they said. Moreover, 48.4% of them indicated that the accent and pronunciation of Thai service staff were incorrect.

Chaiyapornnangkul (2013) studied foreign customer satisfaction with Shangri-La Hotel receptionists' English oral communication ability. The participants were 100 foreign customers, both male and female, who stayed at the hotel. The research instrument was a questionnaire containing open-ended questions, closed-ended questions, and a five-point Likert weighted scale.

The findings showed that most customers were male businesspeople from Asian countries who visited the hotel on business trips. The level of customer satisfaction with the English skills of the receptionists was high with a 4.3 mean score. Overall, English oral communication ability of Shangri-La Hotel receptionists was adequate.

Hirunthet (2011) studied satisfaction of foreign tourists with the service of tourist police on Khaosan Road, Bangkok. The participants were 400 foreign tourists who used the services of the tourist police. The research instrument was a questionnaire containing closed-ended questions, open-ended questions, and a five-point Likert weighted scale.

The findings showed that the level of foreign tourists' satisfaction with the service of tourist police on Khaosan Road regarding service (3.36), security (3.04) and facilities (3.06) are fair. According to English skills, it showed that the level of foreign tourists' satisfaction towards English communication skills of tourist police is fair (3.33).

Jitjenkarn (2011) studied foreign customers' satisfaction towards the level of Bank of Ayudhya PCL staff's English oral communication. The participants were 100 foreign customers, both male and female, who used the services of Bank of Ayudhya PCL at the following branches: Banglampoo, Pattaya, Samui, Pa-ngan, Chiangmai, and Nongkai. The research instrument was a questionnaire containing open-ended questions, closed-ended questions and a four-point Likert weighted scale.

The study found that most customers were male, over 40, and visited the bank so as to change foreign currency. The findings showed that the overall customers' satisfaction was at the highest level with a 3.50 mean scores. The ability level of listening and speaking skills were very good with 3.47 and 3.33 mean scores respectively. Most of the respondents thought that Thai accents (23.0%) were difficult for them to understand when BAY staff spoke English. Other difficulties were choice of words (20.0%), pronunciation (17.0%), and speaking rate (9.0%).

Ravantharanathe (2007) studied the role of the English Language in the Tourism Industry. The participants were 51 English speaking foreign and local tourists staying at 4-5 star resorts in Langkawi, Malaysia. The questionnaire and interview were used as the research instruments.

The findings showed that the role of English language proficiency in the tourism industry is important, because it could affect choice of hotel and customer satisfaction. However, the importance of English language in the tourism industry depends on job descriptions. That means hotel staff members who often have direct contact with hotel guests such as receptionist are expected to have good English skills.

Witchaiyutphong (2011) studied English barriers for Thai employees working in an international setting, a study at Thomson Reuters Company in Thailand. The participants were 100 local Thai employees from both Bangkok office and Thomson Reuters. The research instrument was a questionnaire containing closed-ended questions, open-ended questions, and a four-point Likert weighted scale.

The findings showed that limited vocabulary was the main problem of Thai employees and they thought that speaking in English was the first thing that should be improved. Regarding listening skills, the results showed that most of Thai employees were unfamiliar with different

accents and pronunciations. In addition, making grammatical mistakes was another barrier that obstructed speaking and writing skills of Thai employees. Finally, difference in cultures was the last factor that obstructed Thai employees in effective communication.

In summary, the findings of previous related studies showed that foreign customers were highly satisfied with English skills of hotel receptionists and bank staff because they had a good background of English and were trained well to communicate in English with foreigners. Nonetheless, foreign customers and tourists were moderately satisfied with English skills of Thai travel service staff and tourist police who were supposed to have good English skills. That means the communication errors with foreigners can happen to anyone in any business.

## **2.4 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER**

English communication skills are very important in the tourism industry, especially for businesses serving foreign customers. If product or service providers cannot communicate in English with foreign customers effectively, it can be one of problems affecting customer satisfaction towards products and services. In this research, effective oral communication skills of Thai vendors can increase the level of foreign tourists' pleasure when they are buying goods.

