



**ATTITUDES OF THAIS AND WESTERNERS IN  
KHON KAEN TOWARDS *FARANG*:  
AN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION ANALYSIS**

**BY**

**MISS PHAKHAWADEE CHAISIRI**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MASTER OF ARTS IN  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE STUDIES  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LINGUISTICS  
FACULTY OF LIBERAL ARTS  
THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY  
ACADEMIC YEAR 2016  
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*FARANG*: AN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION ANALYSIS

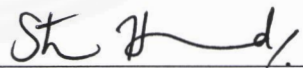
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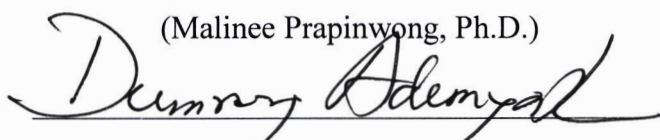
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Thesis Title	ATTITUDES OF THAIS AND WESTERNERS IN KHON KAEN TOWARDS <i>FARANG</i> : AN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION ANALYSIS
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Degree	Master of Arts
Major Field/Faculty/University	English Language Studies Faculty of Liberal Arts Thammasat University
Thesis Advisor	Assistant Professor Sawitri Hammond, Ph.D.
Thesis Co-Advisor (If any)	-
Academic Year	2016

## ABSTRACT

This qualitative study aims to examine the field of intercultural communication, namely language, culture and communication between Thais and Westerners in Khon Kaen. The study investigates the implications of the term *farang* and its effects from the perspectives of the term speakers or Thai people and the term hearers or Westerners. It also examines the attitudes of both Thais and Westerners towards *farang* in Thailand. To foster the interaction of both groups, their intercultural communicative competence when dealing with each other is specifically explored. Two research instruments were applied to collect data in this study. The questionnaires were collected with 60 Thais and 30 Westerners. Then, the in-depth interviews were conducted with five participants from each group.

The results revealed that the Thai and Western participants shared similar views on the general definitions of the term *farang* which was defined as a Caucasian foreigner. But, both groups had different opinions on its connotations and functions which resulted in a sense of separation to the Westerners and the ignorance of Thai people on the origins of each Western individual. The findings showed that the term *farang* could cause offense when used in the presence of the Westerners, especially by

strangers. Therefore, the term *farang* should be avoided in the intercultural contexts. With regard to the attitudes, the majority tended to have positive beliefs, feelings and behaviours towards Westerners. However, the Western participants seemed to reflect their attitudes towards a group of Westerners quite negative compared to the Thais in terms of characteristics and assimilation. Lastly, the findings on the intercultural communicative competence demonstrated that both Thais and Westerners had moderate motivation to communicate with each other, good knowledge about cultural differences, but poor skills in communication. The main obstacles in intercultural communication between Thais and Westerners were the language skills and the different cultural values.

It is concluded that to create a friendly and welcoming environment for the Westerners, both groups should have mutual understanding concerning with the power of the term *farang* and knowledge of different cultural dimensions between Thailand and the Western countries. Additionally, to enhance the relationships between Thais and Westerners, both groups should interact with each other more frequently in order to gain sufficient confidence and skills in intercultural communication as well as to practice analyse the worldviews from others' perspectives. Most importantly, the significance of intercultural communication in the current era should be promoted in families, local communities, schools, international organizations and media.

**Keywords:** attitude, culture, *farang*, intercultural communication, intercultural communicative competence, Thais, Westerners

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study completed because of an enormous support from these following persons. Firstly, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my understanding and dedicated advisor, Asst. Prof. Dr. Sawitri Hammond for her academic and constructive advice during the planning and development of this research work. I truly appreciate her continuous support, kind encouragement and valuable time guiding me during my research. I would also like to extend my sincerest appreciation to my gentle committee members, Asst. Prof. Dr. Apisak Pupipat and Dr. Malinee Prapinwong for their useful feedback and guidance as well as their warm and understanding personalities and kind support. Their academic insights have broadened my knowledge in the field of intercultural communication which is a lifelong benefit that I could apply in both personal and academic life.

My grateful thanks are extended to Asst. Prof. Dr. Kornwipa Poonpon from Khon Kaen University (KKU) for her kind assistance in reviewing my questionnaires. I am indebted to her thoughtful comments and cheerful talk. I wish to acknowledge the help from Ajarn Kevin and Ajarn Thomas from International College, KKU who helped me with the pilot interviews and suggested me some valuable viewpoints in this research. Particularly, Uncle James who voluntarily helped me with the proofreading deserves a million thanks. His positive feedback and generous help are highly appreciated.

I am deeply grateful to my former TEP&TEPE colleagues at Thammasat University (TU), especially P'Nok and P'Pui who always gave me warm welcome and nourished me with great food and sense of humour every time I visited TU. I am also grateful to my current co-workers at International Relations Division, KKU, especially P'Nan and P'Fon who understood my situation and encouraged me to work on my study. I am also thankful to P'Nim for her generous help with the interview transcripts and Noona for the quantitative data analysis with SPSS Program. Besides, the warmest thanks go to my dear friends, P'Tom, P'Jeab, Nook and Keith who introduced me to their Western friends. I also need to express many thanks to my English Language Studies (ELS) lecturers, classmates and officers who made this

study a memorable experience. Special thanks go to P'Ice, P'Kate and P'Tu, my academic partners during this journey.

I am particularly grateful for the assistance given by my beloved friends, Bo, Boong, Design and Gift who helped review my work and shared me various sources to improve myself both personally and academically. I also wish to express my honest thanks to all of my national and international friends, brothers and sisters who understood me, supported me, kept asking me about the progress and encouraged me to work on the project. Most importantly, I wish to express my sincerest thanks to my participants for their valuable time in completing the questionnaires and sharing their experiences concerning this research topic.

Last but not least, I wish to express a million thanks to my Danish host family, Bjarke and Solvej who always cheered me up and supported me with their love and generosity despite the distance. I am truly grateful that I have them. Finally, my deepest appreciation and utmost gratitude belongs to my dear parents who have financially, physically and mentally supported me in all areas of my life. They are the most important persons who have given me the precious life, endless love, useful advice and peaceful comfort. I am tremendously thankful for their unconditional love.

Phakhawadee Chaisiri

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This research entitled “Attitudes of Thais and Westerners in Khon Kaen towards *farang*: an intercultural communication analysis” attempts to investigate the daily intercultural interaction between Thai and Western residents in Khon Kaen, Thailand. It analyses the connection of language, culture and communication. In this regard, the implications of the term *farang* and the attitudes of the target groups towards the Westerners are studied. The intercultural communicative competence of both groups is also examined in order to find the factors that could enhance their interactions. This chapter presents the introduction of the study beginning with the background of the study and the statement of the problem. Then, the purposes of the study and the research questions are clarified. After that, the definition of the terms used in this study and the significance of the study are explained. Finally, the summary of this chapter is provided.

#### 1.1 Background of the study

Nowadays, a great number of foreigners increasingly travel, work and settle in various parts of Thailand. The latest statistical report about the number of international tourists arriving to Thailand in 2016 from the Department of Tourism, Ministry of Tourism and Sports shows that the number of Europeans (18.93%) visiting Thailand was second to East Asians (66.48%). Including foreigners from Americas (4.31%) and the Oceania (2.78%), the total number of Western visitors to Thailand in 2016 was 8,481,903 (25.84%). Even though a large number of the Western tourists from the mentioned statistics might be short-term visitors, it appears that a lot of them have currently lived in Thailand. To this point, Pathnadabutr’s (2010) highlighted the increasing trend of renting and buying real estate in Thailand among foreign buyers. From her research, the British and Americans were the top two in rank of buying real estate in Thailand among non-Thai people. Furthermore, a number of Westerners tended to progressively move to Thailand and purchase housing in Bangkok, especially condominiums (ibid.).

In particular, the Westerners do not only live in the capital of Thailand but many of them have also settled in the upcountry regions, especially in the northeast, locally known as Isan. Observed in 2009, Sunanta found that the *Phua Farang Phenomenon* or the trend of Isan women to seek Western partners led many Isan women to be engaged in the intercultural relationships. Many research studies show that a large number of male Westerners, mainly from European countries, are married to Isan women and have decided to live in the region (Howard 2009, Limanonda 2007, Maher & Lafferty 2014, Prasartkul 2009, Sunanta 2009). Moreover, Allinson (2007) presented that a number of intercultural couples between Isan women and Western men who married and lived in the Western countries were likely to move back to their Isan wives' villages after the retirement. The Isan region which is known as the poorest part of Thailand tends to become a multicultural society that consists of people from various countries with different cultural backgrounds. Thus, the Isan people seem to get involved in the intercultural interaction with foreigners, especially the Westerners, more often than in the past.

Significantly, when people from a wide range of cultural backgrounds live together, they are likely to separate, stereotype and group people into social categorization (Whitley Jr. & Kite 2016). Since everyone is different and unique, the differences and preferences of each individual can cause obstacles in intercultural interactions (Jandt 2007). A lack of awareness in intercultural communication could lead to misunderstanding. Also, a lack of intercultural communicative competence, the communicators could not have an effective communication in the intercultural contexts. Specifically, Samovar and Porter (2003) pointed out that the skills to be competent in the intercultural situations were highly required for people in the world that dramatically changed and provided opportunities to meet people from various countries. The understanding of cultural differences and the ability to be competent in the intercultural interactions are worth learning. Therefore, it is important for Isan people to prepare themselves to meet the challenges of dealing with the Westerners in their area. On the other hand, it is essential for the Westerners who settle in Isan to understand the different ways of living, to be tolerant of diverse viewpoints, to adapt themselves and develop skills to be competent communicators with Thais.

## 1.2 Statement of the problem

Among all types of foreigners, most Thais seem to admire Westerners. One reason might be related with the beauty ideal of whiteness among Asians who prefer to apply the whitening skin care products (Ashikari 2005, Li et al. 2008, Shankar & Subish 2007). Evidence is prevalently found on the radio and television advertisements as well as on the posters published in magazines and in public. Another reason could be concerned with the good relations between Thais and Westerners. Historically, Thais first interacted with Westerners in Ayutthaya period (Terwiel 1991). After the arrival of the first Westerners, namely the Portuguese, in 1551, Siam became “a centre for European missionary work in the East,” (Smithies 2011, vi). Many scholars argue that Siam, which was later named Thailand, became well-developed because of the technologies, innovations and public utility that the Western countries had brought to Siam (Aksara 2011, Ninsiri 2012, Simpson 2007).

In addition, the Westerners seem to be easily noticed due to their dominant physical appearance, such as the fair complexion, sharp nose, light-colored hair and eyes. Because of these different looks, most Thais tend to distinguish the Westerners by noticing their physical appearance and group them together. Instead of calling this group of Westerners *kon tang chad* meaning foreigner or *kon tawan tok* meaning Western person in Thai language, the majority of Thais call them *farang* which is used to refer to the light-skinned people of European origin (Mukhopadhyay 2008). In this paper, the term *Westerner* is used to replace the term *farang* in an academic context. Thus, the Westerners in this study mean the white people whose origin is Caucasian including the Europeans, Americans, Australians and New Zealanders.

To begin with, Thai people use the term *farang* frequently in their daily life. Noticed on television, the term *farang* is used in both formal speaking discourses such as in news report and parliament meetings and less formally such as in game shows or dramas. Practically, the term is commonly used in speaking context by Thais of all ages from children to elders and of all positions from labors to the prime minister. In the writing discourses, the term *farang* is normally seen in both formal and informal forms, such as in books, magazines, articles, research studies and on the internet (Aksara 2011, Bandidkul 2012, Boyes & Piraban 1989, Chachavalpongpun 2005, Erni 1997, Ninsiri 2012, Welty 2005, Wilson 2008).

Wise (1997) defined the term *farang* as “the Thai word for European-ethnic foreigners.” Boyes and Piraban (1989) noted that the term *farang* was an “everyday word used by hilltribe people and Thais when referring to a foreigner of European origin,” (preface). This definition shows that not only a majority of Thais use the term *farang* to refer to the Westerners but the term has also been used among the ethnic minorities of the country, such as Hmong and Karen. Additionally, Chachavalpongpun (2005) provided another function of the term *farang* as it was used to address “anything that belongs to Westerners regardless of specific ethnic backgrounds,” (2). This is related with the way Thai people use the term *farang* to specify objects that come from the Western countries. For example, “*nang farang*” means Western movies and “*pleng farang*” means English or Western songs.

Despite the standard use of the term *farang* in Thailand, the issue of calling the Westerners *farang* has been created in many online forums by both Westerners and Thais questioning whether the term is impolite. It is discussed among the Westerners about how they feel when hearing the term *farang* and whether the term is insulting. Some of them are confused whether the term *farang* is as racist as some racial slurs in the West that have later been enforced political correctness. Many comments have been shared on this issue which has been discussed over a decade. The factor that causes the issue controversial and debatable is the different views between Thais and Westerners. To explain, the Thais tend to believe that the term is common and does not carry any insult whereas some Westerners dislike the term and find it offensive.

This controversial issue concerning with the term *farang* is a starting point of this current study on the intercultural communication between Thais and Westerners in Thailand. Although there are a good number of research articles concerning with the intercultural communication in Thailand, the majority of the researchers pay their attention mostly to the intercultural communication problems occurred in the international organizations (Komolsevin, Knutson & Datthuyawat 2010, Muenjohn 2011, Niratpattanasai 2004, Sriussadaporn 2006, Winnuwat 2011). The conflicts that possibly arise in daily life setting and the overall image towards Westerners excluding from the working perspectives are still lacking. As a consequence, it is worth studying on the implications of the term *farang* and how it affects the Westerners.

More importantly, the language and culture are complicatedly intertwined in communication as language is used to symbolize and convey culture while culture also reflects language used (Beebe, Beebe & Redmond 2011, Bonvillain 2003, Lustig & Koester 1996). In the field of intercultural communication, Hall (1959) summarised that “culture is communication and communication is culture,” (186). Accordingly, the investigation into the attitudes towards Westerners from both parties could provide some insights into the current situation of Westerners in Thailand. The findings on the intercultural communicative competence of both groups could have considerable impacts in enhancing an effective communication, fostering mutual understanding and creating a friendly environment for both Thais and Westerners in Thailand.

### **1.3 Purposes of the study and research questions**

As the term *farang* might cause offense to the Westerners and can affect the attitudes towards Westerners which later result in either positive or negative interactions between Thais and Westerners, these following research objectives are developed in this study:

1. To find the implications of the term *farang* and its effects on the Westerners as well as its offensive contexts
2. To examine the attitudes of Thais towards Westerners and to reflect the attitudes of the Westerners towards a group of themselves in Thailand
3. To identify the components of intercultural communicative competence that Thais and Westerners have or lack when dealing with each other and to investigate the factors that could foster their interaction

As a result, this study attempts to answer these following research questions:

1. What are the implications of the term *farang* in the views of Thais and Westerners?
2. What are the attitudes of Thais and Westerners towards the Westerners?
3. What kind of intercultural communicative competence do Thais and Westerners have or lack when interacting with each other?

#### 1.4 Definition of terms

This study is related to the language, attitude and intercultural communicative competence of Thais and Westerners. The key terms are defined as follows:

1. Attitude is the beliefs and feelings that one has towards an object. These two components influence the actions and behaviours one has towards that object afterwards.
2. Intercultural communicative competence is the ability or a set of skilled behaviours that are appropriate and effective when interacting with people from different cultural background.
3. Farang is a Western or European person of light-colored skin. It is the term that Thais use to refer to white people of European origin judging from the dominant physical appearance, such as height, prominent nose, light-colored skin, eyes and hair.
4. Westerner is a person of European descent. In this study, the term Westerner is used to refer to the term *farang* in academic context. It includes the Caucasians from Europe, America and Oceania continents.

#### 1.5 Significance of the study

This study investigates the attitudes of Thais and Westerners in Khon Kaen towards *farang* in order to analyse the different views of both groups in terms of language, culture and communication. Its goal is to provide the insights from both perspectives so that mutual understanding and respect could be implemented from the study. The findings of this study will be a significant benefit in the field of intercultural communication in Thailand, especially in a daily setting context between Thais and Westerners. The increasing chances to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds in the current era justify the need to prepare one's self to understand the diversity and to be aware of the differences as well as to develop the skills to become competent in intercultural situations.

As a consequence, the teachers who apply the implications of this study concerning with the linguistic awareness, cultural sensitivity and intercultural communicative skills for Thais and Westerners in their curriculums will be able to suggest the students to deal with their daily life's intercultural encounter better. This

research will also be helpful for the international organizations in training their staff, specially the Thai and Western workers, in the area of cultural differences and awareness as well as in searching for the appropriate strategies for the East and the West conflict management. Lastly, this study can be served as a future reference for the researchers who are interested in the Westerners and intercultural communication between Thais and Westerners in Thailand.

### **1.6 Summary**

The number of Westerners settling in Thailand is increasing. This emphasizes the importance of intercultural communication and the intercultural communicative competence of Thais and Westerners in Thailand. One of the controversial issues that has been discussed over a decade and has affected the feelings of Westerners in Thailand is concerned with the term *farang* which can cause offense to the Westerners. This issue brings about the current study which attempts to examine the term *farang* and its effects as well as the attitudes of Thais and Westerners towards Westerners in Thailand. Significantly, it also investigates the intercultural communicative competence of both groups in order to identify the components that they have or lack when dealing with each other. The next chapter will be the review of the literature on the power of language, Westerners in Thailand, concepts of attitude, cultural differences and intercultural communicative competence.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

This study investigates the attitudes of Thais and Westerners in Khon Kaen towards *farang*. It examines the term *farang*, the Westerners and the competence in intercultural communication of both target groups. In this chapter, the theoretical frameworks related to language, culture and communication, especially in intercultural contexts are reviewed to show their inextricable relations that are involved in people's attitudes or ways of thinking, behaving and perceiving the world. Firstly, the importance of language and the power of racial labels in intercultural communication are explored. Then, the review of the attitude theory and the historical relations between Thailand and the Western countries as well as the current situation of Westerners in Thailand are studied. After that, some key aspects of the cultural differences that affect the beliefs and behaviours of Thais and Westerners are reviewed. Lastly, to improve the intercultural communicative ability and to enhance the relationships of the two parties, the reviews on the intercultural communicative competence are presented.

#### **2.1 Language and racial labels**

##### **2.1.1 The power of language**

Language is claimed as “the very core of our existence” since it distinguishes people from animals and is used as a communication tool to develop relationships of humankind (van Lier 1995, 1). Without language, people can hardly convey their thoughts and initiate the relationships. Language is compared as the air that people breathe in as it is very significant but we are barely aware of it (ibid.). van Lier (1995) further highlighted that language could define people and shape their being. To explain, the language is symbolic and words are symbols that people create to represent both concrete and abstract things when communicating with others (Adler & Towne 1990, Beebe, Beebe & Redmond 2011, Orbe & Harris 2008). Functionally, language is governed by rules which are syntactic rules or the ways that symbols are arranged and semantic rules or the shared-meanings of symbols within group (Adler & Towne 1990). Most importantly, the meanings are not in words, but rather in the

person who conveys it. Since meanings of words can be interpreted in many ways depending on each person's experience, it is important to be aware of using and interpreting words (Beebe, Beebe & Redmond 2011, van Lier 1995).

Beebe, Beebe and Redmond (2011) concluded five reasons that strengthened the power of words. Firstly, words affect the way people perceive the world as we communicate senses and feelings through the use of words. Secondly, since words and thoughts are inextricable, they influence each other. The meaning of a word can be interpreted in many ways because people learn to perceive the world differently. Also, the personal experiences affect the thoughts that we have towards the words we use. Thirdly, words influence actions and behaviours. For example, some words can be used to gather people and form a protest march on the street. Fourthly, words affect and reflect culture. Referring to Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, language forms people's thoughts and culture whereas thoughts and culture influence the way people use the language to describe their real world or their cultures. Finally, words can either build or destroy relationships. This is concerned with the ways we use words which show how we relate to others.

According to Hayakawa (1978), people tend to make connection, prejudgment and assumption between the word and the object that it stands for. For example, when people hear the word *pig*, they might have the feeling of *dirty* towards the pig (ibid., 22). This is the double task of language, namely the *informative connotation* or the definition of the word and the *affective connotation* or the personal feeling towards the word. Normally, the speakers tend to express their thoughts when communicating while those messages affect the feelings of the hearers. This is the reason that the word users and the word hearers perceive words differently. It is emphasized that the word is not the thing; instead, it is a symbolic process that people create to communicate within group. Also, it is dynamic and changes all the time. So, the language users should understand the functions of language as well as be aware of the symbolic process so that they could use it to their advantages. Otherwise, the language users could become the victims of languages (ibid.)

In terms of racial labels, it is claimed that people are not able to deal with billions of separate individuals in our thoughts (Allport 1985). Therefore, we need to group people of various races, form clusters and finally name them into categories so

that our thoughts will be in order and easier to be proceeded. Importantly, language could cause and shape prejudice in the language users, especially the ethnic labels with some highly visible features such as Negro and Oriental. Such symbols are called “labels of primary potency” or the name-calling that are used to refer to some ethnic groups who have outstanding physical features and those names have great power to mentally affect the term referrers (ibid., 179). The degrees of sensitivity between the majority and minority within groups towards the words used are different. Allport (1985) proposed the *symbol phobia* and *verbal realism* which he argued that the majority of one group were *verbal realism* who used the words unconsciously without the awareness of their effects whereas the minority were *symbol phobia* who were sensitive to the names given to them (ibid., 186).

Moreover, the words which are associated with religions, races, nations and politics are extremely powerful and able to arouse people’s feelings (Hayakawa 1978). To support the power of ethnic labels with built-in judgments or value-judgment, Hayakawa (1978) presented a clear-cut example of the term *nigger* which was universally considered as an ethnic slur. Although the term *nigger* was, most of the time, used as a dear reference within the group of the African people, it has become an insulting word when White people used it as a way to show their superior status towards people whose skin color was black (Croom 2013, Jackson II 1999, Kennedy 2000). As a consequence, this term has been banned and has driven the Political Correctness practice, especially in the United States of America where people of various racial backgrounds live together and their uniqueness is promoted to be respected.

Words are powerful. The role that power plays with language, especially with naming and labeling should be recognized (Orbe & Harris 2008). The word users should be responsible for the effects of their word choices and should develop the deep understanding of the similarities and differences of the verbal language between groups (ibid.). Also, to reduce conflicts and misunderstandings when using language, some language scholars point out that people should avoid troublesome language, especially ethnically and racially biased language; otherwise, we need to be aware, careful and mindful when using the emotive and ethnic labels (Adler & Towne 1990; Beebe, Beebe & Redmond 2011). Beebe, Beebe and Redmond (2011) strongly

advised the language users to be other-oriented or to be empathetic by having ability to understand the feelings of others. It is highlighted that the word users do not determine the meanings and effects of the words, but the persons who we talk to do. Thus, the word hearers cannot control what the others say: instead, they can choose to react and appropriately affirm and explain how the terms offend them (ibid.).

### **2.1.2 Related research studies on racial and ethnic labels**

In terms of the racial labels, very little research has been carried out into the effects of the term *farang* in Thailand's context. Most existing research studies associated with the term *farang* mainly provide only its definitions and use it as an alternative term for Caucasian Westerners (Aksara 2011, Bandidkul 2012, Boyes & Piraban 1989, Chachavalpongpun 2005, Erni 1997, Mukhopadhyay 2008, Ninsiri 2012, Welty 2005, Wilson 2008, Wise 1997). Therefore, in order to review the studies that are related to the terms used to categorize races and ethnics, the researcher has collected the terms used to refer to the Westerners in East Asian countries and found four related research studies on the term *Maori* in New Zealand (Cotter, 2007), *bogan* in Australia (Bartolo 2008), *squaw* in the United States of America (Merskin 2010) and *gaijin* in Japan (Curtis 2011) to review instead.

To begin with, some Westerners have shared their experiences of being referred to as Westerners in various East Asian countries in the online articles and forums related to the issue of the term *farang*. The researcher read the comments and collected the terms used to refer to the Westerners in some East Asian languages. The terms were verified via email correspondences with each country's people who were friends of the researcher. After receiving the verifications, the terms used to refer to White Caucasian foreigners in some East Asian countries are compiled by the researcher as shown in Chart 2.1.

Chart 2.1

*List of terms used to refer to Westerners in East Asia*

<b>Country</b>	<b>Term addressing to Westerners</b>	<b>Literal translation</b>	<b>Note</b>
Cambodia	Barang	French people	
	Ah Kaang	US people	
China/Hong Kong	Gweilo	Foreign devil	
	Laowai	Old foreigner	
	Waiguoren	Foreigner	Informally use only in the internet
Indonesia	Bule	Albino	
	Orang belanda	Hollanders	Their colonizers
Japan	Gaijin	Outsider/ foreigner	
Lao	Frang	Westerner	
Malaysia	Ang mo/ Ang moh	Red hair	
	Barat	Westerner	
Myanmar	Bo	White trash, Westerner	
	Briti Sha	British People	Their colonizers
	Ingalate/ Ingelan	Englishmen	
	Pyin Thit	French People	Their colonizers
Philippines	Joe	American	General first name of an American
	Kano	Americano	Shorten term
	Puti	White foreigner	
Singapore	Ang mo/ Ang moh	Red hair	
Vietnam	Người tây	Western people	
	Mắt xanh mỏ đỏ	Blue eyes, red lip	

From the literal translations of each term in Chart 2.1, some of them are from the names of the European countries or the United States of America and their people who probably used to historically have great power in these East Asian countries, such as *Kano* and *Joe* in the Philippines and *Orang belanda* in Indonesia. While some literal translations of some terms such as *Waiguoren* in Chinese and *Gaijin* in Japanese seem to convey neutral connotations, the literal translations of some references, for example, *Bo* meaning white trash in Myanmar and *Gweilo* meaning foreign devil in some parts of China and Hong Kong explicitly convey negative and

insulting meanings which can cause offense to the term referents. Accordingly, the terms used to categorize the out-group people in one country have the historical origins which possibly have culturally rooted in the in-group people's minds.