Although there are some previous studies involving the foreign customer's satisfaction towards English language of Thai people in different careers, no one has ever studied foreign satisfaction towards English oral communication with Thai vendors before. Thus, it will be a good opportunity to see whether foreign tourists are satisfied with English oral communication of Thai vendors or not, and to find the main problems that hinder communication between foreign tourists and Thai vendors. Additionally, the results of the study will be useful for Thai vendors to improve their English skills.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

A quantitative research approach is proposed for this study in order to examine the degree of foreign tourists' satisfaction towards English oral communication with Thai vendors and to identify the main problems when Thai vendors communicate in English with foreign tourists

This chapter describes: (1) the participants, (2) the materials, (3) the procedures used in the collection and analysis of the data, and (4) the data analysis

#### **3.1 PARTICIPANTS**

The participants of this study were 100 foreign tourists both male and female who were visiting Khaosan Road. There were both native English speakers and non-native English speakers. Convenience Sampling was applied to collect primary data, so the respondents from the sample size were chosen accidentally to complete questionnaires directly on Khaosan Road.

#### **3.2 MATERIALS**

The research instrument in this study was a questionnaire providing closed-ended questions open-ended questions, and a five-point Likert weighted scale. The questionnaire of this study was adapted from Jitienkarn (2011) who studied foreign customers' satisfaction towards the level of Bank of Ayudhya PCL staff's English oral communication. The questionnaire of this study was divided into 3 parts as follows:

*Part I: General information*

The participants were required to answer questions such as gender, age, educational background, country, first language, and current position.

*Part II: Foreign tourists' satisfaction towards English oral communication*

The participants were required to rate their satisfaction level of English oral communication with Thai vendors. The criteria and meaning of the customer satisfaction rating are described in the following table:

**Table 3.1: Comparison of Rates of Satisfaction and Level of Satisfaction**

Rates of Satisfaction	Level of Satisfaction
5	Highest
4	High
3	Moderate
2	Low
1	Lowest

*Part III: Main problems when Thai vendors communicate in English with foreign tourists*

The participants were required to answer open-ended questions which were about the main problems encountered when foreign tourists communicated in English with Thai vendors and shared their suggestions for improving Thai vendors' English oral communication skills.

### **3.3 PROCEDURES**

#### **3.3.1 Research Design**

A descriptive cross – sectional survey were used in this study to explore the level of satisfaction of foreign tourists towards English oral communication with Thai vendors on Khaosan Road. A questionnaire which was the research instrument in this study was submitted to foreign tourists by the researcher on Khaosan Road. After respondents had completed the questionnaire, the researcher rechecked the questionnaire to ensure that they had followed directions correctly. Then, the data in the complete questionnaires was analyzed by SPSS.

#### **3.3.2 Data Collection**

The research was conducted between 23 and 30 April 2016 and the data was collected by the researcher. 100 questionnaires were distributed to the target group consisting of foreign tourists visiting Khaosan Road by using the Convenience Sampling method. After respondents had finished the survey, the researcher rechecked the questionnaire to ensure that they had followed directions correctly. It took approximately 10 minutes for the participants to answer all questions in the questionnaire.

10 respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire as a pilot test. The results showed that the respondents followed directions correctly. They understood all the words in each

question. They interpreted the questions in the same way, and most of them took approximately 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

For the limitations of the survey, Khaosan Road was the area to do the survey and as it is quite small, it was difficult for the researcher to find foreign tourists to fill out the questionnaire. In addition, some tourists had limited time and were quite busy, so they refused to participate in the survey. Regarding English skills, some foreign tourists could not speak English or spoke a little English, so the researcher could not let them complete the questionnaire. On the other hand, some respondents mentioned that it was hard for them to evaluate the English skills of Thai vendors, because some vendors could not speak English at all.

### **3.4 DATA ANALYSIS**

The quantitative data from the questionnaire was analyzed by using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences on Personal Computer (SPSS/PC). The data of each part was analyzed as follows:

#### *Part I: General information*

This part consists of closed-ended and open-ended questions. The data was analyzed by SPSS in order to find frequency and percentage.

#### *Part II: Foreign tourists' satisfaction towards English oral communication*

This part consists of closed-ended questions with the Likert 5-point scale. The ordinal data were analyzed by SPSS so as to find frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. The average score (mean) obtained from each item was interpreted into degree of satisfaction as shown in Table 3.2:

**Table 3.2: Comparison of Level of Satisfaction and Mean**

Level of Satisfaction	Mean
Highest	4.21 – 5.00
High	3.41 – 4.20
Moderate	2.61 – 3.40
Low	1.81 – 2.60
Lowest	1.00 – 1.80

Part III: *Main problems and suggestions when foreign tourists communicate in English with Thai vendors*

This part consists of open-ended questions therefore the data was analyzed by using content analysis.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

This chapter reports the findings of the study and is divided into three sections based on the questionnaire and the research questions. The data analysis was made by using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences on Personal Computer (SPSS/PC) to calculate the frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation.

#### 4.1 GENERAL INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS

There are 8 items that the respondents needed to respond to regarding the respondents' gender, age, nationality, education, occupation, their first language, the purpose of their trip, and frequency of visiting Khaosan Road. The general information was computed and analyzed by frequencies and percentages.

***Table 4.1: Gender of the Respondents***

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	57	57.0
Female	43	46.0
Total	100	100.0

From table 4.1, the total number of respondents was 100, with 57 male respondents and 43 female respondents. In other words, the respondents, accounting for 57%, were male and the rest, 46% of respondents, were female.

***Table 4.2: Age of the Respondents***

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Under 20	7	7.0
21-25	10	10.0
26-30	31	31.0
31-35	22	22.0

36-40	7	7.0
41-45	9	9.0
46-50	6	6.0
Over 50	8	8.0
Total	100	100.0

Among the 8 age groups in Table 4.2, the largest group in this study was between 26-30 years old (31%), followed by 31-35 years old (22%), 21-25 years old (10%), 41-45 years old (9%), over 50 years old (8%), 36-40 years old (7%), under 20 (7%), and 46-50 years old (6%) respectively.

**Table 4.3: Nationality of the Respondents**

Nationality	Frequency	Percentage
British	21	21.0
American	18	18.0
French	13	13.0
Australian	9	9.0
Russian	8	8.0
Chinese	8	8.0
Filipino	7	7.0
Japanese	6	6.0
Malaysian	5	5.0
German	2	2.0
Norwegian	2	2.0
Bulgarian	1	1.0
Total	100	100.0

According to table 4.3, the nationality of the respondents was various. 21% of the respondents were British, 18% of them were American, 13% of them were French, 9% of them were Australian, 8% of them were Russian, 8% of them were Chinese, 7% of them Filipino, 6%

of them Japanese, 5% of them were Malaysian, 2% of them were German, 2% of them were Norwegian and Bulgarian accounted for 1%.

**Table 4.4: Education of the Respondents**

Education	Frequency	Percentage
High School	27	27.0
Vocational College	11	11.0
Bachelor's	46	46.0
Master's	16	16.0
Doctorate	0	0.0
Total	100	100.0

As shown in table 4.4, 46% of the respondents had a bachelor's degree, followed by 27% of them finished high school, 16% of them had a master's degree, 11% of them graduated from vocational college, and there was no respondent having a doctorate degree.

**Table 4.5: Occupation of the Respondents**

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Student	9	9.0
Businessperson	35	35.0
Employee	46	46.0
Other	10	10.0
Total	100	100.0

According to table 4.5, 46% of the respondents were employees, followed by 35% of them were businesspeople. Others such as housewives and retired people accounted for 10% of respondents, and 9% of them were students.

**Table 4.6: First Language of the Respondents**

English is the respondents' first language	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	48	48.0
No	52	52.0
Total	100	100.0

From table 4.6, 52% of respondents used English as a second language, and 48% of them used English as a first language.

**Table 4.7: Purpose of their trips**

Purpose of their trips	Frequency	Percentage
Business	31	31.0
Seminar	8	8.0
Holiday	56	56.0
Other	5	5.0
Total	100	100.0

According to table 4.7, the majority of the respondents came to Bangkok for holidays (56%), followed by 31 % of them came to Bangkok for business trips, 8 % of them came to Bangkok for seminars. Others such as living in Thailand and working in Thailand accounted for 5% of respondents.

**Table 4.8: Frequency that the Respondents visit Khaosan Road**

Frequency to visit	Frequency	Percentage
1 time	53	53.0
2-3 times	22	22.0
4-5 times	20	20.0
Other	5	5.0
Total	100	100.0

As shown in table 4.8, the majority of the respondents visited Khaosan Road one time (53%), followed by 22 % of respondents visited Khaosan Road two to three times, 20 % of respondents visited Khaosan Road 4-5 times. Others such as more than 5 times and many times accounted for 5% of respondents.

## 4.2 FOREIGN TOURISTS' SATISFACTIONS TOWARDS ENGLISH ORAL COMMUNICATION WITH THAI VENDORS

The second part sought to determine the respondents' satisfaction towards English oral communication with Thai vendors in Bangkok. Closed-ended questions with the Likert 5-point scale were used to measure the degree of opinion. The findings are shown in form of frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation.