To review the research paper on the racial labels, Cotter (2007) studied the documents on the term *Maori* and its effects on the relations, status and power between Maori and non-Maori people in New Zealand. Historically, the Maori were portrayed as “barbaric, uncivilized and uncultured” while presently as “primitive, dirty, lazy, intellectually challenged, having low moral values and generally culturally inferior,” (52). The term *Maori* was sometimes used as discriminatory language. For example, *Maori shower* means dirty and unhealthy and *Maori time* means a lack of punctuality. These negative connotations led to the unfavourable feelings towards the Maori people. This affected the Maori's self-esteem resulting in low achievement. Significantly, this discriminatory language reasserted the superior status of the non-Maori majority and inferior status of the Maori minority which caused the unequal treatment within the community. It is noted that the media, literatures and daily speech are the most influent sources that promote discrimination and racism. Therefore, to prevent the negative effects caused by discriminatory language, the media should be aware of the on-air language. Also, developing the educational system is the key success to foster intercultural relations for the next generation. Although Cotter (2007) provided a plausible of the etymology of the term *Maori* and useful discussions on its effects, this paper would provide more significant results if some current views of the non-Maori and Maori people had been added to support the related literature and documentary reviews.

Bartolo (2008) examined the effects of the term *bogan*, an Australian slang defined as uncouth and unsophisticated. The data were collected by using a corpus of the term *bogan* from the internet sources in the past five years and the interview with three Anglo-Saxon native Australians. The analysis revealed that the term *bogan* was used both in positive and negative ways depending on the persons who used the term and the persons whom the users referred to. In other words, the term was positive and could be used as a compliment when used among the in-group people who accepted themselves as *bogan*. In contrast, the term could be an insult when used between the in-group and out-group people. Furthermore, the findings revealed that the

understanding and connotation towards the term *bogan* and the ways that the Australians used the term *bogan* have changed over time. The term seemed to be more acceptable recently among the group of Australian teenagers and young adults whereas the old generation tended to view the term as a derogatory word and rarely used it. Despite the interesting and opposite views towards the term *bogan* is provided, this study would have been better if the origin and related history of the term *bogan* is reviewed.

Merskin (2010) focused on the term *squaw* and its effects on the term referents or the Native Indian women in the United States of America. Two dominant representations of the term *squaw* towards the Indian woman were concluded as “sexual punching bag and as drudge” (353). Similar to the term *Maori*, the term *squaw* was not originally meant to insult the female Native Indian referents. But it has become a slur when the White Americans used it to show their superior status. However, unlike the term *Maori* and *bogan*, the term *squaw* was gender bias and nationally considered offensive resulting in the law to rename and remove the term *squaw* from some places’ in the country. The mass media including advertisements, films and literary works have also played an important role on ethnic representations. As a result, the *squaw* stereotypes brought about the negative impacts, namely the “ethno-stress”, on the Native American women. The false stereotypes decreased the Native women’s self-esteem and caused oppression in daily life, such as health care problems and social inequitable treatment. Similar to Cotter (2007), Merskin (2010) suggested that the media should be careful and aware of word choices and people within society should be aware of the power of words. In sum, Merskin (2010) took on the difficult task of researching about the etymology of the term *squaw* and of presenting the miserable life affected by the negative stereotypes that the Native Indian women had encountered. Again, it would be useful to conduct the interviews with the Native Indian women and non-Native Indians at present time in the study. So, the views after the law of renaming and removing the term *squaw* had been enforced could be explored.

Lastly, Curtis (2011) investigated the term *gaijin* in Japanese defined as “foreigner” but literally means “outsider”. The specific characteristics, such as tall and blue eyes are typical of a *gaijin*. This study attempted to find how and in what

contexts that the term *gaijin* was used among the Japanese in Sydney, Australia where the Japanese themselves were foreigners in the country. The research tools included three focus groups with the native speakers of Japanese (NSJ) and non-native speakers of Japanese (NNSJ) and individually follow up interviews with six NSJ and NNSJ participants. The findings revealed 11 interpretations of the term *gaijin* which afterwards were formed two models. The differences between the two models were related to the race of the term users and the places where the term was used. In other words, the Absolute *gaijin* model was concerned with race and physical appearance of the term referents. On the other hand, the Relative *gaijin* model could be used by both NSJ and NNSJ as it referred to those who had different or foreign backgrounds from where the term was used. Overall, Curtis (2011) presented an innovative analysis of an interesting topic conducting outside Japan with the use of an exploratory method; however, the study would have been more remarkable and possibly provided significant insights if the different generations of the participants were included. Besides, two out of three of the NNSJ participants were Asians and had little experiences being referred as *gaijin*. Therefore, if the study included more typical *gaijin* whose race are Caucasian, the findings might be scholarly meaningful.

From the literature review of the language theories, language is truly powerful as it is not only used to convey our thoughts, feelings, intentions and desires to others, but it also creates perceptions, affects and reflects cultures as well as influences our actions. The most powerful aspect of language is that it can both build and destroy relationships. In addition, the four research studies on the term *Maori*, *bogan*, *squaw* and *gaijin* significantly support the theoretical frameworks of language on how language affects people's thinking, feelings and behaviours. This review on the importance of language and the power of racial labels can help examine how Thai people use the term *farang* and how Westerners reflect the term. The review can also be used to clarify whether and how the term *farang* can cause offense in intercultural communication.

## **2.2 Attitudes towards Westerners**

### **2.2.1 Concept of attitude**

The study of attitude has been significantly well-known among the socialists and psychologists who are interested in investigating the people's thinking and behaviours. The importance of attitudes is highlighted as "They can help people, they can hurt people, they have influenced the course of history," (Oskamp 1991, 1). As quoted, the investigation of attitude can explain human actions since it examines the causes of such behaviours from their beliefs and feelings. In order to evaluate what people like or dislike, the expressions of their attitudes are inquired. Allport (1935) concluded different aspects of the definition of attitude, namely a mental set, a readiness to respond, a physiological basis, a performance, a learned nature and an evaluative nature. He proposed the comprehensive definition of attitude which was "a mental or neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related," (Allport 1935 in Oskamp 1991). In the study of consumer behaviours, Schiffman and Kanuk (1987) explained attitudes as "an expression of inner feelings that reflect whether a person is favorably or unfavorably predisposed to some "object",," (p.270).

In terms of theoretical views on attitude, three major components related to cognitive, affective and behavioural elements are introduced (Oskamp 1991). Firstly, the cognitive component is concerned with the ideas of a person towards an object which that person has learned from their own experiences. Those ideas are afterwards formed the beliefs. Then, this belief system brings about the feelings or the affective component of attitude that one has towards the object. This second component of attitude is the evaluation process towards the object which can be the like or dislike. Therefore, the affective component is a significant aspect of attitude as it affects the last component or the behaviours. The behavioural component is concerned with the tendency of particular actions or behaviours that one performs towards the object. It is the results of either the beliefs or the feelings that one has towards the object.

Principally, attitude is a vital influence that urges people to think and behave in some certain ways. The theory of the attitude is important in this research as it can be used to find the beliefs and feelings that Thai people have towards a group of

Westerners in Thailand and how these elements lead to some specific actions, behaviors and treatment that Thai people have when interacting with the Westerners. On the other hands, the attitude theory is also a main theme to investigate the perceptions that the Westerners have towards themselves as being Westerners in Thailand and how those attitudes affect their stay and interaction with Thai people.

### **2.2.2 History of Westerners in Thailand**

The relationship between Thai people and Westerners first appeared in the sixteenth century when Ayutthaya, the capital of Siam during that period, became a melting pot of various people from different cultural backgrounds such as Persian, Malay, Japanese and Portuguese (Terwiel 1991). The first group of Westerners in Ayutthaya period were the Portuguese whose first arrival was in 1511 (Smithies 2011). Mr. Kasit Piromya, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, claimed that after the arrival of the Portuguese, Siam became “a centre for European missionary work in the East,” (Smithies 2011, vi). It was since then that the Siamese, who later were the Thais, had started to interact with Westerners.

Historically, Thailand nowadays has become “modernization” because of the extensive interaction and close relationship with Westerners since the nineteenth century (Wise 1997, 21). Terwiel (1991) demonstrated that many Thai nobles during the second half of the nineteenth century deliberately adopted the European model or “the development of a dramatic possibility for confrontation with European colonial powers” (96) in order to create “civilized” image of Thailand (87). Moreover, Ninsiri (2012) noted that the development of Bangkok during its past 230 years was influenced by the Western cultures. He further highlighted that during the reign of King Rama V, the rise of the European model seemed to be obvious. Many technologies and innovations, especially the public utility from some Western countries had been brought to Thailand. Although the fact of this rapid attempted development of modernization was to protect the territories from the Western colonial invasion, Thai people seemed to admire the development and Western cultures since then (Simpson 2007).

During the government of Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram in the middle of the twentieth century, nationalism played an important role in Siam (Aksara 2011). The name “Siam” had been changed to “Thailand” with the principle of “racist

nationalism” (Aksara 2011, 37). People needed to stop eating the betel palm which was seen as uncivilized during that time. Besides, the costume had been changed from the tradition Thai style to the Western one such as shirt, pants, skirt, hat and shoes. The term “Sawasdee” meaning either “hello” or “good bye,” was also used for greeting and farewell since then (Aksara 2011). All these changes were claimed to be modern and civilized. Accordingly, Westerners were seen as the world leaders in terms of development, advanced technology and civilization. These positive attitudes and beliefs towards the Westerners have possibly been transmitted to the present generation of Thai people.

### **2.2.3 Related research studies on attitudes towards Westerners**

In her study of stereotype and interracial attitude in communication between Thai traders and foreign customers, Sirichiaranai (2006) collected data with 150 questionnaire respondents, 15 interviewees and the methodology of non-participatory observation in Bangkok and Chonburi. The findings showed that the Thai traders had positive stereotypes and attitudes towards the Western and Japanese customers while negative ones towards Asians, namely the Chinese and Indians. The traders preferred the Westerners and Japanese because of the stereotypic beliefs of their politeness and friendliness. Comparing to other groups of foreign customers, these positive attitudes of the Thai traders led to the better service and welcome expressions such as a friendly greeting and smile when dealing with the Western and Japanese customers.

In the northeastern part of Thailand or Isan, a great number of Isan women are married to Westerners. Although the perception towards intercultural marriages between Thai women and Western men was quite negative in the past, the recent research studies revealed that marrying Westerners was now accepted and even preferable among Isan women and their parents (Esara 2009, Lapanun 2010, Pomsema, Yodmalee & Lao-Akka 2015, Sunanta & Angeles 2013). By conducting the surveys, interviews, observations and focus-group discussions on transnational marriages in Isan area, the mentioned researchers found some reasons of the increasing numbers of Thai-Western couples such as to seek for economic security, to improve quality of life and to find alternative to unsatisfactory marriages with Thai men. Moreover, the Western men were considered favourable compare to Thai men because they were perceived as wealthy, good looking, responsible, reliable and

caring (ibid.). However, Esara (2009) pointed out that the increasing number of Westerners in Thailand also led to the fear of Westernization among Thai people as her participants concerned that the traditional Thai morality and identity might be gradually disappeared because of the Western influence.

The studies concerning with Westerners in Thailand have not only been conducted by the Thai scholars but the topic has also been studied by some Western researchers. Howard (2009) looked into the issue of migration of Westerners in Thailand. With a huge data collected from about 1,000 Western respondents by the online survey method, this study examined the situation of Westerners in Thailand such as their motives, problems and well-beings during their time in Thailand. The results revealed that the Thai lifestyle, warm climate, low cost of living and Thai women motivated the Westerners to move to Thailand. In terms of problems, Howard (2009) found that language barrier was the biggest challenge for Westerners to overcome in order to live in Thailand comfortably. The visa issue and some misbehaviours of Thai people such as cheating or lying were also considered difficulties for Westerners to settle in Thailand.

While Howard (2009) examined the situations of Westerners in Thailand in general, Maher and Lafferty (2014) specifically studied the White migrant masculinities and their privileges in Thailand. The research data were from the interviews with 30 male Westerners who had married with Thai women and settled in the northeast region of Thailand or Isan. The majority of their participants were from England who had lived in Thailand more than ten years and had few Thai language skills. The findings showed that the Western participants were favourable and even desirable in romantic relationships. They also gained respect from local people and received some privileges in the areas. Furthermore, they considered themselves superior than Thai men in terms of body shapes and financial status. Although they had received quite good treatment during their stay in Thailand and had satisfied with their masculine power, they still encountered difficulties in social isolation, uncertain relationships as well as emotional and financial insecurities. This was because they had to rely on their Thai wives to manage the property transaction in Thailand.

Wise (1997) concluded some common beliefs, which were mostly negative, of Thais towards Westerners. Firstly, Westerners were “big, hairy, clumsy and smell like

meat,” (19). In terms of characteristics, Westerners were “ill-mannered, barbaric hotheads,” (19). While Western women were seen as beautiful and hot-tempered, Western men tended to be proud of themselves and arrogant. With friendly regard, Westerners seemed to “care more about facts, figures and profits than about people and feelings,” (19). Likewise, Welty (2005) found some misconceptions and generalizations that Thais had held towards Westerners. Firstly, Thais believed that all Westerners were rich, honest and preferred to travel alone. Secondly, Westerners survived because of pizza, hamburgers and bread. Thirdly, it was easy for female Thais and male Westerners to fall in love. Fourthly, Thais held certain stereotypical beliefs towards some groups of Westerners, for example, the British had “sharp noses and narrow nostrils,” and the French were “stand-offish,” (155). The last generalization dealt with the eating habit which was a belief that Westerners could not eat spicy food.

Overall, the review on the attitudes towards Westerners provides the history of Westerners since they first arrived in Thailand and how Thailand had changed to be modernized because of the Western technology. This change influences Thai people to have quite positive attitudes towards Westerners. Additionally, many research studies about the intercultural marriage between Thai women and Western men demonstrate that Westerners are perceived as good, superior and preferable (Esara 2009, Howard 2009, Lapanun 2010, Maher & Lafferty 2014, Pomsema, Yodmalee & Lao-Akka 2015, Sunanta & Angeles 2013). Particularly, this review can be applied to examine whether the attitudes of the recent generation of Thai people are similar or different from the existing research studies. It will also help investigate how the current situations of the Westerners in Thailand have changed from the past.

## **2.3 Cultural differences**

### **2.3.1 Culture**

The definitions of the term culture have been given by many scholars. The different aspects of its concepts result in a complex history and various meanings. Samovar and Porter (2003) pointed out that “culture is ubiquitous, multidimensional, complex and pervasive,” (8). As a consequence, it is difficult to find the definite definition of culture since the description of culture appears to be broad. However,

Lustig and Koester (1996) put a great effort to compile many definitions of culture and categorized them into four approaches. The first approach of culture definition focuses on the culture components. The most common definition of culture described by its components is from Tylor (1871) who described culture as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (in Lustig & Koester 1996, 33). The second approach is concerned with the social transmit of symbol, ideas, practices and experiences from generation to generation. This approach focuses on the learning process of an individual to become a member of a group. The third approach emphasizes on behaviours of the group members which include beliefs, values and norms that they have shared and later affected their perceptions of how to act within group. Lastly, the fourth approach is concerned with the way that a person expresses their culture through interaction or cultural communication. As a result, focusing on the definition of culture for the study of communication, Lustig and Koester (1996) defined culture as “a learned set of shared perceptions about beliefs, and norms, which affect the behaviors of a relatively large group of people,” (35).

Five characteristics of culture were proposed by Samovar and Porter (2003) in order to point out the relationship between culture and communication. Firstly, culture is not innate; instead, it is learned through interaction, observation and imitation since we were born. People learn culture from their experience and through interactions with others. Secondly, culture is transmitted from generation to generation. This clearly shows the link of culture and communication since communication is a tool used to make culture be able to continue. Thirdly, culture is based on symbols or languages. Without languages, culture cannot be transmitted through communication. Fourthly, culture is dynamic and subject to change. Lastly, culture is ethnocentric since people tend to believe that their group is the best. In other words, ethnocentrism is learned and developed unconsciously. It is crucial for people to understand the connection between language, culture and communication because their interrelationship is inextricable. Without one element, it is impossible for the other two to exist.

### 2.3.2 Cultural dimensions

To have a better understanding of cultural diversity, the framework of cultural dimensions by Hofstede (2001) offers a clear point to study the cultural values of people from various cultural backgrounds. Despite some criticism on the focus only on workplace context in his study, Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions include tremendously different cultures. After collecting and analyzing surveys from over a hundred thousand workers in intercultural organizations, Hofstede (2001) developed a model of cultural dimensions which consisted of five key features: power distance, individualism versus collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity versus femininity and long term versus short-term orientation. It is highlighted that the socially shared values play an important role to cause each dimension within group.

The first dimension or the power distance describes to what extent a social group accepts the inequalities of power in relationships and organizations. The high-power-distance cultures accept the power and authority in societies. They believe that people are not equal. Hierarchy is prevalent. Conversely, the low-power-distance cultures concern that everyone has equal rights in society. Though power exists in authorities, they attempt not to show power over others in groups. The members of the high-power-distance cultures tend to be humble and indirect when interacting with others whereas the members of the low-power-distance cultures seem to be less formal and more direct. Hofstede (2001) revealed Thailand as a high-power-distance culture while Austria, Israel, Denmark, New Zealand and Ireland as the top five low-power-distance ones. Undoubtedly, the form of hierarchy is quite strong in Thailand. Thai people are usually categorized into various statuses of social levels. Welty (2005) noticed that it was significant for Thai people to know the statuses of the counterparts in interaction. The "phi-nong" or elders-youngers relationship was a common Thai social value. Members of the senior class were "phi" whom "nong" or junior class members needed to pay respects to (ibid.).

The second dimension which is the individualism versus collectivism deals with the relationship that an individual has towards their own group. The individualistic culture emphasizes on the self, such as self-esteem, self-image and self-awareness. The members of this group value themselves independent. The consciousness of "I" is applied. As a consequence, the personal achievements and

competitions are encouraged in this group. In contrast, the members of the collectivistic cultures rely on their in-group members. They are supposed to be interdependent with the consciousness of “we” and respect the shared norms and values within group. They maintain group harmony by respecting traditions and help each other. While groups of Westerners from the United States of America, Australia, Great Britain, Canada and the Netherlands were considered the top five individualistic countries, Thailand was revealed as a collectivistic one (Hofstede 2001). Obviously, Thai society is group-oriented due to the upbringing in the extended family structure. Since Thais learn to help and support their family members, Thais then value the needs of group rather than their own ones. This leads to harmonious relationship within family.

The third dimension or the uncertainty avoidance measures the degree of the anxiety in any uncertain and ambiguous situations. As the future is unknown, the high-uncertainty-avoidance cultures tend to reduce and avoid the uncertainty and ambiguity. It is important for members of this group to plan and strictly follow traditional rules and norms so that they feel secure about their future. They avoid taking risks and are fear of changes and failures. Comparing to the low-uncertainty-avoidance cultures, the members of this group tend not to be threatened by any uncertainty and ambiguity. Rules are rarely followed since they seem to be willing to accept risks. Thus, they are more flexible, relaxed and less serious about future and also in interaction. From Hofstede’s survey, Thailand ranked high on uncertainty avoidance while Greece, Portugal, Belgium, Japan and Yugoslavia were low-uncertainty-avoidance cultures. Thai people mostly prefer to maintain everything as the ways they are rather than to take initiative and be different. Thai children and subordinates prefer to be told how to deal with some certain situations. The majority of Thai pursue job and life security.

The fourth dimension which is concerned with masculinity and femininity indicates the degree of masculine and feminine traits that are revealed in group. In masculine cultures, men are dominant. The behaviours of ambition, strength, achievement, confidence and competitiveness are the signs of this group’s members. Differently, the members of the feminine cultures are likely to be nurturing, emotional, sensitive and caring. They tend to seek harmony, avoid confrontation and

criticism. They seem to be able to interpret non-verbal cues. The gender roles in feminine cultures are more equal than masculine ones. Hofstede's study showed that Thailand's culture was more feminine whereas Japan, Austria, Venezuela, Italy and Switzerland were the top five masculine cultures. The concept of "krengjai" appears to support Hofstede's dimension of feminine culture in Thailand. Komin (1991) defined "krengjai" as an act "to be considerate, to feel reluctant to impose upon another person, to take another person's feelings (and ego) into account, or to take every measure not to cause discomfort or inconvenience for another person," (164).

The last dimension is concerned with the long term versus short-term orientation which is related to the ways that the members of the groups maintain links with their past while dealing with the circumstances of the present and future. The low score on this dimension or short-term orientation is normative society where the members honour the traditional practices and norms. In contrast, the high score or long-term orientation focuses on the pragmatic approach which the members solve problems with suitable conditions rather than the old-fashioned rules. In this sense, Thailand is considered short-term orientation culture whereas most of the Western countries are long-term orientation. Therefore, Thai people have a strong concern with the traditional practices and obey rules.

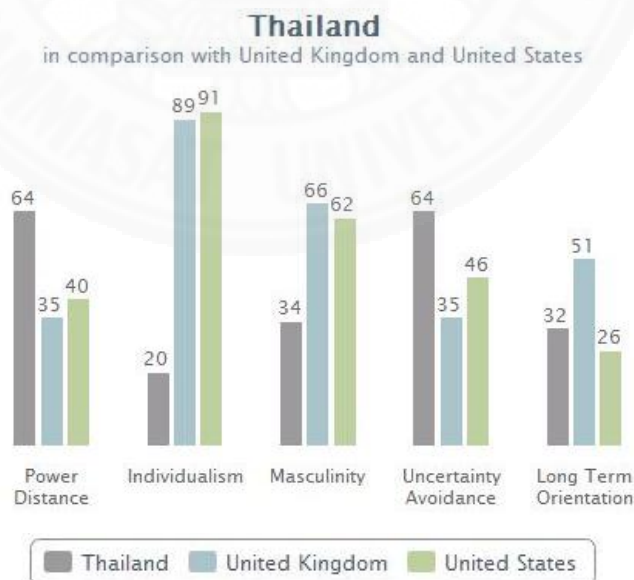


Chart 2.2 Hofstede's (2001) different cultural dimensions between Thailand and United Kingdom and United States of America (Source: <https://geert-hofstede.com/national-culture.html>)

Chart 2.2 presents the comparison of the cultural dimensions between Thailand and some examples of the Western countries, namely the United Kingdom and United States of America. According to Hofstede's (2001) framework, Thailand is considered a collectivistic culture where people accept power and hierarchy in society. Family background and social status are important for most of Thais who tend to be afraid of changes and risks resulting in avoiding the uncertain or ambiguous situations and obeying rules. Besides, the feminine traits of caring and harmony are the common practice in Thailand. In contrast, most of the Western countries appear to have different dimensions from Thailand's. Thus, this review could help explain the causes of the possible difficulties, misunderstandings or conflicts that occur in intercultural communication between Thais and Westerners in Thailand's context.

## **2.4 Intercultural communication and competence**

### **2.4.1 Intercultural communication**

The main cause of conflicts and misunderstanding in communication across cultures seems to be the uniqueness and differences of individuals. In the field of intercultural communication, Hall (1959) concluded the concept of communication across cultures as "culture is communication and communication is culture," (186). Thus, in order to communicate effectively, Hall (1966) pointed out that, only language and culture were not enough to communicate thoughts and cultures to others as it was a difficult task to use language to describe culture solely. Experiences were highly required when people interpreted the worldview of others. This was the primary reason why people tended to encounter problems of linguistic and cultural interpretation when communicating across cultures (ibid.).

Boonnuch (2012) put great effort to compile various sources regarding the field and presented that it was quite impossible to avoid the conflicts in intercultural communication if the communicators lacked of cultural awareness. In this sense, Weaver's (1986) Iceberg consisting of the Big "C" or the concrete things of cultures that people can see such as products and behaviours and the small "c" or the abstract things of cultures such as values and beliefs clearly explains the possibilities of the troubles that could happen in intercultural communication (in Boonnuch 2012). Most of the time, the conflicts in intercultural communication are from what people could

not see or the small “c”. Therefore, the more people are aware of the elements of cultures that could be different across cultures, the more people will be able to communicate effectively in intercultural communication (Boonnuch 2012). According to Tomalin and Stempleski (1994), to be aware of one’s own culture was not enough in intercultural communication, one should be aware and tolerant of their interlocutors’ cultures as well.