**Table 4.9: The respondents' satisfaction towards English speaking skills of Thai vendors**

Speaking Skills	Level of Satisfaction					Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	SD	Satisfaction Level
	Highest	High	Moderate	Low	Lowest			
Fluency	2 (2%)	10 (10%)	43 (43%)	35 (35%)	10 (10%)	2.59	0.88	Low
Accuracy	2 (2%)	9 (9%)	57 (57%)	23 (23%)	9 (9%)	2.72	0.83	Moderate
English Grammar	1 (1%)	8 (8%)	38 (38%)	36 (36.0)	17 (17%)	2.40	0.90	Low
Pronunciation	1 (1%)	4 (4%)	31 (31%)	57 (57.0)	7 (7%)	2.35	0.72	Low
English Vocabulary	3 (3%)	10 (10%)	52 (52%)	27 (27.0)	8 (8%)	2.73	0.86	Moderate
Rate of Responsiveness	2 (2%)	9 (9%)	56 (56%)	21 (21.0)	12 (12%)	2.68	0.87	Moderate
Speaking with Confidence	7 (7%)	18 (18%)	32 (32%)	35 (35%)	8 (8%)	2.81	1.05	Moderate
Vendors' Accents	0	11	39	43	7	2.54	0.78	Low

	(0%)	(11%)	(39%)	(43%)	(7%)			
Overall Speaking Skills	2 (2%)	14 (14%)	35 (35%)	42 (42%)	7 (7%)	2.62	0.89	Moderate

Table 4.9 illustrates the respondents' satisfaction towards the English speaking skills of Thai vendors in Bangkok. In terms of overall speaking skills, the respondents were moderately satisfied with the English speaking skills of Thai vendors ( $\bar{x} = 2.62$ ). The details of the results revealed that they were moderately satisfied with the English speaking skills of Thai vendors in speaking with confidence ( $\bar{x} = 2.81$ ), English vocabulary ( $\bar{x} = 2.73$ ), accuracy ( $\bar{x} = 2.72$ ), and rate of responsiveness ( $\bar{x} = 2.68$ ). Meanwhile, the level of satisfaction was low in fluency ( $\bar{x} = 2.59$ ), vendors' accents ( $\bar{x} = 2.54$ ), English grammar ( $\bar{x} = 2.40$ ), and pronunciation ( $\bar{x} = 2.35$ ).

**Table 4.10: The respondents' satisfaction towards English listening skills of Thai vendors**

Listening Skills	Level of Satisfaction					Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	SD	Satisfaction Level
	Highest	High	Moderate	Low	Lowest			
Understanding Your Request	4 (4%)	24 (24%)	42 (42%)	17 (17%)	13 (13%)	2.89	1.04	Moderate
Familiar with Your Accent	6 (6%)	21 (21%)	37 (37%)	30 (30%)	6 (6%)	2.91	1.00	Moderate
Concentrating on the Conversation	3 (3%)	30 (30%)	46 (46%)	13 (13%)	8 (8%)	3.07	0.93	Moderate
Listening with Confidence	3 (3%)	9 (9%)	54 (54%)	28 (28%)	6 (6%)	2.75	0.82	Moderate
Understanding Your Long Sentences	2 (2%)	11 (11%)	38 (38%)	26 (26%)	23 (23%)	2.43	1.03	Low
Guessing at Unknown Words	8 (8%)	14 (14%)	28 (28%)	43 (43%)	7 (7%)	2.73	1.05	Moderate
Understanding Your Difficult Words	0 (0%)	8 (8%)	39 (39%)	25 (25%)	28 (28%)	2.27	0.96	Low

Catching Up Your Speed of Speech	3 (3%)	19 (19%)	23 (23%)	41 (41%)	14 (14%)	2.56	1.05	Low
Overall Listening Skills	3 (3%)	18 (18%)	29 (29%)	45 (45%)	5 (5%)	2.69	0.93	Moderate

Table 4.10 shows the respondents' satisfaction towards the English Listening skills of Thai vendors in Bangkok. In terms of overall listening skills, the respondents were moderately satisfied with the English listening skills of Thai vendors ( $\bar{x} = 2.69$ ). The details of the results revealed that they were moderately satisfied with the English listening skills of Thai vendors in concentrating on the conversation ( $\bar{x} = 3.07$ ), familiar with tourists' accent ( $\bar{x} = 2.91$ ), understanding tourists' request ( $\bar{x} = 2.89$ ), listening with confidence ( $\bar{x} = 2.75$ ), and guessing at unknown words ( $\bar{x} = 2.73$ ). Meanwhile, the level of satisfaction was low in catching up with tourists speed of speech ( $\bar{x} = 2.56$ ), understanding tourists' long sentences ( $\bar{x} = 2.43$ ), and understanding tourists' difficult words ( $\bar{x} = 2.27$ ).

### **4.3 MAIN PROBLEMS AND SUGGESTIONS WHEN FOREIGN TOURISTS COMMUNICATE IN ENGLISH WITH THAI VENDORS**

The third part was open-ended questions asked to determine main problems and suggestions when the respondents communicated in English with Thai vendors in Bangkok.

#### **4.3.1 Main problems when the respondents communicated in English with Thai vendors in Bangkok**

It was found that the respondents have problems with the pronunciation of Thai vendors, such as pronouncing the letter R. They agreed that Thai vendors often lacked confidence and vocabulary when speaking English, so it was hard to order something or asking for something. For native English speakers, they agreed that Thai vendors could not follow their speed of speech, so they had to speak slowly. They found that some Thai vendor did not speak English or had low English skills, therefore the oral communication between them was blocked almost completely. For non-native English speakers, they agreed that Thai vendors were not familiar with their accents, so Thai vendors did not understand their questions correctly.

#### **4.3.2 Suggestions for improving Thai vendors' English oral communication skills**

Due to various perceptions of the respondents, different suggestions were collected. The respondents suggested that Thai vendors should keep practicing and learning English skills, especially pronunciation and English grammar. They agreed that Thai people should start learning a foreign language at an early age. They agreed that Thai vendors should be able to explain their products in English well so as to attract more foreign tourists. For Food street vendors, they suggested that Thai vendors should learn their long menus containing complicated words, and be able to describe their menus fluently. They thought that it would be great if Thai vendors could make foreign friends in order to have an opportunity to practice English speaking and listening skills. Listening to English music and watching English movies were activities that they suggested. The results of the study will be summarized and discussed in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter presents (1) a summary of the study, (2) a summary of the findings, (3) discussion of the findings by comparison with related research and theories, (4) conclusions, and (5) recommendations for further research.

#### **5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY**

This section summarizes the objectives, participants, materials, and procedures of the study as follows:

##### **5.1.1 Objective of the study**

The main objective of the study was to survey the foreign tourists' satisfaction towards English oral communication with Thai vendors in Bangkok, and also find the main problems when foreign tourists communicate in English with Thai vendors

##### **5.1.2 Participants, Materials, and procedures**

The participants of this study were foreign tourists who visited Khaosan Road. The sample size was 100 respondents who were selected accidentally on Khaosan Road between 23 and 30 April 2016. The material used in this study was a questionnaire which was divided into three parts with closed-ended questions, open-ended questions, and a five-point Likert weighted scale. Part I is general information consisting of 8 questions. Part II is foreign tourists' satisfaction towards English oral communication consisting of 18 questions. Part III consists of 2 questions asking about the main problems and suggestions when Thai vendors communicate in English with foreign tourists

The researcher distributed the questionnaire directly to the respondents on Khaosan Road. After collecting the data the results of the questionnaire were analyzed by using the Social Sciences on Personal Computer (SPSS/PC). The descriptive statistic of frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data in this study.

## 5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The results of the study can be summarized as follows:

### 5.2.1 General Information of the Respondents

The respondents consisted of 100 foreign tourists both male and female who visited Khaosan Road between 23 and 30 April 2016. The results showed that 57% of the respondents were male whereas 43% were female. In terms of age, the respondents between 26-30 years old were the largest group (31%), followed by 31-35 years old (22%), 21-25 years old (10%), 41-45 years old (9%), over 50 years old (8%), 36-40 years old (7%), under 20 (7%) etc. The smallest group (6%) was the respondents between 46-50 years old. The nationalities of the respondents varied. The results illustrated that 21% of the respondents were British, followed by American (18%), French (13%), Australian (9%), Russian (8%), and Chinese (8%) respectively. Regarding education, most respondents had a Bachelor's degree (46%). The remaining 27%, 16%, 11%, and 0% of the respondents graduated from high school, master's programs, vocational college, and Ph.D. programs respectively. In terms of occupation, 46% of the respondents were employees. The remaining 35%, 10%, and 9% of the respondents were businesspeople, others (housewives and retired people), and students respectively. In terms of their first language, 52% of respondents used English as a second language, and 48% of them used English as a first language. Regarding the purpose of their trips, the majority of the respondents (56%) came to Bangkok for holidays. The remaining 31%, 8%, and 5% of the respondents came to Bangkok for business trips, seminars, and other (living in Thailand and working in Thailand) respectively. In terms of frequency, 53% of respondents visited Khaosan Road one time, followed by 2-3 times (22%), 4-5 times (20%), and others (more than 5 times and many times) (5%).