#### **2.4.2 Intercultural communicative competence**

In order to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts in intercultural communication, the communicators need to be competent during the interaction. Spencer-Oatey and Franklin (2009) pointed out that many scholars name and describe the concepts of competence in intercultural communication differently. Particularly, Neuliep (2006) devoted the last chapter of his book on intercultural communicative competence which was defined as “the degree to which you effectively adapt your verbal and non-verbal messages to the appropriate cultural contexts,” (p. 441). It is noted that the way one perceives another as successfully and effectively competent in intercultural communication varies from culture to culture, specifically from situation to situation (Neuliep, 2006). Thus, to be competent in intercultural situation, the communicators need to understand the cultures of their interlocutors.

Spitzberg (2000) defined intercultural communicative competence as “behavior that is appropriate and effective in a given context,” (379). He further explained that competence was actually “an ability or a set of skilled behaviors,” (ibid.). In his model of communicative competence, three basic components which were motivation, knowledge and skill were proposed. Being an intercultural competence communicator, one needs to be motivated to communicate, know how to communicate and be skillful while communicating. The motivation in communication is the most important element since motivation brings knowledge and skills afterwards (Spitzberg 2000).

Byram (2000) defined a person with intercultural competence as:

Someone who is able to see relationships between different cultures – both internal and external to a society – and is able to mediate, that is interpret each in terms of other, either for themselves or for other people. It is also someone who has a critical or analytical understanding of (parts of) their own and other cultures – someone who is conscious of their own perspective, of the way in which their thinking is culturally determined, rather than believing that their understanding and perspective is natural. (9)

Byram's model of intercultural communicative competence which was carefully developed from Hymes' communicative competence and van Ek's model of communicative ability are influenced by three main factors which are attitudes, knowledge and skills as presented in Chart 2.3.

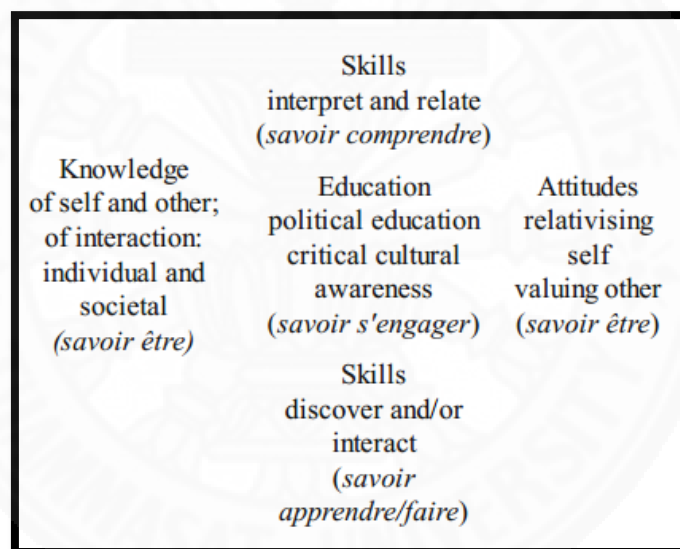


Chart 2.3 Byram's (1997) factors in intercultural communication (34)

In short, the intercultural competent communicators need to firstly develop the attitudes of curiosity and openness to analyse meanings in others' points of view as well as attitudes of readiness and willingness to suspend disbeliefs and beliefs regarding their own cultures and others'. Secondly, they are required to have the knowledge of social groups and concepts as well as the process in interaction of their own groups and their interlocutors' ones. Lastly, they need to have skills of interpreting and relating information of other cultures to their own as well as skills of discovering the new knowledge and apply it in the interaction. These skills are the consequences of the communicators' attitudes and knowledge (Byram 1997).

### 2.4.3 Gudykunst's (1994) communicative competence

Similar to Neuliep (2006), Gudykunst (1994) believed that competence was “an impression we have of ourselves and others,” (160). Some specific skills that one performs in an intercultural communication context could not possibly apply to a particular situation. Therefore, to be competent in communication, one must present himself impressively to their interlocutors. Gudykunst (1994) developed three basic components of communication competence including motivation, knowledge and skills. Chart 2.4 identifies the components of communicative competence according to Gudykunst (1994).

Chart 2.4

*Gudykunst's (1994) components of competence*

<b>Components</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Attributes</b>
Motivation	Our desire to communicate appropriately and effectively with strangers	Need for predictability Need to avoid diffuse anxiety Need to sustain our self-conceptions Approach-avoidance tendencies
Knowledge	Our awareness or understanding of what needs to be done in order to communicate effectively and appropriately	Knowledge of how to gather information Knowledge of group differences Knowledge of personal similarities Knowledge of alternative interpretations
Skills	Our ability to engage in the behaviours necessary to communicate appropriately and effectively	Ability to be mindful Ability to tolerate ambiguity Ability to manage anxiety Ability to empathise Ability to adapt our behaviours Ability to make accurate predictions and explanations

Firstly, motivation which is described as the desire to communicate effectively and appropriately with others is consisted of four attributes, namely the need for predictability, need to avoid diffuse anxiety, need to sustain our self-conception and approach-avoidance tendencies. It is believed that being unable to predict the behaviours of others and feeling anxious during interaction result in less motivation in communication. Besides, people prefer to communicate with others who support their self-conceptions or identity. For example, the individualists emphasize on their self-identity whereas the collectivists on the social identities. Therefore, people tend to interact with others who are similar to them and avoid those who are different (Gudykunst 1994).

Secondly, Gudykunst (1994) pointed out that the misunderstandings mostly occur because of the lack of cultural and linguistic knowledge about members of other groups. The attributes of knowledge or the awareness or understanding of what needs to be done in order to communicate effectively and appropriately are the knowledge of how to gather information, knowledge of group differences, knowledge of personal similarities and knowledge of alternative interpretations. To gather information, Berger (1979) proposed three strategies which were the passive strategy or to observe the behaviors of the interlocutor, the active strategy or to ask information from someone else about the interlocutor and the interactive strategy or to ask the interlocutor questions directly (in Gudykunst 1994). Moreover, the knowledge of similarities is also important since the commonalities can help bridge the gap and remind the communicators that their interlocutors are similar to them at some point. More importantly, to minimize the conflicts and to have an effective communication, people need to recognize that the messages can be interpreted differently from what they want to carry depending on the interlocutors' knowledge and experiences (ibid.).

Lastly, the skills or appropriate behaviours in interaction are considered an essential factor that leads to an effective communication. Gudykunst (1994) explained that the abilities to reduce uncertainty and anxiety in interactions helped foster the communication successfully. The proposed six attributes of the skills include the ability to be mindful, ability to tolerate ambiguity, ability to manage anxiety, ability to empathise, ability to adapt our behaviours and ability to make accurate predictions and explanations. The ability to be mindful is related with the ability to be aware of

the communication and to focus on the process of communication. Additionally, the more people develop the ability to tolerate ambiguity, to manage anxiety, to empathise and to adapt our behaviours, the more effective the communications could become. Overall, the ability to make accurate predictions and explanations requires all attributes of motivation, knowledge and skills altogether (ibid.).

#### **2.4.4 Related research studies on intercultural communicative competence**

In Thailand, many research studies regarding the intercultural communication and communicative competence have been conducted in the context of international organizations. The Thai and Western styles of interaction as well as some problems, conflicts and suggestions for Thais and Westerners are revealed from these following studies. Firstly, Chaidaroon (2003) investigated the Thai way in communication, namely the shy trait of Thai people. The researcher pointed out that some qualities in interaction of Thai people such as not speaking up, not responding quickly and feeling extremely humiliated were not considered incompetence like many of the Western scholars had claimed. Instead, these were the ways that Thais practiced in order to maintain social harmony which was the core value of Thai culture. Thus, he argued that the concept of communicative competence between Thai and Western cultures were different. Though this paper is subjective as the researcher only uses his own experience, at least, it provides the basic understanding regarding the different values and competence in communication among cultures.

Similar to Chaidaroon (2003), Komolsevin, Knutson and Datthuyawat (2010) also investigated the Thai communication behaviours and compared the intercultural communication effectiveness between Thai and American people by reviewing the studies that had been conducted in the past. As Thais value social harmony resulting in the soft, caring and polite traits, Thais prefer indirect nonverbal communication. This explains why silence is a virtue for Thai people as Thais need to wait in order to gather enough information before they give appropriate messages to the message receivers. In contrast, the Americans value assertiveness and self-satisfaction. They prefer to talk or use the direct verbal communication. As a result, Thai people concern about their interlocutors or the message receivers while the Americans concern about

themselves or the message senders. Simply, this study also affirms that Thais and Americans have the different communication styles.

In terms of problems and conflicts in intercultural communication between Thais and Westerners, it is mainly concerned with language capabilities and different cultural values (Howard 2009, Sriussadaporn 2006, Winnuwat 2011). Several research studies revealed that Thai people lacked of willingness to be engaged in intercultural communication because they found difficulties to express themselves in English (*ibid.*). Some problems had arisen because of the different cultural values, especially the indirect way of talking of Thai people. This communication style influenced Thai people to hide feelings, lack of confidence and ability to think proactively and analytically as well as avoid confrontation and criticism in intercultural communication (Sriussadaporn 2006, Winnuwat 2011). Therefore, the suggestions for Thais were to learn English in order to build confidence and to practice to think critically and systematically. Conversely, the foreigners were advised to learn Thai and tried to overcome ethnocentrism as well as practiced the nonverbal reading, such as being silent when interacting with Thai people. Most importantly, the openness in communication was needed in the intercultural interaction (*ibid.*).

While the Western scholars emphasize on motivation, knowledge and skills as important elements to develop the communicative competence (Gudykunst 1994, Spitzberg 2000), some Thai researchers find that maintaining harmony and avoiding conflicts during interaction are considered competent in communication for most of the Thai people (Chaidaroon 2003, Komolsevin, Knutson & Datthuyawat 2010). The review on the intercultural communicative competence of Thais and Westerners presents that being competent in communication varies from culture to culture. It is helpful to investigate what elements in communicative competence that Thais and Westerners have or lack during the intercultural interaction. Besides, this review can help explain the conflicts or misunderstandings that might arise in intercultural communication between Thais and Westerners in this study.

## 2.5 Summary

In this chapter, the theories and existing research studies on the power of language and racial labels, attitudes towards Westerners, cultural differences, intercultural communication as well as intercultural communicative competence have been reviewed. This literature reviews have given an overview of how language, culture and communication are related to each other and how they are inextricable. Specifically, in intercultural communication where people from different cultural backgrounds deal with each other, higher awareness in the group differences and particular communicative ability in communication are required. Otherwise, misunderstandings or conflicts can arise easily resulting in an ineffective communication. This chapter carefully investigated the intercultural interaction between Thai people and Westerners whose cultural upbringings, values and ways of life are totally different so that the reviews can be applied with the results of this study afterwards. In the next chapter, the methodology used in this research study will be explained. The demography information of the participants will also be demonstrated.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter demonstrates the methodology used to conduct this research on “Attitudes of Thais and Westerners in Khon Kaen towards *farang*: an intercultural communication analysis”. The objectives of this study are to investigate and compare the implications of the term *farang* and the attitudes towards the Westerners as well as to identify the intercultural communicative competence of the target groups when dealing with each other. Therefore, this chapter begins with the description of the research design, followed by the importance of the research site. Then, the participant section including the sample group, the criteria in participants’ inclusion and the participant profiles is presented. After that, the research instruments are addressed. Lastly, this chapter concludes with the data collection and data analysis.

#### **3.1 Research design and research questions**

By focusing on the lay views, this qualitative research attempted to provide an in-depth and insightful understanding of the target group’s perspectives and experiences through the social interaction in the intercultural context. In order to find the meanings and facts of the mentioned situation, the descriptive approach with the content analysis was utilized whereas the survey approach was used to provide the data with statistics. Hence, the questionnaires and in-depth interviews were applied to collect data in this study. While the results of the questionnaires were summed up by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Program, the narrative data from the in-depth interviews were recorded, transcribed, coded and categorized into themes related to the research questions as follows:

1. What are the implications of the term *farang* in the views of Thais and Westerners?
2. What are the attitudes of Thais and Westerners towards the Westerners?
3. What kind of intercultural communicative competence do Thais and Westerners have or lack when interacting with each other?

### 3.2 Research site

This study took place in Khon Kaen Municipality, Khon Kaen Province which is located in the northeast of Thailand. Khon Kaen is considered a central city not only among the provinces in the northeastern region or commonly known as Isan, but also between countries in the Greater Mekong Subregion with a large economic trade and investment (Khon Kaen Municipality 2016). The recent data of the population in Khon Kaen Municipality in 2016 was 118,740 which included 117,957 Thais and 783 foreigners. Khon Kaen Municipality was chosen to be the research site in this study because it is one of the provinces in Isan where a great number of Isan women are married to non-Thai men, mostly from the Western countries (Maher & Lafferty 2014, Prasartkul 2009, Sunanta 2009). The available data of the number of foreigners in Isan that had been researched in 2006 by the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) were about 19,000. Among this number, Khon Kaen was ranked second in number of intercultural marriage couples, following Udonthani (Ayuwat, Mee-Udon & Grisanapiti 2011). The number of intercultural couples of Isan women and European men in Khon Kaen were about 2,435 (ibid.). On this basis, it can be deduced that a number of Westerners in Khon Kaen have been increasing whereas the local people are nowadays likely to be familiar with the Westerners and possibly have a high tendency to communicate across cultures in their community.

### 3.3 Participants

This study focused on finding the perspectives of Thai people and Westerners in Khon Kaen towards the term *farang* and the Westerners as well as their experiences on interracial interaction with one another. The participants were divided into two groups which were local Thai people and the Western residents in Khon Kaen.

#### 3.3.1 Sample group

Ritchie, Lewis and Elam (2003) suggest that the number of samples for qualitative research should be fewer than 50. In terms of interview study, Dornyei (2007) emphasizes that 6 – 10 samples should be initially appropriate. As a thesis paper with the feasibility issue of limited time, this study included 90 participants for questionnaire data collection. The participants were divided into two groups which

were 60 Thai and 30 Western residents in Khon Kaen. Then, the in-depth interviews were conducted with five participants from each group which equaled ten in total.

### **3.3.2 Criteria for participants' inclusion**

The selection of participants in this study was purposive sampling. In order to examine the perspectives and experiences related to this study, the criteria for Thai participants' inclusion in this study were rather open. The strategy for Thai participants was homogeneous sampling or individuals who belonged to the same group and shared some experiences relevant to the study (Nunan 1992, Ritchie, Lewis & Elam 2003). The criterion sampling strategy or individuals who matched the specific criteria of the study was applied for the Western participants (Dornyei 2007). The criteria for the Westerners' inclusion in this study were:

1. Race: self-identification as “Westerner” or “Caucasian”
2. Status: expatriate residents living in Khon Kaen for at least three months
3. Thai language proficiency: at least know the term *farang* and have experiences of being referred as *farang*

### **3.3.3 Participant profiles**

As mentioned, two research instruments were used in this study. The profiles of the questionnaire respondents were firstly presented, followed by the profiles of the interviewees.

#### **3.3.3.1 Questionnaire respondent profiles**

Two versions of the questionnaires were designed. The Thai version was used to collect data from 60 Thai respondents whereas the English version from 30 Western respondents. In total, this study collected survey data from 90 Thais and Westerners in Khon Kaen during October to December 2015. The results of demographic information are analyzed in terms of frequency and percentage as shown in Chart 3.1 and Chart 3.2.

Chart 3.1

*Thai respondent profiles*

<b>Profile</b>	<b>N=60</b>	<b>(percentage)</b>
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	41	(68.3)
Male	19	(31.7)
<i>Age</i>		
21 – 30	33	(55.0)
31 – 40	14	(23.5)
41 – 50	8	(13.3)
51 – 60	5	(8.3)
60 up	0	(0.0)
<i>Educational background</i>		
Lower than Bachelor	6	(10.0)
Bachelor	38	(63.3)
Higher than Bachelor	16	(26.7)
<i>Occupation</i>		
Student	7	(11.7)
Worker	50	(83.3)
Unemployed	2	(3.3)
Retired	1	(1.7)
<i>Encountering Westerners</i>		
Never	0	(0.0)
1 – 2 days/week	21	(35.0)
3 – 4 days/week	18	(30.0)
5 – 7 days/week	21	(35.0)
<i>Interacting with Westerners</i>		
Never	17	(28.3)
1 – 2 days/week	18	(30.0)
3 – 4 days/week	11	(18.3)
5 – 7 days/week	14	(23.3)
<i>Self-assessed English Proficiency</i>		
None	0	(0.0)
Poor	10	(16.7)
Average	20	(33.3)
Good	20	(33.3)
Excellent	10	(16.7)

Chart 3.2

*Western respondent profiles*

<b>Profile</b>	<b>N=30 (percentage)</b>
<i>Gender</i>	
Female	6 (20.0)
Male	24 (80.0)
<i>Age</i>	
21 – 30	15 (50.0)
31 – 40	7 (23.3)
41 – 50	2 (6.7)
51 – 60	3 (10.0)
60 up	3 (10.0)
<i>Educational background</i>	
Lower than Bachelor	2 (6.7)
Bachelor	18 (60.0)
Higher than Bachelor	10 (33.3)
<i>Occupation</i>	
Student	7 (23.3)
Worker	19 (63.3)
Unemployed	0 (0.0)
Retired	4 (13.3)
<i>Country</i>	
Canada	1 (3.3)
England	7 (23.4)
France	2 (6.7)
Germany	2 (6.7)
Ireland	1 (3.3)
Russia	2 (6.7)
Scotland	1 (3.3)
Turkey	1 (3.3)
United States of America	13 (43.3)
<i>Length of staying in Khon Kaen</i>	
3–11 months	6 (20.0)
1 – 2 years	10 (33.3)
3 – 4 years	7 (23.3)
5 – 6 years	3 (10.0)
7 years up	4 (13.3)
<i>Length of staying in Thailand (exclude Khon Kaen)</i>	
None	3 (10.0)
Less than 1 year	7 (25.9)
1 – 2 years	9 (33.3)
3 – 4 years	4 (14.8)
5 – 6 years	2 (7.4)
7 years up	5 (18.5)

Chart 3.2 (Cont.)

*Western respondent profiles*

<b>Profile</b>	<b>N=30 (percentage)</b>
<i>Self-assessed Thai Proficiency</i>	
None	3 (6.7)
Poor	9 (30.0)
Average	12 (40.0)
Good	6 (20.0)
Excellent	1 (3.3)

To compare the results of both groups of the questionnaire respondents, the majorities of them were from different genders. While most of the Thai questionnaire respondents (68.3%) were female, the majority of the Western participants (80%) were male. This implies that a number of male Westerners in Khon Kaen were possibly higher than the female ones. Unsurprisingly, this number of male Westerners could be related with the trend of intercultural marriage between Thai women and Western men in the northeastern or Isan region of Thailand (Sunanta 2009). However, the majorities of both groups were from the same categories in terms of age: between 21 to 30 years old, educational background: bachelor's degree and occupation: worker. The results of their self-assessed language proficiency were slightly different. Whereas all Thai participants rated their English proficiency from poor to excellent, the Westerners rated their Thai proficiency from none to excellent. That is the majorities of both groups considered themselves as having average Thai and English proficiency which could mean that most of them could moderately communicate with Thai and Western interlocutors.

Even though all of the Thai participants reported that they had seen Westerners in their daily life at least once a week, they rarely interacted with the Westerners. This can be assumed that the Thai participants tended to have little experience in dealing with Westerners despite the prevalent encounter with Westerners in the daily life. Regarding the length of stay in Khon Kaen, about half of the Western respondents had lived in Khon Kaen for one to four years while another half of them had experienced living in Thailand but outside Khon Kaen for less than one year to two years. The average living period in Thailand of the Western respondents were six years, three in Khon Kaen and three other years elsewhere.

### 3.3.3.2 Interviewee profiles

This section presents brief information of the ten interviewees. The ages of all interviewees ranged from 23 to 70 years old. In total, there were four female and six male interviewees. Both males and females were included in each group of participants. Chart 3.3 summarizes the profiles of the five Thai interviewees whereas Chart 3.4 concludes the profiles of the five Western interviewees. Then, a brief summary of the interviewees' demographics is described afterwards. The interviewees' pseudonyms were listed in alphabetical order. Details of all the interview participants are presented in Appendix G and Appendix H.

Chart 3.3

#### *Thai interviewee profiles*

<b>Anonymous name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Frequency of interacting with Westerners</b>	<b>English proficiency</b>
Den	M	23	1 – 2 days/ week	Good
Fha	F	38	1 – 2 days/ week	Average
Nang	F	55	Everyday	Average
Poot	M	34	3 – 4 days/ week	Good
Tuk	F	31	Everyday	Excellent

As shown in Chart 3.3, two male and three female Thais were participated in the in-depth interviews. Their ages ranged from 23 to 55 years old. They had various educational backgrounds from primary school to master's degree. Four of them were workers while one was a new graduate who had work experience with Westerners from his internship. All of them were able to communicate in English and had experiences working with the Westerners. Among the five, two female interviewees married Westerners. Another one female and two male interviewees used to work in the international organizations where they had chances to interact with the Westerners. However, at the time of the interviews, three of them interacted with Westerners quite often while two of them only a few times per week. They all could speak English ranged from moderate to advanced levels and also had significantly experienced dealing with the Westerners. Overall, the five Thai interviewees were from various statuses. In other words, they represented different genders, generations, educational backgrounds and occupations. However, they shared the common ability to communicate in English and the experiences with the Westerners.

Chart 3.4

*Western interviewee profiles*

<b>Anonymous name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Length of stay in Khon Kaen</b>	<b>Thai proficiency</b>
Jason	M	42	Australia	4 years	Poor
Joe	M	70	Canada	7 years	Fair
Linda	F	24	Russia	3 years	Poor
Paul	M	23	Germany	8 months	Excellent
Victor	M	32	France	3 years	Fair

Chart 3.4 demonstrates the Western interviewee profiles which consisted of four men and one woman. Three of them were from Europe while one was from the America and another one the Oceania. Similar to the Thai interviewee profiles, they were from various generations. Their ages ranged from 23 to 70 years old. Likewise, they had various educational degrees from the bachelor's to the master's. Two of them were students while another two were workers and one was a retiree who still worked voluntarily as English teacher in local community. Among these five, two of them married Thai women and settled in Khon Kaen whereas other three had to study and work with Thai people on weekdays. So, they all had to interact with Thai people very often. In terms of length of stay, the average stay in Khon Kaen of all of them is three and a half years. Unlike the Thai interviewees, four Western interviewees could only communicate in basic Thai conversations. Only Paul who had stayed in Khon Kaen for eight months but had visited Thailand many times and had studied Thai language for three years could communicate well in Thai. Again, the participants of this group were from different statuses in terms of generations, educational and occupational backgrounds.

### **3.4 Research instruments**

As a qualitative research with some statistic data, the survey through a questionnaire form and an interview form which are presented in the Appendix A to Appendix D were used to collect data in this study.

#### **3.4.1 Questionnaire**

There were two sets of questionnaires for two groups of participants: the Thai questionnaire and the English one. The first version of the questionnaires was

reviewed by the researcher's advisor and revised according to the returned feedback. The first revised version was piloted with eight Thais and three Westerners. Several weaknesses revealed. Hence, the questionnaires were revised again for the convenience of the respondents to complete. After that, the questionnaires were reviewed by the researcher's advisor and also a research expert in the area. Finally, both questionnaires contained fixed responses and open responses format with multiple choices, checklists, Likert rating scales and blanks. The five main parts of both sets of the questionnaires were similar which consisted of:

Part 1: Respondents' demographic information

Part 2: Implications of the term *farang*

Part 3: Attitudes towards Westerners

Part 4: Intercultural communicative competence

Part 5: Comments related to the research topic

### **3.4.2 In-depth interview**

In order to collect authentic interaction data, ten questionnaire respondents from both groups were selected to do the in-depth interviews which were audio-recorded. The interview was semi-structured. The interview protocol was presented to the researcher's advisor to review. After the interview protocol was adjusted according to the advisor's advice, the researcher conducted the pilot interviews with one Thai and one Westerner to assess the appropriateness of the questions and the time of the interview. After that, the interview protocol was slightly revised. The questions were open-ended and separated into five parts which were similar to the questionnaire. The questions included:

Part 1: Life background

Part 2: Implications of the term *farang*

Part 3: Attitudes towards Westerners

Part 4: Intercultural communicative competence

Part 5: Comments related to the research topic

### **3.5 Data collection**

The data were collected from October to December 2015. The data collection was explained as follows.

### 3.5.1 Questionnaire

60 Thai participants were randomly found at a library, some cafés, canteens and shopping malls. The researcher explained the purposes of the study and asked for their willingness to fill in the research questionnaire. Whereas the process of Thai participants' recruitment was simple, 30 Western participants were initially recruited with the assistance of the researcher's neighbors who had Western partners and some friends who worked in the international organizations where their colleagues matched the criteria of the Western participants. Then, the recruitment letter stating the purposes and the importance of the study were sent to the Western sampling. After that, the questionnaire was given or sent via email to the group of Westerners who gave the positive replies to participate in the study afterwards. Some English questionnaires were completed by random Westerners at the immigration and shopping malls. After both groups of participants have completed the questionnaires, they were asked to voluntarily participate in the in-depth interviews. If they agreed, they were requested to leave the contact at the end of the questionnaires. Lastly, five Thai and five Western respondents who represented various statuses such as age, gender, educational and occupational backgrounds were invited to interview.