### **5.2.2 Foreign Tourists' Satisfactions towards English Oral Communication with Thai Vendors**

Regarding overall speaking skills, the results showed that the respondents were moderately satisfied with English speaking skills of Thai vendors. The results of speaking skills revealed that speaking with confidence earned the most satisfaction of the respondents, followed by English vocabulary, accuracy, rate of responsiveness, fluency, vendors' accents, and English grammar respectively. Pronunciation of Thai vendors earned the least satisfaction of the respondents. Regarding overall listening skills, the results illustrated that the respondents were moderately satisfied with English listening skills of Thai vendors. The results of listening skills revealed that concentrating on the conversation earned the most satisfaction of the respondents, followed by familiar with tourists' accent, understanding your request, listening with confidence, guessing at unknown words, catching up tourists of speed of speech, and understanding tourists' long sentences respectively. Understanding tourists' difficult words earned the least satisfaction of the respondents.

### **5.2.3 Main Problems and Suggestions when Foreign Tourists Communicate in English with Thai Vendors**

Pronunciation, confidence, English grammar and vocabulary of Thai vendors seemed to be the main problems when the respondents communicated in English with Thai vendors in Bangkok. Additionally, Thai vendors could not follow the speed of speech from native English speakers, and they were not familiar with accents of non-native English speakers such as Japanese and French tourists. Regarding suggestions for improving Thai vendors' English oral communication skills, the respondents suggested that Thai vendors should keep practicing and learning English skills, especially pronunciation and English grammar. Making foreign friends, watching English movies and listening to music were options that the respondents recommended. Moreover, Thais should study English as soon as they can, because the respondents thought that it would be easier to learn a second language at an early age.

## **5.3 DISCUSSIONS**

This section discusses the findings with reference to the literature and the previous related studies.

### **5.3.1 General Information of the Respondents**

The study shows that most foreign tourists were male from non-English-speaking countries, aged between 26-30 years old, came to Bangkok for holidays, visited Khaosan Road one time, earned a bachelor's degree, and worked as employees. The findings of this study are similar to the findings of a study conducted by Chaiyapornnangkul (2013) who studied foreign customer satisfaction with Shangri-La Hotel receptionists' English oral communication ability, because the majority of the respondents were from non-English-speaking countries. However, the finding differs from Ampaipisut (2007) who studied communication problems of foreign tourists towards travel services in Thailand, and Jitjenkarn (2011) who studied foreign customers' satisfaction towards the level of Bank of Ayudhya PCL staff's English oral communication, as most respondents were from English speaking countries. Since the number of European and Asian tourists visiting Khaosan Road is increasing every year, this might be the reason why most of the respondents in this study were from non-English-speaking countries.

### **5.3.2 Foreign Tourists' Satisfactions towards English Oral Communication with Thai Vendors**

In terms of overall oral communication skills, the results of this study showed that the respondents were moderately satisfied with English oral communication skills of Thai vendors in Bangkok. This is similar to Hirunthet's (2011) who studied satisfaction of foreign tourists with the service of tourist police in Khaosan Road, with the results showing that level of foreign tourists' satisfaction towards English communication skills of tourist police was fair. Nevertheless, the results of this study differ from Jitjenkarn (2011) who studied foreign customers' satisfaction towards the level of Bank of Ayudhya PCL staff's English oral communication, and Chaiyapornnangkul (2013) who studied foreign customer satisfaction with Shangri-La Hotel receptionists' English oral communication ability, because the respondents were highly satisfied with English skills of the bank staff and the hotel receptionists. The reason foreign tourists were moderately satisfied with English skills of Thai vendors is because of their educational backgrounds. Most Thai vendors had low educational backgrounds, so they did not

have an opportunity to study English as much as they needed. Therefore, they could not communicate in a high level of English. On the other hand, foreign customers were highly satisfied with English skills of bank staff and hotel receptionists, because they had high educational backgrounds and they were trained well to communicate in English with foreigners.

In terms of speaking skills, the results of this study illustrated that pronunciation of Thai vendors earned the least satisfaction of the respondents. This is in line with Jitjenkarn's (2011), study of foreign customers' satisfaction towards the level of Bank of Ayudhya PCL staff's English oral communication, which showed that the respondents had difficulties with the pronunciation of bank staff. Moreover, the finding is also similar to Ampaipisut's (2007), study of communication problems of foreign tourists towards travel services in Thailand, with the findings showing that pronunciation of Thai travel service staff were incorrect. Regarding the accent, the results of this study showed that the satisfaction level of the respondents was low in vendors' accents. This is also similar to the study of Jitjenkarn (2011), with the findings showing that the respondents thought that Thai accents were difficult for them to understand. The reason is because Thais have their own language, so they have their unique pronunciations and accents when speaking English. Consequently, some foreigners might not be familiar and get confused with them.