### 3.5.2 In-depth interview

To conduct the interviews, the appointment was at the voluntary participants' convenient time and place, mostly after working hours on the weekdays at public places such as canteens, library and coffee cafés. Before the interviews, the purposes of the research study and brief information of the interview questions were informed to the interviewees. Then, the interviewees were required to sign the consent forms and to grant permission for audio recorded during the interview. Firstly, the interviewees were asked to give brief information of their life background such as age, education, occupation and experiences in intercultural communication. Then, the specific questions about their attitudes towards the term *farang* and the Westerners as well as experiences of encountering the intercultural situations between Thais and Westerners were inquired. Finally, the interviewees were encouraged to share or add views related to the research issue. The interviews lasted about 30 – 45 minutes per participant. The field note was taken during the interviews. After all, the interviews were transcribed, coded and categorized into themes related to the research study.

### 3.6 Data analysis

The data collected from the questionnaires and the in-depth interviews were analysed and applied to clarify the research questions. The explanations of the analysis of each form were as follows.

#### 3.6.1 Questionnaire

The data collected from the questionnaires were analysed by using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Program and were evaluated into the forms of the frequency, mean and percentage. The mean of the Likert scale was interpreted by the criteria shown in Chart 3.5.

Chart 3.5

*Mean interpretation criteria*

Scale	Mean	Interpretation	
		Frequency	Agreement
5	4.21 – 5.00	Always	Strongly agree
4	3.41 – 4.20	Very often	Agree
3	2.61 – 3.40	Sometimes	Neutral
2	1.81 – 2.60	Rarely	Disagree
1	1.00 – 1.80	Never	Strongly disagree

#### 3.6.2 In-depth interview

The descriptive method was used in the in-depth interviews which were recorded and transcribed. The data were analysed based on the emerging themes. Firstly, the thematic framework for the study of “Attitudes of Thais and Westerners in Khon Kaen towards *farang*: an intercultural communication analysis” was introduced. Then, the data were labeled into each theme. Various opinions from each interviewee were sorted under the same theme in order to find the similarities and differences. After that, the data were elaborated, integrated, summarized and analysed based upon the theories and related research studies that had been reviewed in Chapter 2 in order to answer the research questions of the study. The findings from the in-depth interviews were incorporated to provide further insights relevant to the issues. Some important points were quoted to describe the findings.

### 3.7 Summary

This study attempted to interpret the daily situation happened in the intercultural setting between Thais and Westerners in Khon Kaen. It specifically focused on finding the views of both parties regarding the term *farang* and the attitudes towards Westerners. Also, the study aimed to investigate the intercultural communicative competence of both groups when interacting with one another. Therefore, the qualitative method with quantitative statistic was applied in this study. The survey data and the in-depth interviews were conducted from October to December 2015 with 90 Thai and Western participants in total. Firstly, 60 Thais and 30 Westerners were asked to complete the questionnaires. Then, five participants with various statuses from each group were selected to do the in-depth interviews in order to provide their experiences related to the research topic afterwards. The results from the questionnaires were analysed by SPSS program while the findings from the interviews were interpreted by using the descriptive method with thematic framework of the study. In the next chapter, the results and discussions which were interpreted and analysed in the relation to the theories and existing literature will be presented.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of this study were from the questionnaires which were completed by 60 Thai and 30 Western respondents and the in-depth interviews which were conducted with five Thai and five Western participants in Khon Kaen from October to December 2015. The data from the questionnaires were analyzed and presented in frequency and percentage by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The in-depth interviews were interpreted by using thematic framework which the data were elaborated, integrated, summarized and analysed based upon the theories and related research studies in order to answer the research questions as follows:

1. What are the implications of the term *farang* in the views of Thais and Westerners?
2. What are the attitudes of Thais and Westerners towards the Westerners?
3. What kind of intercultural communicative competence do Thais and Westerners have or lack when interacting with each other?

Consequently, this chapter presents the results and discussions of the study on “Attitudes of Thais and Westerners in Khon Kaen towards *farang*: an intercultural communication analysis”. It begins with the views of the Thai and Western participants towards the term *farang*, followed by their attitudes towards the Westerners. Then, the chapter concludes with the analysis of the intercultural communicative competence of the participants. In terms of presentation format, the results from the questionnaires are firstly demonstrated, followed by the findings from the in-depth interviews. The discussions are revealed by comparing the views of both target groups.

#### **4.1 Implications towards the term *farang***

This first part was designed to find out the implications of the term *farang* in the views of Thais and Westerners. The questionnaires included the open-ended questions for describing the definition of the term *farang*, the characteristics and beliefs attached to the term *farang*, the five-Likert scales on the contexts in which

Thai and Western respondents exposed to the term *farang*, the checkboxes on the offensive contexts of the term *farang* and the multiple choices for the general views towards the term *farang*. Similar questions were asked in the in-depth interviews in order to provide the informants opportunity to clarify their points. Consequently, this part is divided into four sections including 4.1.1 Definition of the term *farang*, 4.1.2 Characteristics and beliefs attached to the term *farang*, 4.1.3 Contexts of the term *farang* and 4.1.4 Views towards the term *farang*.

#### 4.1.1 Definitions of the term *farang*

In the questionnaires, a paragraph text was provided to the respondents to describe the definition of the term *farang*. The summary of the results from both questionnaires and in-depth interviews is shown in Chart 4.1. The results and discussions are described in four themes: definition, functions, connotations of the term *farang* and sensitivity of the term speaker and the term hearer.

Chart 4.1

##### *Definitions of the term farang*

<b>The term <i>farang</i></b>	<b>Thai participants</b>	<b>Western participants</b>
Functions	noun	noun, adjective
Meanings	Foreigner Westerner Caucasian White people from Europe, America, Australia Not black people	Foreigner Westerner, European, American Caucasian, Hispanic ethnicities European decent, White people Occidental tourist Outsider, other Used as a personal pronoun, or instead of a name Used to bundle everything that is from the West
Physical appearance	Tall Big body White, pale skin Dominant, sharp nose Brown, blonde, gold hair Blue, brown, green eyes Totally different from Thais and Asian people Good looking	Western features Large body frame White skin, lighter complexion Bridged nose Variety of hair colours (blonde, brown, black, red) Who do not look like Thais Who do not have Asian decent Most distinguishable

#### 4.1.1.1 Definition of the term *farang*

Chart 4.1 shows that both groups of participants provided similar meaning and physical appearance of the term *farang* which could be defined as “A white foreigners who has Caucasian decent with dominant features such as white or lighter complexion, a large body frame, a sharped nose, a variety of hair and eyes colours and mostly comes from the Western countries in Europe, America and Australia”. This definition is similar to Curtis’ (2011) study on the term *gaijin* in Japanese which was interpreted as a white person whose physical appearance was different from the Japanese and had certain physical features, for example, tall and sharp-nosed. Simply, the Thai and Western participants defined the term *farang* by including what it was supposed to be a *farang* and what was not such as a person who was not black and whose decent was not Asian. Moreover, some Thais noted that *farang* was good looking. This implies the value judgment of the favourable feeling that the Thai participants have towards Westerners.

#### 4.1.1.2 Functions of the term *farang*

While all Thai participants defined the definition of the term *farang* as a noun used to refer to a group of Caucasian foreigners, some Western participants noticed its adjective function which was used to describe anything from the Western countries such as “arharn *farang*” (Western food) or “nang *farang*” (Western movies). Similar to the definition by Chachavalpongpun (2005), the term *farang* is used for “anything that belongs to Westerners regardless of specific ethnic backgrounds,” (2). Because of this function, one Western participant added:

To me, it’s never quite clear what it (the term *farang*) means. This is also where the problem with this term has begun because, quite often, it’s used as a convenient term to refer to everything that is “Western” while ignoring the cultural and ethnic diversities of countries in the West.

Probably, the term *farang* can cause confusion and frustration to Westerners because of its too broad definition. This point might be overlooked by Thais who tend to ignore the specific background of a Western individual. Importantly, Victor’s comment supports this undesirable function of the term *farang* since he commented “It (the term *farang*) reflects a lack of interest by the Thais in the exact origin of visitors.” This also highlights the importance of language of prejudice raised by

Allport (1985) who pointed out that the ethnic labels could distract people's attentions from the specific traits of an individual. Accordingly, it can be interpreted that though the Westerners have the same Caucasian decent, they are different in terms of original countries, cultural backgrounds and ways of life. Therefore, they prefer to be perceived as a specific group of their original nationalities rather than a group of all *farang* or all Westerners in the world.

#### **4.1.1.3 Connotations of the term *farang***

While the Thai participants only described the definition of the term *farang*, some Western participants mentioned its connotations as an outsider or the other. This possibly represents a sense of not belonging. Writing in "The Double Task of Language", Hayakawa (1978) described two types of language connotations: *informative connotations* or the meanings that were "socially agree-upon" and *affective connotations* or "the aura of personal feelings" that the words carried (63 – 64). It is noted that the viewpoints towards words between the speaker and the hearer are different because the former tends to only express the *informative connotations* of words whereas the latter is likely to be easily touched by the words' *affective connotations* (ibid.). To emphasize, the in-depth interviews with both Thai and Western participants supported Hayakawa's (1978) double task of language as all Thai interviewees only explained the *informative connotations* of the term *farang* whereas some Western interviewees remarked its *affective connotation* which caused them disappointment. Joe commented "I'd rather consider it (the term *farang*) a derogatory – degrading, putting down, disrespectful word. I'd rather be called foreigner." These different perceptions towards the term *farang* will be discussed in the following part.

#### **4.1.1.4 Sensitivity of the term speaker and the term hearer**

From the in-depth interviews, three Western interviewees believed that Westerners were sensitive to the term *farang*. Paul revealed the different ways of using and interpreting the term *farang* between Thais and Westerners as follows:

I think it's a sensitive topic. Foreigners like white people, most of the time, everything is serious. But I think they should not overreact because Thai people use it just because they're used to it and they don't think about it.

Besides, all Thai interviewees supposed that Thai people used the term *farang* prevalently and were rarely aware of its effects because they had generally heard the term *farang* in their every day's life and from the media as well as had seen it on various publications. Referring to van Lier's (1995) comparison of the language to the air that we breathe in automatically and unconsciously, Thai people seem to hardly pay attention to the *affective connotation* of the term *farang* and use it carelessly. In this sense, Allport (1985) explained that the members of minority or the Westerners in this study tended to be sensitive to the name or the term *farang* that the majority or the Thai people had given to them whereas the majority was likely to use the term unconsciously. Additionally, Allport (1985) proposed the concept of *symbol phobia* and *verbal realism* as follows:

We are more inclined to the former (symbol phobia) when we ourselves are concerned, though we are much less critical when epithets of "fascist," "communist," "blind man," "school marm" are applied to other. (186)

As quoted, Westerners are likely to be *symbol phobia* or to be sensitive and afraid of the term *farang* while Thai people tend to be *verbal realism* or to use the term *farang* uncritically. To conclude, Hayakawa's (1978) theory of language and Allport's (1985) concept of racial labels clarify the different degree of sensitivity towards the term *farang* between Thais and Westerners in this study.

#### **4.1.2 Characteristics and beliefs attached to the term *farang***

In this section, the Thai participants reviewed the characteristics and beliefs towards Westerners whereas the Westerners reflected their thoughts on the same topics. The summary of the characteristics of *farang* from both questionnaires and in-depth interviews are presented in Chart 4.2. Then, the findings of beliefs towards *farang* are demonstrated in Chart 4.3.

##### **4.1.2.1 Characteristics of *farang***

While the Thai participants were asked to point out some dominant characteristics of Westerners, the Western participants were required to reflect how Thais perceived the characteristics of Westerners. The results from both questionnaires and in-depth interviews are presented in Chart 4.2.

Chart 4.2

*Characteristics of farang*

Thai participants		Western participants	
Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
Caring, Confident	None	Confident	Crazy
Creative, Curious		Funny	Disrespectful
Flexible, Friendly		Independent	Impolite
Independent		Straightforward	Loud
Open-minded			Rude
Polite, Punctual			Stingy
Respectful			Strange
Responsible			
Smart			
Straightforward			
Well-mannered			

From Chart 4.2, both groups of participants had different views on the characteristics of Westerners as the Thai participants reviewed only positive characteristics while the Western participants reflected both positive and negative ones. In other words, most of Thai participants positively agreed that *farang* are confident, independent, straightforward, open-minded, polite and smart. In contrast, the Westerners reflected more negative characteristics such as impolite, loud, rude and stingy. This evidence shows that the Thai participants seemed to have positive image of *farang* whereas the Western participants seemed to have quite negative thoughts towards Westerners. When mentioning the term *farang*, the Thai participants might think of the Western tourists or businessmen. Conversely, the Western participants seemed to think of the old drunk Western retirees in Thailand.

Consistent with the study of Sirichiaranai (2006), it is found that the Thai traders perceived Western customers positively, namely polite and friendly. As a result, these positive stereotypes led to welcome expressions and better service such as a friendly greeting and a smile when dealing with the Western buyers (ibid.). Besides, in terms of intercultural relationships, Tuk and Nang who married Westerners affirmed that the Western men were responsible and caring. These findings are similar to some research studies on transnational marriage between Thai women and Western men which demonstrate that Western men are preferable because

they are more responsible and reliable compare to Thai men (Esara 2009, Lapanun 2010, Piayura 2012, Sunanta & Angeles 2013).

On the other hand, the negative characteristics provided by the Western participants are also consistent with Wise's (1997) conclusion on the negative beliefs that Thais tend to have towards Westerners. He states that Westerners are seen as "big, hairy, clumsy and smell like meat," with "ill-mannered, barbaric hotheads," and that Thais seem to assume Westerners as lustful, hot-tempered and arrogant (Wise 1997, 19). These different results from both groups on the characteristics of Westerners imply that although Thais seemed to admire Westerners, the Westerners assumed themselves as unfavorable to some extent.

However, the dominant characteristics found in common from both groups of participants are confident, independent and straightforward. These three dominant characteristics support Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions of the Western cultures, namely individualism (independent), low power distance (direct or straightforward) and masculinity (confident). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the Thai participants seemed to realize the different cultural values, behaviours and communication styles between Thais and Westerners while the Westerners tended to believe that Thais understood these differences.

#### 4.1.2.2 Beliefs attached to the term *farang*

Apart from the characteristics of Westerners, the beliefs attached with the term *farang* were also examined in order to compare the perceptions that both groups of participants have towards Westerners. The findings from both questionnaires and in-depth interviews are summarised in Chart 4.3.

Chart 4.3

*Beliefs towards farang*

<b>Beliefs</b>	<b>Thai participants</b>	<b>Western participants</b>
<b>Financial, educational and country background</b>	Rich, have no financial problems Well-educated Speak English or use English as communicative tool From developed countries where equality is practiced Respect laws and rules	Rich, wealthy Well-educated Speak English From first world countries

Chart 4.3 (cont.)

*Beliefs towards farang*

<b>Beliefs</b>	<b>Thai participants</b>	<b>Western participants</b>
<b>Differences</b>	From opposite site of the world From different culture and ways of life Behave differently from Thais	From different cultures Temporary, newcomer, different
<b>Assimilation</b>	Enjoy learning cultures	Cannot speak Thai Do not know and understand Thai culture Do not assimilate into Thai culture
<b>General image</b>	Love to travel Dare to take risk and try new things Do not eat spicy food Like to party, drink alcohol Free sex	At a bar, drinking Old white man

As shown in Chart 4.3, both groups revealed similar background beliefs towards *farang* as those who were rich, well-educated and from developed countries where social rules were strictly followed and everyone was equal. To elaborate, the wealthy stereotype towards Westerners seems to be the common shared belief in Thais' minds that have been socially rooted for long time. Several research studies on attitudes towards Westerners conducted with both Thais and Westerners also emphasize on the belief of high financial status of the Westerners (Esara 2009, Howard 2009, Maher & Lafferty 2014). However, this belief is the common dislike of the Western participants in Howard's (2009) study since it resulted in bad experiences such as cheating and double pricing. Similarly, all Western interviewees who reported bad experiences on the non-standard pricing system in Thailand also argued that this happened because of the wealthy stereotype that Thais had towards them.

Significantly, both groups agreed that *farang* were from different cultures resulting in thinking and behaving differently from Thai people and that *farang* were able to speak English. These beliefs are consistent with Curtis' (2011) interpretations of the term *gaijin* or foreigner in Japanese as those whose non-verbal behaviours were different from Japanese, those who had foreign background and those who were assumed to speak English. To analyse, both groups of participants tended to be aware that Thais and Westerners have different ways of living which affect the different

beliefs and behaviours. In intercultural communication, it is noted that when people are aware and tolerant of the differences, they will be able to deal with intercultural communication effectively (Tomalin and Stempleski 1993).

Some generalizations towards a group of *farang* given by the Thai participants such as love to travel, enjoy learning culture, dare to take risk strengthen Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimension of the low uncertainty avoidance cultures where its members tend not to be threatened by uncertainty and ambiguity. So, they are more likely to be flexible, relaxed and less serious (ibid.). Besides, the findings from Thais participants are similar to Welty (2005) who concluded some misconceptions and generalizations as those who preferred to travel alone and could not eat spicy food. However, it is important for Thais to realize that the generalizations and stereotypes could downgrade their ability to notice differences of individuals (Boonnuch 2012). Under this circumstance, Thais could easily fail in intercultural communication.

Noticeably, only the Western participants believed that *farang* were assumed as not knowing or understanding Thai language and culture and not trying to assimilate into Thai society. They further believed that *farang* were perceived as newcomers and temporary visitors in Thailand. This implies a feeling of unsuccessful integration. This unacceptable feeling could negatively affect the Westerners' adaptation when living abroad. In my views, if the Westerners do not assume themselves as temporary visitors who hardly acculturate into Thai cultures, they would become more confident and comfortable living in Thailand.

#### **4.1.3 Contexts of the term *farang***

This section presents the measurement on the self-report frequency of how often the Thai and Western questionnaire respondents used and heard the term *farang*. Both groups rated the contexts in which Thais and Westerners were exposed to the term *farang* in the Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). The mean of the Likert scale was interpreted due to the criteria shown in Chart 4.4. Moreover, they also checked the offensive contexts of the term *farang*. The results from the questionnaires are demonstrated in Chart 4.5 while the findings from the in-depth interviews were analysed and presented in the discussions.

Chart 4.4

*Mean interpretation criteria*

Scale	Mean	Frequently Interpretation
5	4.21 – 5.00	Always
4	3.41 – 4.20	Very often
3	2.61 – 3.40	Sometimes
2	1.81 – 2.60	Rarely
1	1.00 – 1.80	Never

Chart 4.5

*Frequency of exposure to the term farang and its offensive contexts*

Context	Frequency of exposure to the term <i>farang</i>				Offensive contexts of the term <i>farang</i>	
	Thais		Westerners		Thais	Westerners
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation	N=60 (percentage)	N=30 (percentage)
1. In the spoken context	3.47	Very often	4.33	Always	15 (25.0)	17 (56.7)
2. In the written context	2.08	Rarely	2.53	Rarely	33 (55.0)	6 (20.0)
3. In front of the term referent, <i>farang</i> meaning “you” (not knowing each other)	2.02	Rarely	3.27	Sometimes	34 (56.7)	21 (70.0)
4. In front of the term referent, <i>farang</i> instead of the person’s name (knowing each other)	1.98	Rarely	2.87	Sometimes	35 (58.3)	17 (56.7)
5. In the context of third person in general	2.95	Sometimes	3.70	Very often	13 (21.7)	6 (20.0)
6. In the context of third person in the presence of the term referent	2.00	Rarely	3.17	Sometimes	27 (45.0)	9 (30.0)

**4.1.3.1 Contexts and frequency of exposure to the term *farang***

As presented in Chart 4.5, both groups mostly exposed the term *farang* in the spoken context (Context 1), but rarely used or found it in the written context (Context 2). To explain, three of the Thai interviewees reported that the term *farang* was used

as an informal way to refer to the Westerners as the third persons (Context 5) in their speech with their Thai friends. Their intention was to specify with their Thai interlocutors that those whom they referred to were not African, Asian or Middle Eastern foreigners, but Caucasian Westerners. Additionally, they believed that their Thai interlocutors had common shared ideas of the meaning of the term *farang* so that the conversation was shorter and easier. This emphasizes the power of language as a tool that makes communication possible when the communicators share common meanings (Orbe & Harris 2008).

In the views of the Western interviewees, four of them reported that they had heard the term *farang* quite often at the department stores, markets or on streets used by the shop keepers, vendors and taxi drivers. Most of the time, the term was used to refer to them as the third person (Context 5) when Thai people talked to each other or gossiped about them (Context 6). Additionally, the frequency of hearing the term *farang* tends to be related with the settings of where they were. Two Western interviewees described:

I can hear it (the term *farang*) in any situations, usually in the department stores. Not in the university. Just the places that people haven't seen me before. - Linda

(I hear the term *farang*) Not every day because usually I go to the places that I know. - Victor

As the research setting is in Khon Kaen where is not a touristic city, it can be interpreted that those who use the term *farang* are Thai people who rarely see Westerners in their areas since the Thais who often see Westerners seem to seldom mention or talk about Westerners in their presence. On the other hand, the Westerners seem to be more conscious of their presence as outstanding when being at the places they have not been before.

#### **4.1.3.2 Offensive contexts of the term *farang***

In the right column of Chart 4.5, the Thai participants believed that using the term *farang* in the spoken context was less offensive than in the written context whereas the Westerners reported conversely. However, both groups of participants considered Context 3: in front of the term referent, *farang* meaning “you” (in case of

not knowing each other) and Context 4: in front of the term referent, *farang* instead of the person's name (in case of knowing each other) most offensive.

Two Thai interviewees who married Westerners rarely used the term *farang* as they had experiences using the term *farang* and resulted in offense and misunderstandings. They explained:

He (her Western boyfriend) was extremely mad at me and was about to book the flight to go back to his country immediately when he heard me use the term (*farang*) on the phone as he thought that I was gossiping about him. - Tuk

Some of my husband's Western friends don't like the term *farang*. The problem is that Thai people assume that Westerners don't understand what they say. So, they use the term *farang* in the presence of the Westerners. But actually the Westerners know the term *farang* and they notice how it is use. Mostly, they assume that Thais gossip or talk negatively about them. - Nang

From Tuk and Nang's experiences, the Westerners tended to dislike the term *farang* when hearing it in their presence. They noticed the tones of voice and assumed that the conversations were negative. Considerably, the meaning is not in the word but in how it is used. This is an important and powerful characteristic of language since meanings of words can be interpreted in many ways depending on each person's experience (Adler & Town 1990, Beebe, Beebe & Redmond 2011, Hayakawa 1978, van Lier 1995). Significantly, Thai people who frequently interact with Westerners seem to be aware of the alternative interpretations of their foreign interlocutors. They tend to be careful and avoid racial labels in intercultural situation. Consequently, encountering intercultural interaction frequently can improve skills in intercultural communication.

On the other hand, the majority of the Western participants argued that using the term *farang* in any contexts was racism because the term conveyed the disrespectful connotation resulting in uncomfortable, excluded and unwelcome feelings. These negative feelings towards the racial labels are also discovered in the studies of the term *maori* on Maori people (Cotter 2007) and of the term *squaw* on the American Indian women (Merskin 2010). However, there was no discrimination record in this study unlike the study of Cotter (2007) and Merskin (2010) who found serious negative impacts on the term referents such as discrimination at workplace

and mental problems because of ethno-stress and low self-esteem. The factor that causes these different results between the term referents in this study and in Cotter's (2007) and Merskin's (2010) might be concerned with the status of the term referents. In other words, the Westerners in Thailand tend to be perceived as superior unlike the Maori and the American Indian women whose statuses are inferior to the countries' majorities according to Cotter (2007) and Merskin (2010).

To emphasize, all Western interviewees considered the term *farang* derogatory when it was used to refer to them directly instead of their names. Several important points were shared as follows:

Even when they (Thai people) know my name, they don't call me Joe. They call me *farang*. It's just disrespectful. I think they don't realize that to Westerners, it comes across as derogatory. It's a kind of separating me from them. You know, they could have called me neighbor. That would be nicer. - Joe

Once, I had a culture class with Thai students and the Thai teacher mentioned me "*farang*" directly. He asked "What's your opinion, *farang*?" That was the reason I'd never been to that class again. - Paul

As illustrated, the Western participants seemed to be disappointed when they were referred as *farang* by people who knew their names because they preferred to be called by some neutral terms that were not associated with races such as "neighbor" or "student". As a matter of fact, these non-discriminated words represent closer relationship and create friendly connotations. This finding strengthens the power of ethnic labels by Hayakawa (1978) who claimed that the racial terms were extremely powerful and able to arouse people's feelings and actions. From Paul's experience, anger was the consequence of the wrong manner of using the term *farang*. As a result, to become a successful communicator in an intercultural context, the racial labels should be avoided. Under these circumstances, one single word is considered an essential element to develop or to destroy human relations (Beebe, Beebe & Redmond 2011, van Lier 1995). Although the term referents cannot control what the others say, they are able to explain how a word offends them and suggest some preferable terms for mutual understanding (Beebe, Beebe & Redmond 2011).

#### 4.1.4 Views towards the term *farang*

In this section, the participants had to answer several questions about general views towards the term *farang*. In the questionnaires, the respondents had to choose only one from multiple choices of each question. A blank textbox was provided at the end of each question for clarification. The results from the questionnaires are presented in charts while the findings from the in-depths interviews are categorized into several themes. As a result, this section is divided into two subsections which are 4.1.4.1 Power and effects of the term *farang* and 4.1.4.2 Suggestions for future use of the term *farang*.

##### 4.1.4.1 Power and effects of the term *farang*

Both groups of the participants had to rate whether the term *farang* was a polite word. The Thai participants were specifically investigated whether the term could cause offense whereas the Western participants were inquired about the effects when hearing the term *farang*. The results from the questionnaires are demonstrated in Chart 4.6.

Chart 4.6

*Whether the term farang is polite*

Responses	Thais N=60 (percentage)	Westerners N=30 (percentage)
Yes	9 (15.0)	0 (0.0)
No	19 (31.7)	13 (43.3)
Sometimes	32 (53.3)	17 (56.7)

##### (1) The term *farang* was either polite or impolite.

As presented in Chart 4.6, the majority of both groups of the participants agreed that the term *farang* could be either polite or impolite depending on the contexts. All of the Thai interviewees believed that the degree of politeness of the term *farang* depended on the situations, tones of voice, purposes of usage and moods of the term users. In their views, the term itself was a common Thai word that most Thais used with neutral intention. In the same way, the majority of the Western questionnaire respondents argued that the term itself was a convenient word that Thais used to refer to a group of foreigners. However, they considered the term impolite when it was used with wrong manners, bad intentions or in derogatory contexts such as gossiping or saying it in their presence. These findings support the characteristic of

language as symbols that people create to represent things but the meanings are rather in the persons who convey the words, not the words themselves (Adler & Towne 1990, Beebe, Beebe and Redmond 2011, Hayakawa 1978, van Lier 1995). It is suggested that although the word hearers cannot control the others, they can choose to react and appropriately affirm how the term offend them (Beebe, Beebe & Redmond 2011). It is quite obviously clear that, in the Westerners' view, the term *farang* was rather impolite as none of them reported that the term was polite in this part.

**(2) The term *farang* caused annoyance and offense when used to group all Westerners together despite their unique origins.**

Chart 4.6 shows that the second majority of the Thai questionnaire respondents (31.7%) and of the Western questionnaire respondents (43.3%) considered the term *farang* impolite and racist. This group believed that the term “*chao tang chat*” which meant foreigner should be used instead. Three Western interviewees pointed out that most of the time they heard the term used in a negative connotation or a derogatory way which carried an undertone of a racist ideology and that separated them from a group of Thai people. This is similar to one interpretation of the term *gaijin* given by the Western participants in Curtis' (2011) study. They said the term *gaijin* is “a strong nuance of non-acceptance of the referents of the word *gaijin* when used by NSJ (Native Speaker of Japanese),” (ibid., 43). Moreover, this finding indicates that the term *gaijin* was sometimes used to estrange the term's referent from the native speaker. As Allport (1985) explained in the “labels of primary potency”, such symbols were like “shrieking sirens” that “deafen” the term users to any types of discriminations but were “noisy” to the term hearers (179). In this case, the Westerners preferred not to be grouped as *farang* altogether since they said that “not all *farang* are the same”. Moreover, some of them disclosed that the term *farang* was “a rude, frustrating and annoying word” and considered “unprofessional” when used by Thai people in the restaurants or stores. Therefore, this hidden implication is possibly the cause of annoyance that the term users or the Thai people should be aware so that they could initiate a better communication.

### (3) The connotation of the term *farang* has changed over time.

Another interesting point raised by the Thai participants is about the connotation of the term *farang* has changed over time. They gave an example of the term *mia farang* which means Westerners' wives. This term was used to carry negative image of Thai women who were associated with male Westerners in the Vietnam War and seen as rented wives or prostitutes. This perception resulted in the rejection of intercultural marriage at that time, but nowadays the transnational marriage is more acceptable or preferable (Esara 2009, Piayura 2012, Pomsema, Yodmalee & Lao-Akka 2015). Thus, the participants in this study believed that people tended to perceive the term *farang* neutrally or perhaps more positively at the present. The changing connotation of terms over time is also presented in the study of Bartolo (2008) on the term *bogan* as the term tends to be perceived more positively and more acceptable than in the past. This finding highlights the significant characteristic of language as it is dynamic and the connotations can change (Adler & Towne 1990, Beebe, Beebe and Redmond 2011).

#### 4.1.4.2 Suggestions for future use of the term *farang*

This part demonstrates the tendency of Thais on how they would use the term *farang* and of Westerners on how they would prefer to hear the term *farang*. Specifically, the Thai participants were asked about the possibility not to use the term *farang* if it can cause offense to the Westerners. Their choices were yes, no and maybe. Conversely, the Western participants were inquired whether the term *farang* should be banned with three slightly different choices which were yes, no and it does not matter. Consequently, Chart 4.7 presents the results whether the term should be avoided.

Chart 4.7

*Whether the term farang should be avoided*

Responses	Thais N=60 (percentage)	Westerners N=30 (percentage)
Yes	35 (58.3)	8 (26.7)
No	6 (10.0)	12 (40.0)
Maybe (for Thais)/ It does not matter (for Westerners)	19 (31.7)	10 (33.3)

**(1) The term *farang* should be avoided.**

As shown in Chart 4.7, a majority of the Thai questionnaire respondents (58.3%) would avoid using the term *farang* in any contexts while the second majority of them (31.7%) would reduce the usage of the term *farang* in the presence of the Westerners. The clarification of these two points discovered from the in-depth interviews was overlapped. To explain, four Thai interviewees would also avoid using the term *farang* in order to maintain good relationship with the Westerners. However, they admitted that it was difficult not to use the term at all since sometimes they might need to use it to refer to the Westerners in general as the third persons with their Thai friends for their convenience. This shows that the term *farang* makes the assumptions in conversations easier and that Thai people get used to use the term in their daily life. So, they find it difficult not to use it, but they would use it as less as possible instead.

**(2) Length of stay in Thailand changed the way that the Westerners interpreted the term *farang*.**

On the other hand, most of the Western questionnaire respondents (40%) and three Western interviewees did not request Thais to eliminate the term *farang*. This group appeared to acknowledge the usage of the term and accepted that they were different. Some of them realized that the term was Thai language which they could not change. Four Western interviewees said that the longer they had stayed in Thailand, the better they understood Thai people and culture. Having experienced in the usage of the term *farang* in various contexts and learned about Thai people's characteristics that were easy and not serious, they gradually understood its meaning and its usage. Finally, they overcame the frustration regarding the issue. Beebe, Beebe and Redmond (2011) suggested that when people gained additional experiences, they would have new thoughts about the words. Also, the more familiar with the communication partners' cultures, the closer meaning of words the message receivers can interpret in the view of the message senders (ibid.). In this regard, van Lier (1995) declared that every day's experiences in life would help people create their own ways to deal with things as people tended to rely on "the way things are done around here," (11).

### **(3) Names and nationalities were preferable.**

The second majority of the Western participants (33.3%) thought that it did not matter whether Thais would not use the term *farang* or not because they also accepted that the term was part of Thai language and culture. They believed that its meaning was neither negative nor harmful. Nonetheless, they preferred not to be grouped altogether as *farang*. Despite their similar physical appearances, they were different in terms of cultural backgrounds and personalities. Therefore, they preferred to be called by their names or their nationalities such as “*Kon Angkrit*” (English people) or “*Kon American*” (American people) which were more polite and acceptable. They further suggested that in the case of not knowing a person’s name, it was better to gently ask for his or her name rather than using the term *farang*. In essence, asking the persons for preferable terms to be addressed to is necessary in interracial interaction (Beebe, Beebe & Redmond 2011, Orbe & Harris 2008).

### **(4) Grouping all Westerners as *farang* was considered racism.**

Lastly, the minority of the Westerners (26.7%) thought that the term *farang* should be banned as they believed that the term was language discrimination. Since they were unique, they pointed out that using the classification term grouping people by skin colors was considered racism. This supports the explanation of Allport (1985) who stressed that the ethnic labels had emotional tone and that people were rarely aware of their power. Significantly, many linguistic scholars emphasize that language is powerful as it can destroy the relationships (Beebe, Beebe & Redmond 2011, Orbe & Harris 2008, van Lier 1995), especially words related to ethnics and races (Allport 1985, Hayakawa 1978). Additionally, Thai people should be aware that they were not in the position to determine the effect of words. But, it was the other person who they mentioned to does (Beebe, Beebe & Redmond 2011). To have an effective interracial communication, one should recognize the power of words and its effects, especially the racial labeling (Orbe & Harris 2008).

## 4.2 Attitudes towards Westerners

To answer the second research question, the attitudes of Thais and Westerners towards Westerners were studied. In the questionnaires, both groups of participants were required to evaluate their agreement on 18 statements related to the three components of attitude which are beliefs, feelings and behaviours. The Likert scale of agreement ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) which its mean interpretation criteria are shown in Chart 4.8. Then, the insights of the participants' attitudes towards Westerners were focused in the in-depth interviews. To find more about the behaviours of Thais towards Westerners, the treatment and privileges that Westerners had experienced were additionally examined. Finally, the sources of attitude formation were investigated. Thus, the results and discussions of this part are divided into four sections which are 4.2.1 Beliefs towards Westerners, 4.2.2 Feelings towards Westerners, 4.2.3 Behaviours towards Westerners and 4.2.4 Sources of attitude formation.

Chart 4.8

*Mean interpretation criteria*

Scale	Mean	Agreement Interpretation
5	4.21 – 5.00	Strongly agree
4	3.41 – 4.20	Agree
3	2.61 – 3.40	Neutral
2	1.81 – 2.60	Disagree
1	1.00 – 1.80	Strongly disagree

### 4.2.1 Beliefs towards Westerners

The statements 1 to 6 were designed to investigate and compare the beliefs that both Thai and Western participants had towards Westerners. Chart 4.9 demonstrates the results from the questionnaires.

Chart 4.9

*Mean and interpretation of beliefs towards Westerners*

Beliefs	Thais N=60		Westerners N=30	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
1. Westerners and Thai people have good relations since the old time.	3.75	Agree	3.33	Neutral
2. Westerners brought modernity to Thailand.	3.87	Agree	3.43	Agree
3. There is a tendency of an increasing number of Westerners settling in Thailand.	3.65	Agree	4.03	Agree
4. Westerners in Thailand help improving local economics.	3.33	Neutral	3.43	Agree
5. It is difficult for Westerners to adapt themselves into Thai society.	2.45	Disagree	3.50	Agree
6. Westerners in Thailand are always considered foreigners despite the good knowledge of Thai language and Thai culture.	2.17	Disagree	4.13	Agree

Overall, Chart 4.9 shows that both groups of the questionnaire respondents tended to agree with the first four beliefs on the relations of Thai people and Westerners in the past and the increasing number of Westerners as well as its effects in the future. However, the participants revealed different opinions on the last two statements about the assimilation of the Westerners into Thai society. The findings from the in-depth interviews conducted with both groups of participants are similar to the results from the questionnaires. As a consequence, three themes regarding the beliefs of Thais and Westerners towards Westerners are presented as follows.

#### **4.2.1.1 Belief on good relations between Thais and Westerners in history had been transmitted to current generations.**

This first positive theme is from the findings on the beliefs regarding the good relations between Thai people and Westerners (Statement 1) and the development of Thailand since Siam period due to the assistance of the Western countries in the history (Statement 2). Both groups of participants believed that this positive historical

knowledge between Thailand and the Western countries had been transmitted to the current generations of both Thais and Westerners through today's media and publications. Consistent with the literature reviews, the positive history of Westerners in Thailand since Siam period has been presented in many documents (Ninsiri 2012, Terwiel 1991, Wise 1997). Ninsiri (2012) further highlighted that the development of Bangkok was influenced by the Western cultures during the reign of King Rama V. Many technologies, innovations and especially the public utility from some Western countries had been brought to Thailand (ibid.).

Elaborated in the in-depth interviews, all Thai interviewees believed that most Thais had positive attitudes towards Westerners because many innovations from the Western countries have been brought into Thailand since the old time. Moreover, Joe pointed out that Thai people treated him well because of the belief on the good relations between Thailand and the United States of America both in history and in the present. This belief tends to provide basic positive idea when Thai people think of Westerners and could be the fundamental belief that affects other components of attitude or the feelings and behaviours towards Westerners afterwards. As a result, it can be concluded that the belief of the good relations between Thailand and the Western countries in the history influenced how Thai perceived Westerners positively and resulted in good interactions afterwards.

#### **4.2.1.2 The increasing number of Westerners in Thailand provided more pros than cons.**

This second slightly positive theme is concerned with the agreement on the belief of the increasing number of Westerners in Thailand (Statement 3) which tended to result in positive effects, namely the local economic improvement (Statement 4). This shows that both groups were aware of a change of Thailand in the future where would become more multicultural and could provide more opportunity for Thai people to deal with intercultural interaction with the Westerners. This is consistent with some research studies which conclude that a large number of male Westerners who are married to Isan women have decided to settle in the region (Howard 2008, Maher & Lafferty 2014, Prasartkul 2009, Sunanta 2009). When asking whether the increasing number of Westerners would negatively or positively affected Thailand, the Thai interviewees shared some pros and cons as shown in Chart 4.10.

Chart 4.10

*Pros and cons of the increasing number of Westerners in Thailand*

<b>Pros</b>	<b>Cons</b>
1. Change in self-awareness and self-development	1. Argumentative problems, quarrels
2. Country reputation and development	2. Change in traditional Thai cultures
3. Cultural variety environment and learning	3. Crimes
4. Job opportunity	
5. Local economic improvement	
6. Understanding in intercultural interaction	
7. Wide open views towards the world	

Chart 4.10 reports that the Thai participants believed that having lots of Westerners in Thailand could foster the country and economic improvement, increase the reputation, allow Thai people to learn more about other cultures and to understand more about their own culture, motivate Thai people to improve themselves in order to reach the Western standards and possibly provide Thai people more job opportunity in the touristic places or business. Interestingly, Poot gave a vivid comparison of the pros of the increasing number of Westerners in Thailand as follows:

Having a lot of Westerners in our society is like the Thai football nowadays that invited some foreign players into the team. It helps improve the Thai football league to reach the standard of the world competition as the Thai football players have played with foreign football players every day. This leads to competition which the Thai players need to improve themselves in order to beat the foreign players.

This clearly explains that it might be difficult for Thai people to improve themselves if they only learn from Thais. Therefore, it is important for Thais to learn from people of other countries. Learning the similarities and the differences between people of different cultural backgrounds is the key start for self-improvement. Poot further added that this was the same in education since Thais should learn from the Westerners and be more productive. The prevalent encounters of Westerners in the area evoke the need of local people in English learning. Moreover, three Western interviewees assured that they were in Thailand in order to contribute to the society and to improve the quality of Thais' lives.

In terms of local economics, a majority of Thai and Western interviewees revealed that most of the Westerners in Khon Kaen were retirees who spent their living salary from their homelands in the local areas. Some of them owned a business such as resorts or restaurants which provided jobs to Thai people. This finding is relevant to Allinson's (2007) research which presented a feasible scenario of the return daughters who married to Westerners, migrated to Western countries and planned to be back to their original Isan villages after their husbands' retirement. The researcher believed that the return of this group of cross-marriage couples would play an important role in the contribution of the village in terms of local economics and cultural aspects (ibid.).

Investigated on the negative effects of the increasing number of Westerners in Thailand, all Thai interviewees were afraid that the traditional Thai cultures such as the obedient and humble behaviours or the practice of nonsexual expressions in public might have been changed because of the Western individualism influence. This fear of Westernization is also revealed in the study of Esara (2009) who concluded that the engagement with Westerners could replace Thai traditional values, especially the traditional feminine values such as modesty and virginity. The Thai participants also concerned about the misunderstandings and communicative competence in intercultural situations. This echoes the primary concern of Westerners in Thailand regarding communication difficulties found in Howard's (2009) study. But as presented, there are more pros than cons of the increasing number of Westerners in Thailand from Thais' views. Therefore, Thais seemed to appreciate and welcome the incoming number of the Westerners.

#### **4.2.1.3 Westerners believed that it was difficult to integrate into Thai society.**

This last theme is the different views that both groups had shared on the beliefs of assimilation of the Westerners from the Statement 5 and 6. While Thais believed that the Westerners could easily adapt themselves into Thai society and that they would accept Westerners into Thai society, the Western participants reported conversely. Consistent with the study of Howard (2009) on Westerners in Thailand, their Western participants reported that they had difficulties belonging in Thai society since they believed that it was impossible for them to be accepted by the Thais.

Despite the length of their stay, they said that they would always be seen as foreigners (ibid.). From the in-depth interviews, all of the Western interviewees admitted that it was difficult for them to be formally accepted by Thai people due to the different appearance. Despite the good knowledge of Thai cultures and abilities in Thai language, they would always be perceived as foreigners. Besides, Victor revealed that it was difficult to trust Thai people because of the indirect communication. He found that most Thais tended not to express their true feelings. This resulted in his doubts whether Thais sincerely accepted him as a friend.

In the context of intercultural organizations, Sriussadaporn (2006) highlighted on the non-acceptance feelings that her Western participants felt because of the hiding feeling practice of Thai people. This practice is concerned with the Thai collectivist culture and the value of social harmony (Chaidaroon 2003, Hofstede 2001, Komolsevin, Knutson & Datthuyawat 2010, Winnuwat 2011). From these studies, Thais tended to have an indirect non-verbal communication as being straightforward might break the social harmony value. Thus, the foreigners found it difficult to trust the Thais. This feeling influenced the way Westerners feel unacceptable by Thais (ibid). However, looking into the Thais' perspectives, they seem not to be aware of their practice to maintain social harmony and possibly think that this way is appropriate. Therefore, providing the knowledge on different cultural values for Thais and Westerners is needed. Also, the fact that Thais tend to be more open and love to welcome Westerners into Thai society could increase the Westerners' confidence to feel like being part of Thai society.

#### **4.2.2 Feelings towards Westerners**

Feelings are considered the most important aspect of attitude as it evaluates people's favourable or unfavourable judgment to the subject. The statements 7 to 12 were to review the feelings that both groups of participants had towards the Westerners. The results from the questionnaires of the feelings towards Westerners are presented in Chart 4.11.

Chart 4.11

*Mean and interpretation of feelings towards Westerners*

Feelings	Thais N=60		Westerners N=30	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
7. Thai people respect Westerners.	3.42	Agree	3.07	Neutral
8. Thai people admire Westerners' physical appearance i.e. fair skin and a prominent nose.	3.90	Agree	4.10	Agree
9. In any kind of world competition, Thai people cannot beat Westerners.	2.60	Disagree	1.77	Strongly disagree
10. Westerners look down on Thai people.	2.80	Neutral	2.53	Disagree
11. Westerners like to drink alcohol.	3.27	Neutral	3.33	Neutral
12. Westerners should have equal right as Thai people in terms of buying and selling movable and immovable properties in Thailand.	1.90	Disagree	3.53	Agree

Chart 4.11 demonstrates that both groups of questionnaire respondents tended to have similar views to all statements, except the last one which is concerned with buying housing in Thailand. The findings from the in-depth interviews from both Thai and Western participants are slightly different from the findings of the questionnaires. To elaborate the results of both research instruments, four themes towards the feelings of Thais and Westerners towards Westerners are discussed as follows.

#### **4.2.2.1 Thais respected and admired Westerners.**

The agreement on the Statement 7 and 8 about the feelings of respect and admiration clearly show that the Westerners were favorable in Thailand and that the Westerners themselves tended to be aware of these positive feelings that Thais had towards them. Although the Western questionnaire respondents reported neutral on statement 7 (Thai people respect Westerners), all of Thai and Western interviewees noted that most Thais respected Westerners. Possibly, the respectfulness that Thais show towards the Westerners could come from some beliefs and feelings that have mentioned earlier, such as historically good relations between Thailand and the

Western countries and the admiring feelings that Thais have on the Westerners' looks. Several studies also present that Westerners are respected by Thais which provide quite friendly environment and privilege for the Westerners (Fadzillah 2004, Maher & Lafferty 2014).

In terms of admiring feeling towards Westerners, some Thai interviewees explained that Thais valued fair skins which represented the upper social class people who tended to be rich. This idea is also presented in Esara's (2009) study which pointed out that white was the color of desire as it represents wealth, success and a consequence of higher social status. The Thai interviewees believed that advertisements on media have played an important role on the concept of beauty in Thailand such as having fair skin and sharp nose like the Westerners. This resulted in the popularity of the whitening skin care products and the nose surgery among Thai people. This finding could not only strengthen the beauty ideal of whiteness among Asians (Ashikari 2005, Li, Min & Belk 2008, Shankar & Subish 2007), but also the essential role of media on whitening beauty products (Chaipraditkul 2013). Elaborated by Chaipraditkul (2013), the advertising media in Thailand had dramatically presented the ongoing trend of the ideal of whiteness. By using the European body to portray the attractiveness, the fair skin and the Western facial looks had become desirable traits for Thai people (ibid.).

#### **4.2.2.2 The sense of inferiority of Thais and the superior status of Westerners existed in Thailand.**

Both groups of the questionnaire respondents reported that Thai people were not inferior to Westerners and that Westerners did not look down on Thai people. This means that both groups tended to believe in the abilities of Thai people. They seemed not to hold the stereotypical belief of the Western superiority. These feelings were likely to reduce the gap between Thais and Westerners which could create equality and positive acceptance of racial differences. In fact, this finding is inconsistent with the study of Maher and Lafferty (2014) who noted that the male Western participants in their study reported themselves as superior to Thais in terms of physical body and financial security. However, these different findings seem to be related to the statuses and generations of the participants as the participants in Maher and Lafferty's (2014) study were the old male Caucasian migrants who married Isan women and settled in

the northeast of Thailand while most of participants in this study were the middle aged Caucasian workers. Simply, the old generations tended to hold the superior belief whereas the younger ones tended to be more open.

From the questionnaires' results, the Thai participants tended not to be afraid of Westerners and were confident to deal with the Westerners. However, four Thai interviewees believed that Thai people felt inferior to Westerners to some extent in terms of finance, education and technology. Fha, the only interviewee who believed that Thais were not inferior to Westerners pointed out an interesting view about the cause of such feeling as she explained:

Most Thais think that they are inferior to Westerners. They believe that they can't be better than Westerners. But actually they can. I once read an article of J Jetarin (Thai singer) who sent his children to study in England. One of his sons said "I'm good at Math and Science. I'm brighter than my foreign classmates. What they are better than me is just their English skills." So, I think that if Thai people are good at English, their abilities wouldn't be second to Westerners.

From this explanation, the English skills seem to be the key point that affects the inferior feeling of Thai people. Possibly, if Thais are confident to speak English, they can overcome the feeling of inferiority and might not be afraid of Westerners. Also, from Fha's experience, the publications are a great source to provide views that could later change attitudes. The ability to keep learning and reading is also required in order to build better understanding regarding the intercultural issues.

On the other hand, all Western interviewees believed that most Thais might feel inferior to Westerners as Thailand was a developing country with limited opportunity in terms of education. But they claimed that they did not feel superior to Thai people. However, Victor who admitted that he sometimes felt a bit superior to Thais commented:

I try to control myself (not to feel superior) but sometimes it's very hard because there's no logic in the way (Thai) people act. I notice the inefficient ability to answer simple questions with my students. I think they lack of logic and training in education. Sometimes, I feel like it could be so much easier if you (Thais) do it like this. That's maybe the time I can feel a bit superior. Like you guys are very slow and mess up. Let me do it in 5 minutes and it's done.

From this point, the different cultural dimensions between Thais and Westerners seem to be the cause of Victor's superior feeling to Thais sometimes. As Thailand is a collectivist, high power distance, high uncertainty avoidance and feminine cultures, Thai people tend to rely on others, be humble, avoid conflicts and seek harmony instead of being competitive (Hofstede 2001). In my views, these dimensions are related to the lack of critical thinking and some particular characteristics of Thais such as slow and easy. Particularly, Chaidaroon's (2003) study revealed that Thai people tended to maintain harmony and to show respect to others by not speaking up and not responding quickly. Thus, these characteristics of Thais were not considered incompetence (ibid.). However, in the intercultural context as mentioned by Victor, if Thais adapt some Western cultural dimensions such as being active, confident and critical, Victor would not feel superior to Thais.

#### **4.2.2.3 The stereotype of alcoholism towards Westerners has faded.**

As shown in Chart 4.12, both groups of the questionnaire respondents reported neutral on the alcoholic stereotypical belief towards Westerners which were similar with the findings from a majority of both Thai and Western interviewees. It can be seen that the image of Westerners in this study is rather positive compare to the image in the past that some research studies have found a problem concerned with alcoholism of Westerners in Thailand (Howard 2009, Staiff & Ongkhluap 2012). However, this inconsistent finding could be related to the site of the study. In other words, most of the Westerners mentioned in the past research studies stayed at the tourist attraction areas in the Southern region of Thailand. But the participants in this study were in Khon Kaen where is not popular for tourism comparing to the provinces in the South. They possibly rated this statement based on their experience seeing the Westerners in Khon Kaen in their daily life. So, it could be assumed that the image of Westerners in Khon Kaen is rarely attached with the alcoholic stereotype. As both rated neutral, it could not be concluded that the image of the Westerners in Khon Kaen is positive. But this, at least, provides a view point that the image of Westerners in Thailand has been changed from the negative one.