Furthermore, the results of this study showed the satisfaction level of the respondents was low in English grammar and fluency. This is similar to Tipmontree's (2007), with the findings showed the main problems of Thai staff who communicated with foreign customers were of low fluency and poor English grammar. English grammar and fluency seem to be the main problems of many Thai people. That is why Thai vendors in this study faced these problems as well.

In terms of listening skills, the results of this study showed the satisfaction level of the respondents was low in catching up with tourists speed of speech. This is similar to Ampaipisut's (2007), study of communication problems of foreign tourists towards travel services in Thailand, with the findings showing that Thai travel service staff could not catch what the respondents said. The reason is that some foreign tourists, especially native English speakers spoke English faster than Thai vendors thought, so Thai vendors could not follow their speed of speech.

### **5.3.3 Main Problems and Suggestions when Foreign Tourists Communicate in English with Thai Vendors**

In terms of speaking skills, the results of this study showed that most respondents had a problem with English vocabulary. This is similar to Witchaiyutphong's (2011), study of English barriers for Thai employees working in an international setting, a study at Thomson Reuters Company in Thailand, with the findings showing that a limited vocabulary was the main problem of Thai employees. Lack of English vocabulary seems to be the main problem for many Thai people. That is why Thai vendors in this study faced this problem as well.

In terms of listening skills, the finding showed that most Thai vendors were not familiar with accents of not non-native English speakers. This is also in line with the study of Witchaiyutphong (2011), with the results showing that most of Thai employees were unfamiliar with different accents. The reason is because normally Thai people have been watching English news and movies from native English speakers. Consequently, they are familiar with British or American accents rather than the accents from non-native English speakers, such as Japanese or French people. Furthermore, the results of this study also showed that Thai vendors could not follow the speed of speech from native English speakers. This is similar to the study of Ampaipisut (2007), on communication problems of foreign tourists towards travel services in Thailand, which showed that the respondents agreed that Thai travel service staff could not keep up with what they said. The reason is that native English speakers spoke English faster than Thai vendors thought, so Thai vendors could not follow their speed of speech.

## **5.4 CONCLUSIONS**

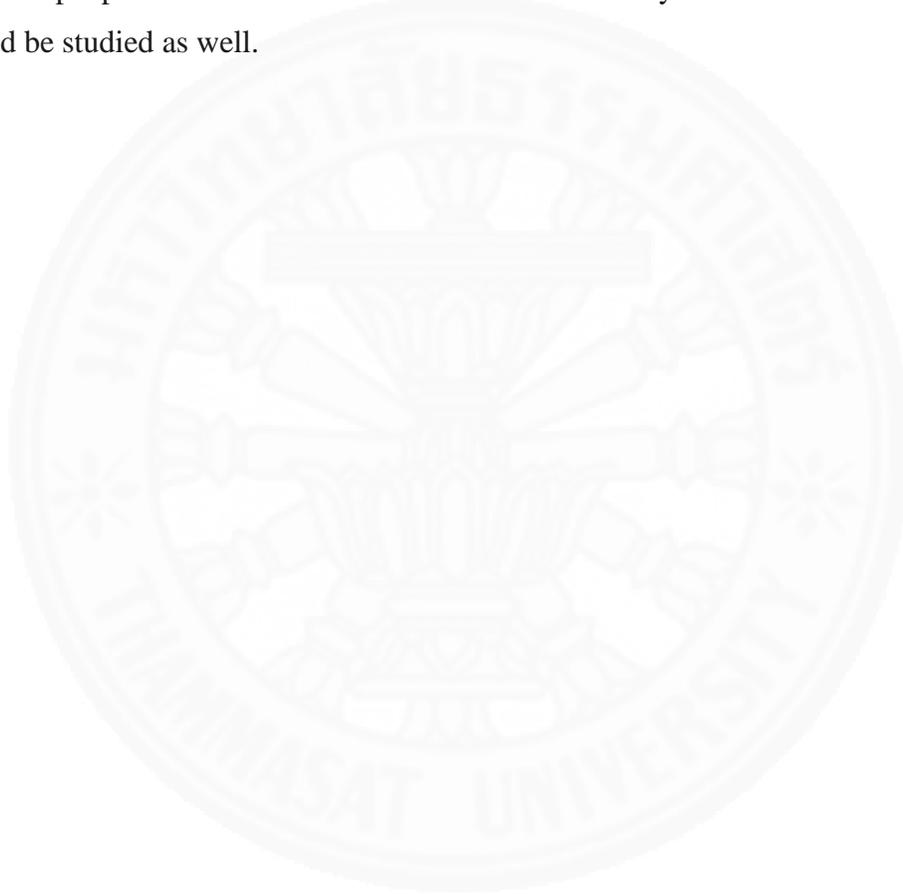
The respondents had a moderate level of satisfaction toward English speaking skills of Thai vendors in Bangkok, and they had a moderate level of satisfaction towards English listening skills of Thai vendors in Bangkok. In terms of speaking skills, they gave the highest rank to speaking English confidently of Thai vendors. On the other hand, they gave the lowest rank to the pronunciation of Thai vendors. In terms of listening, they gave the highest rank to concentrating on the conversation of Thai vendors. On the contrary, they gave the lowest rank to understanding their difficult words.