#### **4.2.2.4 The prohibition of purchasing housing in Thailand provided the feelings of inequality and insecurity to the Westerners.**

The only statement that both groups of participants from both research instruments had different views is concerned with the issue of purchasing land and houses in Thailand. While the Thai participants disagreed with the equal right of the Westerners on buying properties in Thailand, the Western participants argued that this should be equal. All Thai interviewees believed that if the Westerners were allowed to buy land, Thais might find difficulties possessing land in the future since the Western currencies were competitive compared to Thai Baht. In contrast, the Western interviewees claimed that they would not take advantages of Thai people. They were willing to help the communities. But it was difficult for them to live in Thailand without worries when they were not allowed to possess the country's properties and had to rely on Thai persons to do that instead. This has also become one of the main disadvantages and struggles that the Westerners encountered in the studies of Howard (2009) and Maher and Lafferty (2014). It is noted that this issue caused Westerners the feeling of emotional and financial insecurity (ibid.).

Accordingly, this law tends to make the Westerners not only feel insecure but also unequal whereas Thai people seem to be afraid of Westerners to take control of the country. Interestingly, most of the Western interviewees believed that Thais were indeed afraid of Westerners. By limiting the Westerners' right to buy land, Joe commented:

I think there's a little scene of phobia to some extent. It's very difficult to work here to get the proper permit and visa and such that. And I think that is fear of foreigners when I come in and take jobs and all that. I think Thais are afraid of what they don't know. Maybe they are even afraid to find out more about foreigners. We're not going to take anything away, but we can do more to give.

From this comment, it appears that although Thai people were likely to admire or prefer Westerners, Thais tended not to completely trust or welcome Westerners to Thailand. Implicitly, Thais created boundary of how far the Westerners could reach into the society. On the other hand, the Westerners also tended to acknowledge this. To emphasize, prohibiting purchasing land in Thailand is a factor that makes the Westerners feel bitter, insecure and unequal.

### 4.2.3 Behaviours towards Westerners

The statements 13 to 18 were to examine the behaviours of Thai people and Westerners when dealing with each other. Chart 4.12 shows the results of this last component of attitude which is the consequences of the beliefs and feelings that one has towards an object.

Chart 4.12

*Mean and interpretation of behaviours towards Westerners*

Behaviours	Thais N=60		Westerners N=30	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
13. The entrance fees at tourist attractions in Thailand for Westerners should be the same price as Thai people.	3.37	Agree	3.67	Agree
14. Westerners should receive equal salary as Thai people	3.25	Neutral	3.43	Agree
15. Thai people are friendly with Westerners.	4.00	Agree	4.03	Agree
16. Thai people treat Westerners well.	3.78	Agree	3.83	Agree
17. Thai people do not like to encounter with Westerners.	3.47	Agree	2.63	Neutral
18. Thai people take advantages of Westerners.	3.03	Neutral	3.03	Neutral

Chart 4.12 demonstrates that both groups of the questionnaire respondents tended to have similar views on the behaviours towards Westerners. They both agreed with the equal practice on pricing between Thais and Westerners and with the positive reactions that Thais had towards Westerners. Additionally, they both reported neutral on the chances that Thais exploited the Westerners. The slightly different views were demonstrated in two points regarding the equal salary and tendency of avoiding the interaction. The findings from the in-depth interviews from both Thai and Western participants are similar with the results of the questionnaires. Thus, the results and discussions from both research instruments are categorized into five themes as follows.

#### **4.2.3.1 Equal practice on pricing was preferable.**

As presented in Chart 4.12, both groups of questionnaire respondents agreed with the statement 13 on the same price of entrance fee between Thais and Westerners and slightly agreed with the statement 14 on the equal salary. Although the Thai questionnaire respondents felt neutral on the equal salary payment, both groups of Thai and Western interviewees agreed that if both Thai and Western employees had the same qualifications, they should receive the same amount of payment. However, one Thai interviewee suggested that the Westerners should receive more because they came from other countries to be in Thailand where they could not buy land and houses. Thus, their lives tended to be unstable under this condition. This opinion was also reviewed by Victor who was asked whether he would like to settle in Thailand. He answered “Sometimes yes. Sometimes no. They (Thais) give us just enough to survive, not to settle.” This implies that the Westerners would probably like to settle in Thailand. But because of the insecure feelings in terms of job and properties, they were uncertain whether they could settle in Thailand despite their willingness to stay. For this reason, it tends to be fair for Westerners to receive more salary.

In terms of the entrance fee at the tourist attractions, both groups of participants agreed that the price should be equal. The in-depth interviews with both groups reveal that having the same entrance fee at the tourist sites could give the feeling of equality to the Westerners and represent that Thais do not take advantages from foreign tourists. Moreover, all of the Western interviewees explained that the double price standard did not exist in their countries. They further explained that this unequal pricing practice in Thailand gave them the sense of discriminated. Importantly, this is similar to the main disadvantage that Howard (2009) found in his study on the migration of Westerners to Thailand. The double pricing system was reported bad treatment that had become one of the reasons some Westerners left Thailand (ibid). Thus, to create a friendly environment for foreigners, the pricing system in Thailand should be standard.

#### **4.2.3.2 Westerners were taken advantages of due to the rich stereotype.**

Another point that both groups reported the same neutral view in the questionnaires is about the inconvenienced behaviours that some Thais acted towards

Westerners. Conversely, both groups of the interviewees agreed that Thai people sometimes took advantages of Westerners. All Thai interviewees pointed out that Thais tended to perceive Westerners who came from developed countries and had no financial problem as rich. So, Thais charged Westerners more. Similarly, the Western interviewees also reported about the double price charges. Most of the Western interviewees experienced this mostly at the touristic places where the Thai sellers tried to charge them more than usual. They described that this happened because Thais believed that Westerners were able to pay for everything, but this was not fair. In this case, the rich stereotypical belief that Thais have towards Westerners had caused Westerners struggles with the unfair payment. This is consistent with some research studies regarding the rich stereotype that Thais have towards Westerners which has become the dislike point among the Western foreigners (Esara 2009, Howard 2009, Maher & Lafferty 2014).

Moreover, Victor commented that the Westerners worked hard to receive the amount of money that they deserved. He further added that Thai people might think that they were stingy sometimes but they needed to spend their money wisely. On the other hand, Joe tended to understand the reason of Thai people regarding the rich assumption towards the Westerners. He suggested:

I think Westerners have to be open-minded. They have to understand that some parts of Thai society are very poor and perhaps desperate. So, they try to take advantage of them for their money. But if you're aware of all that, you wouldn't have any conflicts and avoid that.

As quoted, the openness is a key that assisted Joe to be able to analyse the situation from the other's point of view. He seemed to develop the attitudes of curiosity and openness which are considered a fundamental factor that increases intercultural communicative competence (Byram 1997). Besides, having basic understanding of Thai people and history could help avoid such conflict. It is also important for foreign newcomers to learn about Thai people and values that are socially rooted in cultures, religion, education and history (Niratpattanasai 2008). If the foreigners understand this, they would have a pleasant stay in Thailand despite the difficulties that they have encountered.

#### **4.2.3.3 Avoidance reactions happened because of language barriers.**

From the findings, Thai people tended to avoid interacting with Westerners. Elaborated in the in-depth interviews with the Thai interviewees, the language barrier was a primary factor. Interestingly, some Thai interviewees pointed out that most Thais would like to talk to Westerners, but they could not speak English well. So, they were afraid to interact with Westerners and tended to avoid the interaction. Similarly, the Western interviewees also believed that the language barrier and Thai values such as shyness were the main obstacles for Thais to develop communicative competence in intercultural interaction. According to Howard (2009), language and communication difficulties were the main disadvantages that Westerners had experienced in Thailand. From this point, it can be seen that despite the change of Thailand to become more multicultural recently, Thai people at the present still lack of English skills and have little knowledge on intercultural communication. More discussions of this point will be elaborated in the next part regarding the communicative competence.

#### **4.2.3.4 Westerners were impressed with the friendly behaviours and good treatment provided by Thais.**

Both groups of the participants from the questionnaires and in-depth interviews agreed with the statement 15 and 16 on the friendly reactions and good treatment that Thais had towards Westerners. The Thai participants added that they liked to interact with the Westerners and to treat them well so that they would have positive experience in Thailand. Likewise, the Western participants also revealed that most Thais were friendly and treated them well. These findings are consistent with the study of Howard (2009) and Maher and Lafferty (2014) who pointed out that their Western participants enjoyed living in Thailand because of Thai people and their hospitality.

The interviewees were required to share their opinions whether Thai people treated Westerners better than other groups of foreigners. All Western interviewees addressed that they had good experiences on treatment by Thai people. Though they rarely had experiences on how Thais treated other foreigners, they believed that the Westerners seemed to receive better treatment than the non-Western foreigners. They

agreed that most Thais whom they had met were friendly, kind, generous, supportive and helpful. They added that the Thais' smiles were the welcoming sign that they rarely found in other countries. Some of them mentioned that whenever they needed help, Thai people would always offer help without hesitation. A few of them had ever received genuine help from the Thai strangers which highly impressed them.

On the other hand, four Thai interviewees stated that they treated all foreigners similarly despite the different racial backgrounds. Only Poot admitted that Thai people were discriminated to some extent since the hierarchy existed in Thailand. He noted that people treated people differently depending on the classes and stereotypes. In his view, he preferred to assist Westerners more than to help the Chinese because he was irritated with the Chinese talking styles and actions. Although the equal treatment was reported by most of the Thai participants, Poot's honest view can strengthen the high power distance cultural dimension of Thailand proposed by Hofstede (2001). It is believed that the high power distance cultures accept the power and authority in societies and that people are not equal. Consequently, it can be noted that the majority who reported equal treatment might wanted to provide good image of themselves by practicing no bias. Significantly, Poot's small voice can be taken as worth noting and considering about the racial stereotypes and discriminations in Thailand.

#### **4.2.3.5 Westerners received some privileges in Thailand.**

As most of the Western participants noted that they had been treated well by Thai people, some privileges they had received are summarised in Chart 4.13.

Chart 4.13

#### *Privileges experienced in Thailand*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Example</b>
Better daily interaction or treatment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. People come to help me without me asking.</li> <li>2. I am invited to attend all sorts of events at which I hardly know the people throwing them.</li> <li>3. I am regularly given food and drinks when I go out.</li> </ol>
Special service	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It's because I'm a teacher here. So they give me like I can go in front of people at the canteen so I can go quickly.</li> <li>2. At the immigration, they (officers) are rather nice to me.</li> </ol>

Chart 4.13 (cont.)

*Privileges experienced in Thailand*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Example</b>
Job opportunity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I think being young and being a <i>farang</i> has helped me find work.</li> <li>2. I get paid more than Thai people for my job even though I am less qualified and do less work.</li> </ol>
Power relationship	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Not being expected to conform to all of the social norms can have its advantages.</li> <li>2. I didn't have to pay the fine when I got caught by the police.</li> </ol>

The findings of the privileges that the Western participants provided in Chart 4.13 can be summarized into four categories. Generally, they seemed to receive help and excellent hospitality in their every day's interactions with Thais. This included some special services in public such as at their workplace, department stores or some organizations that they had to deal with. Some participants described that Thais needed to make them feel comfortable by offering more than they had asked. In terms of job opportunity, they tended to be favorable compared to other groups of foreigners. Victor mentioned that the Filipinos were very well trained for English teaching. Still, Thai people preferred to study English with white Westerners whose native language might not be English. Being White in Thailand had benefits in the tendency of being hired for work and of receiving more salary than the Thai and non-Western colleagues.

Apart from the better treatment, special service and job opportunity, some participants admitted that the ignorance on Thai cultural values and Thai language could be used in order to gain benefits as being White in Thailand. When they pretended not to know Thai values and not to understand Thai language, they had shifted the power relationship. In this case, some Western participants spoke English in order to make Thais feel embarrassed and uncomfortable so that they did not have to deal with the situations. In sum, the Westerners tended to receive positive treatment from Thai people. The findings reveal that they seemed to receive better service and treatment from Thais compared to the ways Thais treated other groups of foreigners. It is believed that these careful actions and better treatment that Thai behave with Westerners are the results of the good attitudes including the positive beliefs and impressive feelings that Thais have towards Westerners.

#### 4.2.4 Sources of attitude formation

The last topic of this part is relevant to the sources of the participants' attitude formation. Five choices and an "Other" checkbox were provided in the questionnaires. The participants could choose more than one answers. The results are presented in Chart 4.14.

Chart 4.14

##### *Sources of attitude formation*

Source	<b>Thais N=60 (percentage)</b>	<b>Westerners N=30 (percentage)</b>
1. In classes, training courses	26 (43.3)	4 (13.3)
2. Own experience	56 (93.3)	30 (100.0)
3. Reading books, newspapers, literary works	37 (61.7)	11 (36.7)
4. Stories from others	27 (45.0)	12 (40.0)
5. Watching television, movies, VDO clips	31 (51.7)	8 (26.7)

As presented in Chart 4.14, the majorities of both Thai and Western questionnaire respondents formed their attitude by their own experiences. This is consistent with the study of Sirichiaranai (2006) who found out that a majority of her Thai trader participants learned about foreigners' behaviours by their own experiences. However, the rest of the results from two groups of participants are slightly different. Whereas over half of Thai participants chose reading and watching media as the sources of attitude formation, the Western participants learned to form their attitude by hearing stories from others and reading. From these findings, it is important for Thais and Westerners to interact more with each other in daily life so that they can learn more about each other. Also, publications and media are essential and accessible tools used to demonstrate ethnic differences. According to the studies of Cotter (2007) and Merskin (2010), mass media had played an important role on ethnic representations and were claimed as the most influent sources that promote discrimination and racism. Therefore, it is important for the publications and media to provide accurate information to the audience as this could affect people's attitudes.

### **4.3 Intercultural communicative competence**

In this part, the data were analysed in order to answer the third research question about the communicative competence that Thais and Westerners have or lack when interacting with each other. According to Gudykunst (1994), to be perceived as a competent communicator who can communicate appropriately and effectively, a person should have the motivation, knowledge and skills when interacting with others. At this point, the five-Likert scales on the eight statements regarding the three components of Gudykunst's (1994) communicative competence were applied in the questionnaire. The agreement scales ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The in-depth interviewees were conducted to find more insights of their communicative competence when dealing in the intercultural situations. The results of each component from the questionnaires are summarised in Chart 4.16 – 4.18. Then, several themes emerged from the in-depth interviews were discussed. To provide appropriate practices, the suggestions for Thais and Westerners in intercultural communication are demonstrated at the end. Hence, this part consists of four sections: 4.3.1 Motivation to communicate, 4.3.2 Knowledge of communicative competence, 4.3.3 Skills in communication and 4.3.4 Suggestions for Thais and Westerners in intercultural communication.

#### **4.3.1 Motivation to communicate**

Gudykunst (1994) noted that there were four needs which are the need for predictability, need to avoid diffuse anxiety, need to sustain our self-conceptions and approach-avoidance tendencies that motivate people to communicate with others. As the need for predictability and approach-avoidance tendencies tend to vary among individuals; therefore, these two needs were interpreted into the statement 1 and 2 in the questionnaire. On the other hand, the need to avoid diffuse anxiety and the need to sustain our self-conceptions were asked in the in-depth interviews. Chart 4.15 presents the results from the questionnaires regarding the motivation to communicate appropriately of both groups of participants.

Chart 4.15

*Mean and interpretation of motivations to communicate*

Motivations	Thais N=60		Westerners N=30	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
1. I am keen on predicting Thai/ Western counterparts' thoughts and behaviors.	3.40	Neutral	3.23	Disagree
2. I avoid interacting with Thai/ Western people when possible.	2.12	Neutral	1.67	Strongly disagree

As shown in Chart 4.15, the results of the communicative competence from both groups of the questionnaire respondents regarding the motivation to communicate were the quite similar. It appears that both groups seemed to have average desire to communicate appropriately and effectively with each other. To explain, both groups felt neutral to predict the counterparts' thoughts and behaviours. In fact, if the communicators have the need to predict their counterparts' behaviours, they would be eager to take part in the conversation because the high level of predictability can decrease anxiety when communicating with people from other groups (Gudykunst 1994). Thus, the findings can be interpreted that both groups of participants tended to be moderately interested in gathering information of the counterparts. This resulted in an average need to interact with each other. Although they reported neutral on the keen to predict their counterparts' thoughts and behaviours, most of them rarely avoid interacting with each other. The findings from the in-depth interviews which were slightly different can elaborate the findings from the questionnaires. Several main points of the motivation in the intercultural communication between Thais and Westerners were explained as follows.

#### **4.3.1.1 Keeness on interaction of Thais depended on the willingness to communicate of the Westerners.**

Explained in the in-depth interviews, four Thai interviewees also felt neutral to predict their interlocutors' thoughts and behaviours. Asked about the feelings when interacting with the Westerners, most of them felt indifferent. Their motivation to communicate tended to rely on the counterparts, not themselves. As Thailand is a collectivist culture where the practice of the dependence on group is valued, Thais

rarely make decisions by themselves but rather rely on others in order to show respect and maintain group harmony (Hofstede, 2001). This style of initiating interaction could mean that they have the need to gather willingness to communicate of the counterparts. They tended to care more about others' than themselves. Komolsevin, Knutson and Datthuyawat (2010) found that the soft, caring and polite traits of Thai people were from the social harmony value which affected the communication. In their study, Thais concerned about the message receivers or their interlocutors, unlike the Americans who emphasized on the message senders or themselves (ibid.). This could explain the findings of the Thais' neutral and indifferent feelings when interacting with Westerners as they seemed not to judge their own motivating level in communication, but rather focused on their counterparts' motivation instead.

#### **4.3.1.2 Language skills were considered the most important motivation in intercultural communication.**

Different from the majority, Den admitted that he felt quite afraid when he had to interact with the Westerners. He explained that he could not predict what issues that the counterpart would talk about and that he was concerned whether he had enough vocabulary to follow the talk. This strengthens Gudykunst's (1994) motivation component on the need for predictability and need to avoid diffuse anxiety since the low ability to predict the interaction will result in less motivation to communicate while the more anxiety results in the higher tendency to avoid communication. As illustrated, the less English skills Thai people have, the more tendencies they seem to avoid the communication. Lacking of English capacities has been one of the main problems that cause communication conflicts among Thais and Westerners (Howard 2009, Sriussadaporn 2006, Winnuwat 2011). According to Sriussadaporn (2006), the English deficiency resulted in the unwillingness to communicate. In this study, Linda who had less motivation to communicate with the Thais whose English skills were poor described:

If I know that people don't speak English, I will try to avoid going to that place because it will take a lot of energy and time for me to explain and get something. That's why I prefer to go to the places that people are good with English. Or I will try to go at the time when the particular person who speaks English will work.

As quoted, Linda avoided anxiety and possibly frustration communicating with Thais by not visiting a place where Thai people did not speak English. However, the difference between the Thai and Western participants' views on language barrier was that Thai people tended to blame themselves as not having enough ability to communicate in English whereas the Westerners seemed to expect Thais to speak English, instead of themselves to learn Thai. Again, these differences support the study of Komolsevin, Knutson and Datthuyawat (2010) on the converse concerns of Thais on the message receivers and of the Americans on the message senders in communication. Yet, not all Westerners expect Thais to speak English. Most of the Western interviewees who had lived in Thailand for long time understood that most of Thai people had limited opportunity in education. This realization tends to increase the motivation to interact with Thai people despite the language barrier.

Particularly, Paul who studied Thai culture and language for three years and spoke Thai fluently revealed that he was keen and excited to learn about Thai culture. He pointed out that being able to speak Thai was essential because this motivated him to engage in interaction with the Thais. Indeed, the attempt to use local language indicates the interest of foreigners in local culture and language (Gudykunst 1994). The interest of Westerners in Thai language and culture could positively motivate Thais to interact with them in return. Therefore, the Westerners in Thailand should study Thai, instead of expecting Thais to speak English. Besides, Gudykunst (1994) suggested that to be mindful in the intercultural communication would remind communicators of the differences of the two groups. When communicators were aware of this, they tended to be patient to gather more information. Accordingly, this would increase the need for predictability and decrease the need to avoid interaction.

#### **4.3.1.3 Ability to use and interpret the non-verbal communication motivated Thais and Westerners to interact with each other.**

Four Western interviewees who felt fine to communicate with Thais were aware of the language barrier of themselves and Thais. With this in mind, the Western interviewees were keen to predict the counterparts' thoughts and behaviours. Furthermore, most of the Western interviewees noted that the body language was important and that they had developed this skill in order to maintain and increase their motivation to interact with Thai people. Joe said:

When I buy things at the markets, it's all body language, sign language, facial expression what I want and they understand. We have a laugh. I go away happy. And we go away. They're happy too.

This can be assumed that Thai people and Westerners who are aware of the language challenge but have some particular characteristics such as open-minded and confident still have the desire to communicate. The people who tend to develop the skills of interpreting and relating information to their own knowledge as well as discovering the new ways of communication and using it in the interaction can become competent in intercultural communication (Byram 1997). In addition, the body language and the willing to perform and to interpret the interaction are the keys to be the successful communicators despite the limited language skills. The need to carry the messages by non-verbal communication and the need to predict and interpret the counterparts' thoughts and behaviours can increase the motivation to encounter the intercultural situations. Sriussadaporn (2006) suggested that practicing nonverbal reading was necessary for Westerners to communicate with Thais.

#### **4.3.2 Knowledge of intercultural communicative competence**

To avoid misunderstandings, the cultural and linguistic knowledge are the key factors that could help communicators interpret the conversations accurately (Gudykunst 1994). Gudykunst (1994) proposed four types of knowledge or awareness and understanding of what needed to be done in order to communicate appropriately and effectively. This second component of communicative competence includes the knowledge of how to gather information, knowledge of group differences, knowledge of personal similarities and knowledge of alternative interpretations. While the knowledge of group differences and the knowledge of alternative interpretations were measured in the questionnaires, the knowledge of how to gather information and knowledge of personal similarities were investigated in the in-depth interviews. The results from the questionnaires are demonstrated in Chart 4.16.

Chart 4.16

*Mean and interpretation of knowledge of intercultural communicative competence*

Knowledge	Thais N=60		Westerners N=30	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
3. I am aware of the actual differences that exist between my group and Thai group.	3.87	Agree	3.83	Agree
4. I am aware of the alternative interpretations that Thai/ Western counterparts might have.	3.52	Agree	3.90	Agree

Chart 4.16 shows that both Thai and Western questionnaire respondents seemed to have good knowledge of the different backgrounds of their interlocutors and of the possible alternative interpretations when interacting with each other. To discuss this part, the findings are categorized into four themes as follows.

#### **4.3.2.1 The knowledge of group differences and how to react towards differences were important.**

Both participants from both research instruments agreed that they were aware of the group differences between Thais and Westerners. According to Hofstede (2001), Thailand is collectivist, high power distance, high uncertainty avoidance and feminist cultures whereas most of the Western countries have the opposite cultural dimensions to Thailand. At this point, many studies discover that the problems and misunderstandings in communication between Thais and foreigners mostly cause by the different values, norms and practices (Chaidaroon 2003, Komolsevin, Knutson & Datthuyawat 2010, Sriussadaporn 2006, Winnuwat 2011).

Significantly, Jason who was aware that he was different from Thai people pointed out how different Thais and Westerners react to the group differences as follows:

Sometimes, I'm strange to them. It depends on what area of Thailand I'm in. A lot of people stare at you. It's like they've never seen a foreigner before. Even now when I shop in a supermarket, the kids will be like "Hey yeah *farang!*" I feel like I'm an alien from another planet. It's just different from Australia, we would never look at you and say "oh Asian" like that. It's weird for me.

This reveals that the physical appearance is an obvious sign of the group differences. The ways that people reacted to those differences and dealt with the intercultural encounter were also different. While Thai people seemed to be excited to meet the Westerners and pointed that out in their presence, the Australians would react differently. Although this situation made Jason felt “strange” and “like an alien”, when asked if he was annoyed, he said no. The knowledge of cultural diversity and the cultural values tend to play an important role on how people see the world and how they deal with it. On one hand, the way Thais pointing out the differences explicitly could be rude and threaten the Westerners in the Westerners’ view. On the other hands, such way could represent the admirable action that Thais have towards Westerners. Therefore, if both groups have learned to act and to interpret the actions from other person’s perspective, Thais would perform the appropriate actions while the Westerners would have clear understandings in this situation. In essence, Gudykunst’s (1994) suggested that to have an effective communication, the communicators needed to recognize these dimensions of cultural differences.

**4.3.2.2 Despite different cultural values, the straightforward way of communication was preferable.**

Both groups of Thai and Western participants agreed that they had the awareness of an alternative interpretation. They further admitted that the misunderstandings in the intercultural communication caused by the different interpretations of their interlocutors. The cultural dimension of power distance plays an important on this. To clarify, Thais as the members of the high power distance culture tend to be humble and indirect when interacting with others whereas the Westerners who are from the low power distance culture seem to be less formal and more direct (Hofstede 2001). The direct and indirect ways of speaking could cause frustrations when both groups deal with each other. However, both groups of participants suggested that when they had to be involved in the intercultural situations, they would use the straightforward way. Also, in order to make the conversations clear, they would ask for clarification if needed. In fact, being straightforward and asking if in doubts are recommended in intercultural management for Thai people in the international organizations (Sriussadaporn 2006, Winnuwat 2011).

#### **4.3.2.3 To gather information of the interlocutors, the passive and interactive strategies were applied.**

Three approaches to gather information of the counterparts are the passive, active and interactive strategies (Berger 1979 in Gudykunst 1994). In this study, most of the participants applied the passive way as they observed the counterparts' manners and the styles of talking. Then, they decided how to continue the interaction. Besides, they gathered deeper information of their interlocutors by asking questions directly. This interactive strategy is considered an excellent way to gather information of others (Gudykunst 1994). Generally, the participants explained that they rarely found out about the persons by asking someone else who knew them or by the active strategy. Some participants noted that they were also aware of how their interlocutors gathered information of them. As a result, they tended to be careful of their manners and ways of interaction.

#### **4.3.2.4 Finding and sharing similarities could foster the communication.**

Important to realize, both groups of participants revealed that knowing only differences between groups was not enough. They both also needed to find and learn about the shared similarities. This affected the ways they gathered information of their interlocutors by observing and noticing the ways they acted and talked. So, they could learn more about their interlocutors' personalities. Joe noted that he found Thai people were easy to get along with and easy to laugh which were similar to his personalities or to be happy and not angry. Then, he shared these similarities in the intercultural communication with Thais and it resulted in positive interactions. Obviously, the similar characteristics they have, the better chances they would have the effective communications. Moreover, Gudykunst (1994) noted that individual similarities were crucial for relationship development.

#### **4.3.3 Skills in communication**

Lastly, it is noted that the communicators have to reduce uncertainty and anxiety so that they have abilities to engage in the behaviours necessary to communicate appropriately and effectively (Gudykunst 1994). Six skills which are the ability to be mindful, ability to tolerate ambiguity, ability to manage anxiety, ability to empathize, ability to adapt and ability to make accurate predictions and explanations

are introduced by Gudykunst's (1994). In the questionnaires, the statement 5 to 8 were designed to measure this third component of Gudykunst's (1994) communicative competence, namely the ability to be mindful, ability to tolerate ambiguity, ability to empathize and ability to adapt. The results from this part are summarized in Chart 4.17. As the ability to manage anxiety and ability to make accurate predictions and explanations require the participants with a lot of experiences dealing in the intercultural communication to provide such insights, these two abilities were included in the in-depth interviews.

Chart 4.17

*Mean and interpretation of skills to communicate*

<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Thais N=60</b>		<b>Westerners N=30</b>	
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
5. I am concerned about the outcomes of my encounters.	3.27	Neutral	3.47	Agree
6. I am frustrated when things do not go the way I expect.	2.67	Neutral	2.97	Neutral
7. I am able to tell what Thai/ Western counterparts feel during the interaction without being told.	3.30	Neutral	3.07	Neutral
8. For Thais, I insist that Westerners should communicate with me on my terms for example not being too straightforward. For Westerners, I insist that Thai people should communicate with me on my terms for example being straightforward.	3.05	Neutral	2.63	Neutral

Overall, the results shown in Chart 4.17 demonstrate that both groups of the questionnaire respondents were likely to have average skills on communication since they mostly felt neutral with the four statements. Only one agreement on the concerns of the outcome was highlighted by the Western respondents. However, the findings from the interviews contrast with the results of the questionnaires because most of the interviewees tended to have quite efficient skills to deal with the intercultural situations. The different results found between the groups of the questionnaire

respondents and the interviewees are probably associated with the frequencies and experiences of interacting with Thais for the Westerners and with the Westerners for Thais. In fact, most of the interviewees had encountered the intercultural situations more often than the questionnaire respondents. Thus, the interviewees tended to be competence in the intercultural communication. Five main themes are presented as follows.

#### **4.3.3.1 More frequency in intercultural interaction resulted in the fine communicative skills.**

Most of the Thai interviewees reported that they mostly had quite effective communication with the Westerners. They explained that the serious conflicts rarely occurred; instead, the misunderstandings happened sometimes due to the language barrier. But when they did not understand, they would ask the Western interlocutors to explain and repeat the conversation again. They would not make the assumptions of the situation. In this case, they seemed to have ability to be mindful, ability tolerate ambiguity and ability to make accurate predictions and explanations. Significantly, the confident ability to ask when in doubts is suggested for Thai people to develop the communication skill, especially in the intercultural situations which various interpretations can be made (Sriussadaporn 2006, Winnuwat 2011).

Furthermore, three Thai interviewees seemed to have ability to manage anxiety and ability to emphasize when dealing with the Westerners. They described that if the conflicts arose, they would be more careful to determine the situations. Tuk and Nang suggested that they needed to think of the effects of the communication and the feelings of their Western counterparts. If the communication led to the negative consequences, they would say sorry if it was their faults. Then, they would try to explain to ameliorate the situation. According to Prather (1986), staying calm was the most important strategy to manage anxiety (in Gudykunst 1994). In this case, the Thai participants possibly gained the calmness from practicing to be empathetic or to understand their Western interlocutors' feelings. Empathy is a useful ability that the communicators should master in order to be competent in the intercultural situations with high anxiety.

#### **4.3.3.2 Westerners found difficulties interpreting Thai people's indirect messages.**

The Western interviewees seemed to have refined skills in the intercultural communication with Thai people. Most of them reported that their communications with Thais were generally not problematic. Although the language barrier might cause difficulty sometimes, the overall interactions that they had experienced with Thais were quite warm. However, they pointed out that the indirect way of speaking among Thai people led to misunderstandings. Victor added that the obstacle that caused frustration when he interacted with Thais was that the Thais did not say what had to be said. In his view, he always felt like there was a hidden agenda as Thais tended not to tell him everything. Consistent with the studies of Sriussadaporn (2006) and Winnuwat (2011) on the problems in the international organizations, the practice of hiding feelings and lack of openness in communication of Thai people were the major problems claimed by foreigners. The foreigners found it difficult to build mutual trust as long as Thai people did not speak directly (ibid.).

Since Thai culture is high power distance, Thai people accept the power and authority in societies resulting in the humble and indirect way of interaction (Hofstede 2001). Unlike most of the Western countries where the power distance is low. Therefore, the Westerners are less formal and more direct in interaction (ibid.). Indeed, both Thais and Westerners need to be aware of these differences. However, to overcome this obstacle, the Western interviewees used the same strategy as Thai participants as explained earlier. They would also ask for clarifications and repeat if their understandings were mutual. They added that to be patient was the key to manage this problem since being mad or getting angry would upset Thai people and worsen the situation.

Obviously, this shows that the Western interviewees were likely to have all skills of Gudykunst's (1994) communicative competence including the ability to be mindful, ability to tolerate ambiguity, ability to manage anxiety, ability to empathize, ability to adapt and ability to make accurate predictions and explanations. This finding can also be interpreted that the Western interviewees seemed to have higher skills than Thai participants in intercultural communication as the Westerners were actually the ones who lived in another cultures whereas Thais lived in their own.

Boonsathorn (2007) explained that time spending in other cultures were related to the performance in conflict management. Simply said, people who have experiences living in other cultures tend to be flexible and have higher skills in conflict management in the intercultural situations.

#### **4.3.3.3 Thai people lacked of skill to manage ambiguity.**

Apart from the problem about the indirect way of speaking, Linda noticed that Thai people did not ask for clarification if they did not understand. Instead, Thais tended to guess the message and continued doing things wrong. Linda added that Thais seemed to be afraid of losing their face if they showed that they did not understand. This usually happened at the shops when she asked for something and received another. To deal with that situation, she explained that she would have complained if this happened in Russia where the complaint books were available in every shop. But when she realized that she had to come back to the shop again, she gradually learned to be patient and ask the Thais to repeat her order. This is also one of the problems in Sriussadaporn's (2006) study which revealed that most Thais followed the orders with an unclear understanding. Thais rather made guesses and foreigners did not get what they wanted (ibid.). Look into the Thai way, Chaidaroon (2003) argued that being shy and not speaking up were the ways that Thais maintained social harmony and showed respect. This underlying value should be promoted to both Thais and Westerners in order to build mutual understanding and to avoid such conflict in the intercultural communication. The skills to make accurate predictions and explanations are highly recommended to prevent the conflict.

#### **4.3.3.4 Thai people lacked of confidence and critical thinking in communication.**

Most of the Western interviewees noted that Thai people were quite slow in communication and lacked of critical thinking. Again, this is consistent with the study of Sriussadaporn (2006) who found that the inability to think productively, analytically and systematically was one of the major international business communication problems in Thailand. To explain, this is related to the culturally shared values of Thai people in the dimensions of collectivistic, high power distance and feminine cultures (Hofstede, 2001). Thais are taught to foster harmony in society and not to criticize others. Chaidaroon (2003) argued that the ways Thais did not

respond quickly was not considered incompetence in communication. Instead, it was a way Thais maintained social harmony, gained recognition and showed respect to others. Likewise, Komolsevin, Knutson and Datthuyawat (2010) described that the practice of social harmony value of Thai people influenced the way Thais communicate since they concerned more about their interlocutors. This resulted in the slowness and, most of the time, silence in communication because Thais needed to wait to gather information until they had sufficient facts to encode the message appropriately and reply to their respective message receivers (ibid.).

#### **4.3.3.5 The value of face was important to Thais.**

All of the Western interviewees were concerned about the value of face when engaging in the intercultural communication with Thai people. When asked what to be aware of when communicate with Thais, they said:

(I'm aware of) Losing face. You don't want to put Thai people down. Be careful not to embarrassing them, specially the men. In Australia, that's not really a case. I think we treat people equally. - Jason

Thai people care about the social face. I think most Westerners don't know about that because we don't have that. That's why we speak very directly. It's easy for us. But for Thai people, it's very uncommon. - Paul

This is related to Hofsted's (2001) cultural dimension of masculinity and femininity. Thailand is considered feminine culture where people are emotional and sensitive so that they seek harmony and avoid confrontation and criticism. Losing someone's face is what Thais rarely do as it would threaten this value that is generally practiced in Thailand. Conversely, most of the Western countries are masculine culture where people are ambitious, strong, competitive and confident. They are more direct and do not afraid of confrontation and criticism. Therefore, the Westerners rarely concern about other people's faces. In this case, the Western participants noticed this different cultural dimension and used this knowledge to apply in the intercultural interaction with Thai people. They tended to have the ability to be mindful, ability to empathize and ability to adapt.

#### **4.3.4 Suggestions for Thais and Westerners in intercultural situations**

Both Thai and Western interviewees shared some suggestions for the effective communication in the intercultural contexts as follows.

#### 4.3.4.1 Suggestions for both Thais and Westerners

The most vital factor to improve the communication between Thais and Westerners is to learn the languages and cultures of each other. Thais need to learn to speak English while the Westerners are advised to learn the basic phrases in Thai. Being able to communicate in local language shows eagerness and interest in learning about cultures that foreigners live in (Gudykunst 1994). This could positively impress the local people and motivate them to engage in the interaction despite the limited language ability of both groups. The practice of using and interpreting the body language is also important in intercultural communication in case the communicators do not speak each other's languages fluently. Importantly, Thailand and most of the Western countries are different in all aspects of Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions. Learning about other cultures could not only widen the worldviews, but could also help people understand more about themselves. The different cultural values and practices are the main causes of misunderstandings in the intercultural communication. Hence, Thais need to learn more about the Western cultures and its people whereas the Westerners should observe more about Thai ways of life and Thai people so that both groups have some ideas of how their interlocutors are brought up and what their values are. Having this knowledge can reduce the tendency to avoid the encounter in the intercultural situations.

Both groups further provided similar key personalities that can lead to satisfying interaction between Thais and Westerners such as open-minded, flexible and mindful. Besides, the intercultural communicators need to be aware of the differences between groups. Even in individual level, two people are not exactly the same. However, the group similarities are also necessary. This could not only reduce the anxiety in communication, but could also facilitate the better interaction. According to Byram (1997), people with the attitudes of curiosity and openness are considered competent in intercultural communication as they are able to interpret the interaction from the viewpoints of others. Also, to be mindful is the key communicative competence that Gudykunst (1994) highlighted because when the communicators were mindful, they would show more respect to others. Respect was a quality that was highly needed in human relations as it could develop the skills to behave appropriately in the interaction.

#### **4.3.4.2 Specific suggestions for Thais**

Specifically for Thai people, if they are more confident and independent, they could be the masterful communicators in the intercultural situation. Simply, Thais need to overcome shyness and non-confrontation. They should not be afraid to ask for clarifications when in doubts and to interact more with the Westerners because this can increase their confidence in the intercultural communication. Thus, Thais need to practice critical thinking, to learn to share ideas openly and to speak directly so that the Western counterparts could receive the true messages that Thais would like to carry. Also, Thais need to be aware that the Westerners are from low distance cultures which make them less formal and more direct unlike Thai people who are from high distance culture where people are humble and indirect (Hofstede 2001). This is why the Westerners tend to have low ability to interpret the indirect messages of Thai people. The indirect way of communication is a major problem of Thais and Westerners in the intercultural situation as it affects the willingness to communicate (Komolsevin, Knutson & Datthuyawat 2010, Sriussadaporn 2006, Winnuwat 2011).

#### **4.3.4.3 Specific suggestions for Westerners**

On the other hand, the Westerners should be patient and should not be too straightforward when communicating with Thai people. They should be aware that Thais highly value social harmony and that social face is critical. It is essential that the Westerners can overcome ethnocentrism. To do so, Sriussadaporn (2006) suggested that the foreigners should discard their own beliefs and should be open to learn about the Thai ways and people. Moreover, the Westerners should not judge the communicative competence of Thais. Indeed, Chaidaroon (2003) claimed that the communicative competence between Thais and Westerners are different due to the different cultural dimensions. The interpretive approach in each situation should be applied to find the underlying assumptions of intercultural communication between Thai and Western communicators (ibid.). Most importantly, the Westerners should accept the way Thais are and not to change Thais, but change their own attitudes towards the ways they perceive Thais instead. This is necessarily beneficial in the intercultural communication in Thailand.

#### 4.4 Summary

This chapter has presented the results and discussions of the term *farang*, the attitudes towards Westerners and the intercultural communicative competence of Thais and Westerners in Khon Kaen, Thailand. Firstly, the main findings on the term *farang* revealed that the Thai and Western participants had different perspectives on the term *farang*. While Thais were used to use the term *farang* to refer to Caucasian foreigners in general, the Westerners found a sense of separation when hearing the term. Besides, the term was claimed offensive when it was used in the presence of the Western referents. As a result, the term *farang* should be avoided in the intercultural contexts.

Secondly, the overall findings of the attitudes towards Westerners demonstrated that both groups of participants had good attitudes towards Westerners as most of them reported positively in all aspects of attitudes components including the beliefs, feelings and behaviours. Significantly, the findings from the interviews demonstrated that the Westerners tended to be treated better than other groups of foreigners in Thailand. Some privileges in daily life and work places that the Westerners had been received were the results of the positive beliefs and feelings that Thais had towards Westerners.

Thirdly, both groups of participants tended to have good knowledge for communicative competence, but average motivations to initiate interactions and poor skills in the intercultural communication. The major obstacles were the language barrier and the misunderstandings because of the different cultural dimensions. Some suggestions were emphasized in order to provide Thais and Westerners the appropriate strategies to interact with each other effectively and successfully. In the next chapter, the conclusion of the study will be presented. Some implications found from the findings will be described. Then, the limitations of the study and suggestions for further research will be presented at the end of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

The aim of this research is to provide the implications of the term *farang*, the insightful attitudes towards Westerners that both Thais and Westerners have and their intercultural communicative competence. The conclusion of the study is presented in this chapter beginning with the summary of the study. Then, the implications of the findings are discussed to show some practices which can promote the awareness on the term *farang*, the group differences and to enhance the intercultural communicative competence of the target groups. After that, the limitations of the study and the suggestions for further study are addressed. Lastly, the final conclusion of this study is summarised.

#### 5.1 Summary of the study

This study aimed to investigate the implications of the term *farang* used to refer to the Westerners, the attitudes of Thais and Westerners towards Westerners and the competence in intercultural communication between Thais and Westerners when interacting with each other. Three research questions were formulated as follows:

1. What are the implications of the term *farang* in the views of both Thais and Westerners?
2. What are the attitudes of Thais and Westerners towards the Westerners?
3. What kind of intercultural communicative competence do Thais and Westerners have or lack when interacting with each other?

With an attempt to provide insights of the phenomenon through the target groups' perspectives and experiences, two research instruments consisting of the questionnaires and the in-depth interviews were used to collect the qualitative data from October to December 2015. 90 participants (60 Thais and 30 Westerners) were asked to complete the questionnaires. The number of Thai participants was twice the size of the Western participants because the proportion of Thais in the Khon Kaen, a research site in the northeastern part of Thailand, was higher than that of Westerners. The Thai participants were from the homogenous sampling strategy; however, the

Western ones, expatriate residents living in Khon Kaen and knowing the term *farang*, were from the criterion sampling strategy. Five questionnaire respondents from each group of participants were then invited for semi-structured in-depth interviews. The results from the questionnaires were presented in the forms of frequency, mean, and percentage while the narrative data from the in-depth interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and categorized into themes according to the research questions

The results demonstrate that the Thai and Western participants had different perceptions of the term *farang*. While both groups of participants seemed to agree on the views of a general definition, characteristics, and beliefs attached to the term *farang*, the Western participants tended to express that the term *farang* conveyed negative meanings because it showed a sense of separation reminding the Westerners as the outsiders with unwelcomed or unaccepted feelings. Moreover, when the term *farang* was used as an adjective, it tended to include anything from the West regardless of its exact origin. This created confusion and frustration to the Westerners. The term *farang* was also considered offensive when used in the presence of the Western referents. The Western participants suggested that they should be referred to by their names or nationalities instead of the term *farang*. Therefore, the term *farang* should be avoided in intercultural contexts.

Although the term *farang* might possibly lead to intercultural communicative problems, and it was suggested to be excluded from intercultural communication, the results showed that a majority of Thai and Western participants tended to have positive attitudes (beliefs, feelings, and behaviours) towards Westerners. Basically, both Thai and Western participants seemed to be well-aware of good relations between Thailand Western countries. They also tended to believe that the increasing number of Westerners in the northeast of Thailand would provide some benefits to the local community. As a consequence, Thais tended to admire and respect Westerners by giving privileges, such as special services and job opportunities. However, some of the participants indicated negative attitudes towards Westerners. Some of the Thai participants reported several disadvantages as a result of the increasing number of Westerners in Thailand, such as an impact on Thai culture due to the Western influence. Apart from cultural deterioration, some of the Thai participants indicated fear of and inferiority to Westerners. On the other hand, some of the Western

participants pointed out some negative attitudes, such as the difficulties in adaptation, feelings of inequality and security due to the prohibition of purchasing housing, and poor treatment because of the language barrier and the rich stereotype towards Westerners. The primary source of the participants' attitude formation was from their own experiences.

The results also reveal that the majority of both groups tended to have an average motivation to communicate, good knowledge of intercultural communicative competence but poor skills in communication. The main motivational factors were the language ability and the ability to use and interpret the body languages. In terms of knowledge of intercultural communication, both groups were aware of the group differences. Still, the Thais tended to lack of knowledge on how to react towards group differences. The knowledge of sharing similarities and the awareness of the value of face also fostered the communication. Nonetheless, both groups still had difficulties in interaction because of the different cultural values which affected the unlike skills in communication.

## **5.2 Implications of the findings**

The findings indicate that the term *farang* might cause offense to Westerners because of a sense of separation creating annoyance and unwelcoming feelings. The study also reveals that despite the positive attitudes towards Westerners, several negative attitudes were expressed because of the insufficient ability to communicate the languages, misconceptions towards Westerners, lack of skills to analyse the situations from other persons' viewpoints, and different cultural practices of both groups of participants. Most importantly, the findings show that both Thais and Westerners have poor skills in intercultural communication due to different cultural values. As a consequence, several implications are presented below to promote mutual understanding of power of language, cultural sensitivity, different cultural dimensions and the ability to be a competent communicator in intercultural contexts.

To educate Thais to be aware of their use of the term *farang*, the curriculums provided by educational institutes should include the topic of language power. It may focus on significant features of language which could be used to foster or destroy relationships in intercultural communication. The pedagogical method could rely on

in-class discussions about the undesirable terms which could be used to refer to students to create negative feelings as examples of language power. Then teachers might compare those terms with the term *farang* and introduce to students that this term could be seen an offensive remark; besides, teachers should suggest students to refer to Westerners by their names or nationalities rather than the term *farang*. Importantly, teachers need to point out the different degrees of sensitivity between speakers and hearers so that students could clearly understand from both viewpoints. The same method could also be applied with the guide books and training courses for Thai professionals in international organizations. Trainers, for example, might include the awareness of the term *farang* in the do's and don'ts guidelines.

To change the negative attitudes which Thais have towards Westerners and to eliminate the negative beliefs about difficulty in assimilation of Westerners, both Thais and Westerners should be introduced to knowledge of cultural differences. Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions should be included in educational curriculums and guidebooks at international workplaces. Instructors could manage an effective classroom by showing movies or video clips about different cultural practices and values of Thais and Westerners and let learners discuss the differences they have noticed. Using such materials could not only allow learners to analyse the differences based on what they have seen but also establish international networks and foster their relationships. Additionally, some information boards or brochures about cultural differences and sensitivity should be provided at educational institutes and international organizations.

To improve the ability of Thais and Westerners in intercultural communication, language proficiency should receive critical attention. English teachers should encourage students to increase exposure to the English language and communicate in English in their daily lives. International organizations should arrange language sessions or training courses for both Thai and foreign employees to learn English and Thai. Furthermore, by introducing Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence, learners could find keys to effective communication. Instructors also need to encourage learners to develop a sense of curiosity, openness, readiness, and willingness to communicate with foreigners. The workshops which include both Thai and Western learners could provide diverse views

in intercultural communicative competence. The comments exchanged during a discussion could enhance an analytical thinking, and later, learners could develop necessary skills to interpret intercultural messages and compare with their own culture to discover new knowledge and use it for intercultural communication with foreigners.

### **5.3 Limitations of the study**

Although the findings provide the significant implications of the term *farang*, insights of attitudes towards Westerners and understandings in intercultural communicative competence in intercultural situations between Thais and Westerners, there are several limitations in this study. Firstly, the size of the sampling and the research site were quite small. Accordingly, the data of the study cannot generalize the attitudes of all Thais and Westerners in Khon Kaen and other parts of the country.

The second limitation is related to the gender of the Western participants. There were 20% female Western questionnaire respondents and only one female Western interviewee participated in this study. As a result, the analysis of the attitudes towards *farang* in this study was mainly from male Westerners. Male and female might have different views on this issue. For further study, the number of male and female participants should be equal, which might reveal new and different findings.

The third limitation is concerned with the research instruments. Although the questionnaires and in-depth interviews were incorporated into this present study, the participants might not provide what they really thought because they would like to maintain their good images as competent communicators. In other words, what they completed in the questionnaires and what they shared in the interviews might not be the honest views towards the issue and might not reflect overall intercultural communicative problems. Therefore, the observation method should have strengthened the results of the study since the researcher can notice the real interactions and actions of the target groups who seem not to be aware of the observation and thus generate the interactions naturally.

#### 5.4 Suggestions for further research

The results from this study on “Attitudes of Thais and Westerners in Khon Kaen towards *farang*: an intercultural communication analysis” provide some suggestions for further investigation. The first recommendation is concerned with the issue of the term *farang*. As the findings indicate that the term *farang* is offensive when used in the presence of the Westerners, especially in the communication between strangers. Future research should be conducted in the specific intercultural areas where the term *farang* is used frequently in the context where strangers usually communicate, such as at the markets and at the tourist attractions, focusing on sellers and public drivers. As their purpose of communication is to sell products or provide services, they may want to create a friendly environment and provide a sense of acceptance to the Westerners with the term *farang*, and it would be interesting to see if Westerners feel the same.

Secondly, it is worth investigating the difficulties that Westerners have experienced in order to prevent such causes and to create the welcoming atmosphere to the Western newcomers to Thailand. Hence, future studies should look into the effects caused by the negative beliefs or inaccurate overgeneralizations and stereotypes. For example, Westerners are wealthy and Westerners do not understand the Thai language and culture and do not assimilate into Thai society. In addition, to examine the notion of Whiteness and racism in Thailand, the white privileges and the discrimination that the Westerners have experienced should also be studied either to compare or contrast the situations of the Westerners in Thailand from the past until the current period of the research.

Lastly, in order to improve the accuracy of data collection on communication problems and intercultural communicative competence of Thais and Westerners, , future research should be carried out with a close observation as another research instrument. The researcher may observe the interactions between Thais and Westerners in the service places where various foreigners frequently visit, such as the restaurants or international fairs. With this technique, the interpretations and discussions on the issue could be compared and analysed from the actual interactions in real-life settings which could provide more accurate intercultural communication conflicts and the intercultural communicative incompetence of the target groups.

## 5.5 Final conclusion

“We do not see things as they are; we see things as we are.” – Talmad

As quoted, it can be assumed that the misunderstandings, offense and problems occur in the multicultural society because people perceive the world differently due to their own customs. This study further expands the understanding of such dilemmas between Thais and Westerners towards the term *farang* and Westerners. It lends new support for the theory of language, cultures and intercultural communication Thais and Westerners in Thailand’s context. Since words are powerful and categorizations are normal, people use their language within their native community naturally, effortlessly and unconsciously (Orbe and Harris 2008). Still, in intercultural communication, the knowledge of language awareness, especially the power of labeling should be emphasized in order to help Thais use language appropriately and to create a welcoming environment for the non-Thais in Thailand.