## **5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made for further research.

5.5.1 This survey was limited to foreign tourists visiting Khaosan Road, hence the results of the study may not be representative of all areas in Bangkok. The next study should cover more areas so as to have more accuracy and reliability.

5.5.2 Since the researcher only focused on English oral communication of Thai vendors, other groups of people who involved with the tourism industry such as taxi drivers and travel agents should be studied as well.



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## APPENDIX QUESTIONNAIRE

### Foreign tourists' satisfaction towards English Oral Communication with Thai vendors in Bangkok.

**Objective:** This survey will be used to access the level of foreign customers' satisfaction towards English oral communication with Thai vendors on Khaosan Road.

#### Part 1: General Information

**Instructions:** Please fill in the following questionnaire by placing a mark ( ✓ ) in the box or writing your answers in the space.

1. Gender                     Male                     Female
  
2. Age                         Under 20                 21-25  
                                   26-30                     31-35  
                                   36-40                     41-45  
                                   46-50                     Over 50
  
3. Nationality .....
  
4. Education                 High School             Vocational college  
                                   Bachelor's                 Master's                 Doctorate
  
5. Occupation                 Student                 Businessperson         Employee  
                                   Other (please specify) .....
  
6. Is English your first language?                 Yes                 No
  
7. What is the purpose of your trip?  
                                   Business                 Seminar                 Holiday  
                                   Other (please specify) .....
  
8. How many times have you visited Khaosan Road?  
                                   1 time                     2-3 times                 4-5 times  
                                   Other (please specify) .....

## Part 2: Foreign tourists' satisfaction towards English oral communication

**Instructions:** Please rate your satisfaction with Thai vendors' English skills by placing a mark (✓) in the box.

Thai vendors' English skills	Level of Satisfaction				
	Lowest	Low	Moderate	High	Highest
<b><i>Speaking Skills</i></b>					
9. Fluency	<input type="checkbox"/>				
10. Accuracy	<input type="checkbox"/>				
11. English Grammar	<input type="checkbox"/>				
12. Pronunciation	<input type="checkbox"/>				
13. English Vocabulary	<input type="checkbox"/>				
14. Rate of Responsiveness	<input type="checkbox"/>				
15. Speaking with Confidence	<input type="checkbox"/>				
16. Vendors' Accents	<input type="checkbox"/>				
17. Overall Speaking Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<b><i>Listening Skills</i></b>					
18. Understanding Your Request	<input type="checkbox"/>				
19. Familiar with Your Accent	<input type="checkbox"/>				
20. Concentrating on the Conversation	<input type="checkbox"/>				
21. Listening with Confidence	<input type="checkbox"/>				
22. Understanding Your Long Sentences	<input type="checkbox"/>				
23. Guessing at Unknown Words	<input type="checkbox"/>				
24. Understanding Your Difficult Words	<input type="checkbox"/>				
25. Catching Up Your Speed of Speech	<input type="checkbox"/>				
26. Overall Listening Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>				

\* Vendor - a person offering something for sale on the street, such as food, drinks, clothes and souvenirs.

**Part 3: Problems and suggestions when foreign tourists communicate in English with Thai vendors**

**Instructions:** Please write down your answers for the question number 27 and 28.

27. What are the main problems you find when communicating in English with Thai vendors?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

28. Please give your suggestions for improving Thai vendors' English oral communication skills.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Thank you for your kind cooperation and your valuable time.