The barriers in intercultural communication between Thais and Westerners found in this study are language ability, misbeliefs and different cultural values in communication. While language ability is related to the motivation in initiating the interaction, the misconceptions towards Westerners and the insufficient knowledge on cultural values can lead to failure in communication. Thus, both Thais and Westerners should improve their language ability. Whereas Thais should eliminate the stereotypes towards Westerners in order to be ready to build and enhance the relationship with a Western individual, Westerners should remove the misbelief of their ability to assimilate into Thai society.

In the final analysis, the understanding of the interrelationship of language, cultures and communication are important in intercultural communication. In the context of intercultural interaction between Thais and Westerners, cultural values and practices of both parties are different (Hofstede 2001). If both groups are not aware of the other groups’ cultures and values, the misunderstandings, conflicts or offense can easily arise. This could later result in an unfriendly environment. Apart from the knowledge of cultural dimensions and cultural sensitivity and awareness, the intercultural communicators should be aware that people might have different self-concepts on personal and social identities due to various races; however, we all share human identities since we are all people of the world (Gudykunst 1994). Therefore,

we need to be treated gently and equally in the multicultural society. Finally, it is hoped that this research has added significance in the field of intercultural communication between Thais and Westerners in Thailand's context and that it has discovered interesting points and provided useful suggestions for both parties to understand each other more so that they could contribute an effective interaction.



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**APPENDICES**



2.2 ท่านใช้คำว่า “ฝรั่ง” ในลักษณะต่อไปนี้บ่อยครั้งแค่ไหน โปรดใส่เครื่องหมาย ✓ ในช่องที่ท่านเลือก

ข้อ	ข้อความ	1 ไม่เคย	2 น้อยครั้ง	3 บางครั้ง	4 บ่อยครั้ง	5 บ่อยมาก
1.	ใช้ในภาษาพูด					
2.	ใช้ในภาษาเขียน					
3.	ใช้ต่อหน้าผู้ที่กล่าวถึงโดยตรงแทนสรรพนาม คุณหรือเธอ (กรณีที่ไม่รู้จักกัน)					
4.	ใช้ต่อหน้าผู้ที่กล่าวถึงโดยตรงแทนชื่อบุคคลนั้น (กรณีที่อยู่จักกัน)					
5.	ใช้กล่าวถึงในกรณีบุคคลที่ 3 กล่าวโดยรวม ไม่ได้เจาะจง					
6.	ใช้กล่าวถึงในกรณีบุคคลที่ 3 และผู้ที่กล่าวถึงอยู่ร่วมในวงสนทนาหรืออยู่ในบริเวณการสนทนานั้น					

2.3 จากข้อ 2.2 ท่านคิดว่าการใช้คำว่า “ฝรั่ง” ในข้อใดถือว่าไม่เหมาะสม (เลือกได้มากกว่า 1 ข้อ) เพราะเหตุใด โปรดอธิบายและ/หรือยกตัวอย่างประกอบ

[ ] 1. ใช้ในภาษาพูด

[ ] 2. ใช้ในภาษาเขียน

[ ] 3. ใช้ต่อหน้าผู้ที่กล่าวถึงโดยตรงแทนสรรพนามคุณหรือเธอ (กรณีที่ไม่รู้จักกัน)

[ ] 4. ใช้ต่อหน้าผู้ที่กล่าวถึงโดยตรงแทนชื่อบุคคลนั้น (กรณีที่อยู่จักกัน)

[ ] 5. ใช้กล่าวถึงในกรณีบุคคลที่ 3 กล่าวโดยรวม ไม่ได้เจาะจง

[ ] 6. ใช้กล่าวถึงในกรณีบุคคลที่ 3 และผู้ที่กล่าวถึงอยู่ร่วมในวงสนทนาหรือในบริเวณนั้น

เหตุผล.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

2.4 ท่านคิดว่าคำว่า “ฝรั่ง” เป็นคำสุภาพหรือไม่ เพราะเหตุใด โปรดอธิบายและ/หรือยกตัวอย่างประกอบ

[ ] เป็น เพราะ.....

[ ] ไม่เป็น เพราะ.....

[ ] เป็นบางครั้ง เพราะ.....

2.5 หากท่านใช้คำว่า “ฝรั่ง” ต่อหน้าชาวตะวันตกหรือในบริเวณที่มีชาวตะวันตกอยู่ ท่านคิดว่าคำว่า “ฝรั่ง” อาจก่อให้เกิดความไม่พอใจแก่ชาวตะวันตกได้หรือไม่ เพราะเหตุใด

[ ] ได้ เพราะ.....

[ ] ไม่ได้ เพราะ.....

[ ] ไม่แน่ใจ เพราะ.....

2.6 หากชาวตะวันตกไม่พอใจที่ถูกเรียกว่า “ฝรั่ง” ท่านจะเลิกใช้คำว่า “ฝรั่ง” หรือไม่ เพราะเหตุใด

[ ] เลิกใช้ เพราะ.....

[ ] ไม่เลิกใช้ เพราะ.....

[ ] อาจจะเลิกใช้ เพราะ.....

### ส่วนที่ 3 ทศนคติต่อชาวตะวันตก

3.1 ท่านเห็นด้วยกับข้อความต่อไปนี้มากน้อยเพียงใด โปรดใส่เครื่องหมาย ✓ ในช่องที่ท่านเลือก

ข้อ	ข้อความ	1 ไม่เห็นด้วย อย่างยิ่ง	2 ไม่เห็น ด้วย	3 ปาน กลาง	4 เห็นด้วย	5 เห็นด้วย อย่างยิ่ง
1.	“ฝรั่ง” และคนไทยมีความสัมพันธ์ที่ดีต่อกัน ตั้งแต่อดีต					
2.	“ฝรั่ง” นำวิวัฒนาการและความเจริญมาสู่ ประเทศไทย					
3.	“ฝรั่ง” มีแนวโน้มเข้ามาตั้งรกรากในประเทศ ไทยสูงขึ้น					
4.	“ฝรั่ง” ที่อาศัยอยู่ในประเทศไทยมีส่วนช่วยให้ เศรษฐกิจของชุมชนดีขึ้น					
5.	“ฝรั่ง” ปรับตัวเข้าสู่สังคมไทยได้ยาก					

6.	“ฝรั่ง” ไม่มีทางเข้าใจภาษาไทยและวัฒนธรรมไทยอย่างถ่องแท้ แม้จะอาศัยอยู่ในประเทศไทยนานเพียงใดก็ตาม					
7.	“ฝรั่ง” ได้รับความเคารพในสังคมไทย					
8.	คนไทยชื่นชมลักษณะภายนอกของ “ฝรั่ง” เช่น ผิวขาว จมูกโด่ง					
9.	ในการแข่งขันรายการใดก็ตามในระดับโลก คนไทยมักสู้ “ฝรั่ง” ไม่ได้					
10.	“ฝรั่ง” คุกคนไทย					
11.	“ฝรั่ง” ชอบดื่มของมีนเมา					
12.	“ฝรั่ง” ควรมีสิทธิซื้อขายสังหาริมทรัพย์และอสังหาริมทรัพย์ในประเทศไทยเท่าเทียมกับคนไทย					
13.	ค่าเข้าชมและค่าธรรมเนียมต่างๆ ระหว่างคนไทยและ “ฝรั่ง” ตามสถานที่ท่องเที่ยวในประเทศไทยควรมีราคาเท่ากัน					
14.	“ฝรั่ง” ควรได้รับค่าตอบแทนในการทำงานเท่าเทียมกับคนไทย					
15.	คนไทยเป็นมิตรกับ “ฝรั่ง” เช่น ยิ้ม ทักทาย					
16.	คนไทยปฏิบัติต่อ “ฝรั่ง” เป็นอย่างดี เช่น ใสใจ เอาอกเอาใจ					
17.	คนไทยหลบเลี่ยงการพบปะหรือเสวนากับ “ฝรั่ง”					
18.	คนไทยเอาเปรียบ “ฝรั่ง” เช่น หลอกหลวง โกง					

3.2 ท่านเรียนรู้ทัศนคติที่มีต่อ “ฝรั่ง” จากแหล่งใดบ้าง (เลือกได้มากกว่า 1 ข้อ)

- ประสบการณ์โดยตรง
- การบอกเล่าจากบุคคลอื่น
- การเรียนรู้ในชั้นเรียน หลักสูตรฝึกอบรม ฯ
- การอ่านจากหนังสือ นิยาย วรรณกรรม ฯ
- การดูโทรทัศน์ ภาพยนตร์ ละคร คลิป ฯ
- อื่นๆ โปรดระบุ.....

## 3.3 ท่านปฏิบัติต่อกลุ่ม “ฝรั่ง” อย่างไร โปรดอธิบายและ/หรือยกตัวอย่าง

[ ] ดี .....

[ ] ไม่ดี .....

[ ] ปกติ .....

**ส่วนที่ 4 ความสามารถในการสื่อสารกับชาวตะวันตก (ฝรั่ง)**4.1 ในระหว่างที่พบเห็นและ/หรือสื่อสารกับชาวตะวันตก (ฝรั่ง) ท่านเห็นด้วยกับข้อความต่อไปนี้  
อย่างน้อยเพียงใด โปรดใส่เครื่องหมาย ✓ ในช่องที่ท่านเลือก

ข้อ	ข้อความ	1 ไม่เห็นด้วย อย่างยิ่ง	2 ไม่เห็น ด้วย	3 ปาน กลาง	4 เห็นด้วย	5 เห็นด้วย อย่างยิ่ง
1.	ฉันกระตือรือร้นในการเอาความรู้สึกรู้สึกนึกคิดและพฤติกรรมของกลุ่มชนทนาย “ฝรั่ง”					
2.	ฉันหลีกเลี่ยงการพบปะหรือสนทนากับ “ฝรั่ง” เท่าที่จะทำได้					
3.	ฉันตระหนักถึงข้อแตกต่างด้านวัฒนธรรมขณะพบเห็นและ/หรือสื่อสารกับ “ฝรั่ง”					
4.	ฉันเข้าใจว่าบางที “ฝรั่ง” อาจแปลความหมายในสิ่งที่ฉันต้องการจะสื่อคลาดเคลื่อน					
5.	ฉันคำนึงถึงผลลัพธ์ของการสนทนากับ “ฝรั่ง” ก่อนที่จะเริ่มสนทนาเสมอ					
6.	ฉันรู้สึกไม่พอใจเมื่อการสนทนาไม่ดำเนินไปตามที่ฉันคาดหวัง					
7.	ฉันสามารถรับรู้ถึงความรู้สึกของกลุ่มชนทนาย “ฝรั่ง” โดยที่เขาไม่ต้องบอก					
8.	ฉันคิดว่า “ฝรั่ง” ในประเทศไทยควรสื่อสารในวิถีแบบไทย เช่น พูดยกยมน้ำใจ หรือไม่พูดตรงจนเกินไป					

จบแบบสอบถาม

ขอบพระคุณท่านที่ให้ความร่วมมือ

## APPENDIX B

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR WESTERN PARTICIPANTS

#### Questionnaire

#### “Attitudes towards the term *farang* and the Westerners”

##### **Part 1 Background information**

- 1.1 Gender: [ ] Male [ ] Female
- 1.2 Age: [ ] 20 – 30 [ ] 31 – 40 [ ] 41 – 50 [ ] 51 – 60 up
- 1.3 Education: [ ] Lower than Bachelor [ ] Bachelor [ ] Higher than Bachelor
- 1.4 Occupation: [ ] Student [ ] Worker [ ] Unemployed [ ] Retired
- 1.5 Country : .....
- 1.6 Length of stay in Khon Kaen: .....year(s) .....month(s)  
 Length of stay in Thailand (exclude in Khon Kaen): .....year(s) .....month(s)
- 1.7 Thai language proficiency: [ ] None [ ] Poor [ ] Average [ ] Good  
 [ ] Excellent

##### **Part 2 Attitudes towards the term *farang***

2.1 From your point of view, what does the term *farang* mean? Please describe and give some details.

2.1.1 Definition:

.....

.....

.....

2.1.2 Physical appearance:

.....

.....

.....

2.1.3 Believes towards the group of *farang*:

.....

.....

.....

2.2 How often have you heard these following usages of the term *farang*? Please put a check mark ✓ in front of an appropriate item.

No	Statement	1 Never	2 Rarely	3 Some- times	4 Very often	5 Always
1.	In the spoken context					
2.	In the written context					
3.	In front of the term referent, <i>farang</i> meaning “you” (not knowing each other)					
4.	In front of the term referent, <i>farang</i> instead of the name of the person’s name (knowing each other)					
5.	In the context of third person in general					
6.	In the context of third person in the presence of the term referent					

2.3 From Part 2.2, in which context(s) do you think that Westerners might feel offended by the term *farang* used among Thai people? You can choose more than one answer. Please give reason(s) or example(s) to support your answer(s) in the blank.

[ ] 1. In the spoken context

[ ] 2. In the written context

[ ] 3. In front of the term referent (e.g. *you*)

[ ] 4. In front of the term referent (instead of the person’s name)

[ ] 5. In the context of third person in general

[ ] 6. In the context of third person in the presence of the term referent

.....

.....

.....

.....

Please put a check mark ✓ in front of an appropriate item that indicates your opinion.

2.4 Do you use the term *farang* to refer to yourself when talking to others? Why? If yes, in what situation?

Yes, because.....

No, because.....

2.5 Do you think the term *farang* is a polite word? Why?

Yes, because.....

No, because.....

Sometimes, because.....

2.6 Are you annoyed when hearing the term *farang*? Why?

Yes, because.....

No, because.....

Sometimes, because.....

2.7 Do you wish Thai people would stop using the term *farang*? Why?

Yes, because.....

No, because.....

It does not matter because.....

### **Part 3 Attitudes towards Westerners**

3.1 Please put a check mark ✓ in front of an appropriate item that indicates your agreement on the following statements.

No	Statement	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
1.	Westerners and Thai people have good relations since the old time.					
2.	Westerners brought modernity to Thailand.					
3.	There is a tendency of an increasing number of Westerners settling in Thailand.					
4.	Westerners in Thailand help improving local economics.					
5.	It is difficult for Westerners to adapt themselves into Thai society.					
6.	Westerners in Thailand are always considered foreigners despite the good knowledge of Thai language and Thai culture.					

7.	Thai people respect Westerners.					
8.	Thai people admire Westerners' physical appearance i.e. fair skin and a prominent nose.					
9.	In any kinds of the world competition, Thai people cannot beat Westerners.					
10.	Westerners look down on Thai people.					
11.	Westerners like to drink alcohol.					
12.	Westerners should have equal right as Thai people in terms of buying and selling movable and immovable properties in Thailand.					
13.	The entrance fees at tourist attractions in Thailand for Westerners should be the same price as Thai people					
14.	Westerners should receive equal salary as Thai people.					
15.	Thai people are friendly with Westerners.					
16.	Thai people treat Westerners well.					
17.	Thai people do not like to encounter with Westerners.					
18.	Thai people take advantages of Westerners.					

3.2 From where did you learn to build the intercultural awareness? You can choose more than 1 answer.

- Own experience                       Stories from others  
 In class, training courses    Reading books, newspapers, literary works  
 Watching television, movies, VDOclips  
 Other, please specify .....

3.3 How have you experienced treatment by Thai people?

- Good.....  
 Bad.....  
 Neutral.....

3.4 Have you ever experienced any privileges in Thailand? If yes, how?

- Yes.....  
 .....  
 No.

#### **Part 4 Communicative competence**

4.1 Please put a check mark ✓ in front of an appropriate item that indicates your agreement on the following statements in the situation when you communicate or interact with Thai people.

No	Statements	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
1.	I am keen on predicting Thai counterparts' thoughts and behaviors.					
2.	I avoid interacting with Thai people when possible.					
3.	I am aware of the actual differences that exist between my group and Thai group.					
4.	I am aware of the alternative interpretations that Thai counterparts might have.					
5.	I am concerned about the outcomes of my encounters.					
6.	I am frustrated when things do not go the way I expect.					
7.	I am able to tell what Thai counterparts feel during the interaction without being told.					
8.	I insist that Thai people should communicate with me on my terms for example being straightforward.					

#### **Part 5 Comments related to the research topic**

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**End of questionnaire. Thank you for you cooperation.**

## APPENDIX C

### GUIDED INTERVIEW FOR THAI PARTICIPANTS

#### แนวคำถามสัมภาษณ์

##### ส่วนที่ 1 ข้อมูลทั่วไป ได้แก่

1. เพศ อายุ ระดับการศึกษา อาชีพ
2. ความถี่ในการพบเห็นกลุ่มคน “ฝรั่ง” และความถี่ในการสื่อสารกับกลุ่มคน “ฝรั่ง”
3. ความสามารถในการสื่อสารภาษาอังกฤษ

##### ส่วนที่ 2 ทักษะคติที่มีต่อคำว่า “ฝรั่ง”

4. อธิบายความหมาย ที่มาและแหล่งที่เรียนรู้คำว่า “ฝรั่ง”
5. ความถี่ในการใช้คำว่า “ฝรั่ง” ใช้กรณีใดบ้างและมีเจตนาในการใช้อย่างไร
6. คิดว่าคำว่า “ฝรั่ง” เป็นคำสุภาพหรือไม่ เพราะเหตุใด
7. คิดว่าคำว่า “ฝรั่ง” สามารถทำลายความรู้สึกหรือความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างคู่สนทนาหรือไม่ อย่างไร
8. หากชาวตะวันตกไม่พอใจที่ถูกเรียกว่า “ฝรั่ง” จะทำอย่างไร

##### ส่วนที่ 3 ทักษะคติที่มีต่อกลุ่มคนฝรั่ง (ชาวตะวันตก)

9. มีความเชื่อต่อกลุ่มคน “ฝรั่ง” อย่างไร
10. ชอบหรือไม่ชอบกลุ่มคน “ฝรั่ง” เพราะเหตุใด
11. มีประสบการณ์ที่ดีหรือไม่ดีกับกลุ่มคน “ฝรั่ง” อย่างไร
12. คิดว่ากลุ่มคน “ฝรั่ง” ที่พำนักอยู่ในประเทศไทย ส่งผลดีหรือผลเสียต่อสังคมไทย อย่างไร
13. ปัจจัยใดบ้างที่จะทำให้ท่านยอมรับกลุ่มคน “ฝรั่ง” เข้าสู่สังคมไทย
14. ระหว่างที่พบปะหรือพูดคุยกับกลุ่มคน “ฝรั่ง” ท่านปฏิบัติตนอย่างไร/แตกต่างจากที่ท่านปฏิบัติในระหว่างการพบปะหรือพูดคุยกับกลุ่มคนไทย/คนต่างชาติชาติอื่นหรือไม่ อย่างไร
15. เรียนรู้ทักษะคติที่มีต่อกลุ่มคน “ฝรั่ง” จากแหล่งใด

##### ส่วนที่ 4 การสื่อสารข้ามวัฒนธรรม

16. รู้สึกอย่างไรเมื่อต้องสนทนาข้ามวัฒนธรรมกับกลุ่มคน “ฝรั่ง” เพราะเหตุใด (กระตือรือร้น/ ก้าว/ กังวล ฯ)
17. ระหว่างที่พบปะ/สนทนากับกลุ่มคน “ฝรั่ง” ท่านคำนึงถึงเรื่องใดบ้าง เรียนรู้จากที่ใด
18. ประสบการณ์การสื่อสารหรือสนทนากับกลุ่มคน “ฝรั่ง” เป็นอย่างไรบ้าง

19. หากเกิดความขัดแย้ง ไม่พอใจหรือไม่เข้าใจกันในการสนทนากับกลุ่มคน “ฝรั่ง” จะทำอย่างไร เพราะเหตุใด
20. คิดว่าปัจจัยใดที่เป็นอุปสรรคต่อการสื่อสารข้ามวัฒนธรรมระหว่างท่านกับกลุ่มคน “ฝรั่ง” คืออะไร
21. คิดว่าปัจจัยใดจะช่วยส่งเสริมให้การสนทนาข้ามวัฒนธรรมระหว่างคนไทยกับกลุ่มคน “ฝรั่ง” มีประสิทธิภาพ เพราะเหตุใด

#### ส่วนที่ 5 ความเห็นอื่นๆ

22. ความเห็นอื่นๆเกี่ยวกับคำว่า “ฝรั่ง” และกลุ่มคน “ฝรั่ง” ในทัศนคติของท่าน (หากมี)



## APPENDIX D

### GUIDED INTERVIEW FOR WESTERN PARTICIPANTS

#### Guided interview questions

##### Part 1: Interviewees' information

1. Gender, age, education, occupation and nationality
2. Period of staying in Khon Kean (KK) and Thailand (TH)
3. Thai language proficiency
4. Life background (reasons to be in KK, Life in KK, future plan for settlement)

##### Part 2: Attitudes towards the term *farang*

5. Definition of the term *farang*
6. Frequency, contexts, situations of being called *farang* and of using the term *farang*
7. Feelings, responses, or reactions when being referred as *farang*
8. Positive and negative experiences of being referred as *farang*
9. Do you wish Thai people would stop using the term *farang*?

##### Part 3: Attitudes towards the group of *farang* or Westerners

10. How do you think Thai people perceive Westerners?
11. How would you like Thai people to perceive Westerners?
12. How do you adapt yourself into Thai society? How important and how difficult is it?
13. How does your physical appearance or race impact your stay in Thailand?
14. How have you been treated by Thai people?
15. Do you think you have been treated better by the Thais comparing to the way Thai people treat other groups of foreigners? How?
16. Have you ever experienced any privileges while staying in Thailand?

##### Part 4: Communicative competence in intercultural communication

17. How do you feel when you have to interact with Thai people?
18. What factors are you aware of when interacting with Thai people?
19. If there is conflict while dealing with Thai people, what would you do?
20. What factors do you think can be the obstacles when dealing Thai people?

21. What factors do you think can enhance the intercultural interaction between Thai people and Westerners to have effective communication?
22. How would you like Thai people to communicate with you? (Thai way/ Western way)
23. How was your experience dealing with Thai people so far? (effective/problematic)

**Part 5: Comments**

24. Is there any comments related to the issues that you need to add?



## APPENDIX E

### CONSENT FORM FOR THAI INTERVIEWEES

#### หนังสือแสดงเจตนายินยอมเข้าร่วมการสัมภาษณ์ในงานวิจัย

งานวิจัยเรื่อง การวิเคราะห์ทัศนคติของคนไทยและชาวตะวันตกในจังหวัดขอนแก่นที่มีต่อ “ฝรั่ง”

ในบริบทของการสื่อสารข้ามวัฒนธรรม

วันที่ให้คำยินยอม วันที่.....เดือน.....พ.ศ.....

ก่อนที่จะลงนามในใบยินยอมให้ทำการวิจัยนี้ ข้าพเจ้าได้รับการอธิบายจากผู้วิจัยถึงวัตถุประสงค์ของการวิจัย วิธีการวิจัย รวมทั้งประโยชน์ที่จะเกิดขึ้นจากการวิจัยโดยละเอียด และมีความเข้าใจดีแล้ว ซึ่งผู้วิจัยได้ตอบคำถามต่างๆ ที่ข้าพเจ้าสงสัยด้วยความเต็มใจ ไม่ปิดบัง ซ่อนเร้น จนข้าพเจ้าพอใจ และเข้าร่วมโครงการวิจัยนี้โดยสมัครใจ อีกทั้งข้าพเจ้ามีสิทธิ์ที่จะบอกเลิกการเข้าร่วมโครงการวิจัยนี้เมื่อใดก็ได้

ข้าพเจ้ายินยอมให้ผู้วิจัยบันทึกบทสนทนาในการสัมภาษณ์ เพื่อเป็นประโยชน์ต่องานวิจัย ในภายหลัง ทั้งนี้ ผู้วิจัยรับรองว่าจะเก็บข้อมูลเฉพาะเกี่ยวกับตัวข้าพเจ้าเป็นความลับ จะเปิดเผยได้เฉพาะในรูปที่เป็นสรุปผลการวิจัย การเปิดเผยข้อมูลของตัวข้าพเจ้าต่อหน่วยงานต่าง ๆ ที่เกี่ยวข้องกระทำได้ด้วยเหตุผลทางวิชาการเท่านั้น

ข้าพเจ้าได้อ่านข้อความข้างต้นแล้ว และมีความเข้าใจดีทุกประการ และได้ลงนามในใบยินยอมนี้ด้วยความเต็มใจ

ในกรณีที่ข้าพเจ้าไม่สามารถอ่านหนังสือได้ ผู้วิจัยได้อ่านข้อความในใบยินยอมนี้ให้ข้าพเจ้าฟังจนเข้าใจดีแล้ว ข้าพเจ้าจึงลงนามในใบยินยอมนี้ด้วยความเต็มใจ

ผู้วิจัยสามารถติดต่อข้าพเจ้าที่หมายเลขโทรศัพท์..... หรือที่อีเมลล์

.....

ลงนาม.....ผู้ยินยอม

(.....)

ลงนาม.....พยาน

(.....)

ลงนาม.....ผู้วิจัย

(.....)

## APPENDIX F

### CONSENT FORM FOR WESTERN INTERVIEWEES

**Research title:** Attitudes of Thais and Westerners in Khon Kaen towards *farang*: an intercultural communication analysis

**Sign date:** Date.....Month.....Year.....

Before I sign this consent form, I clearly understand the purposes of the study and its methodology as well as its benefits as explained by the researcher. Also, I have opportunity to ask questions concerning the study and receive clear explanation from the researcher. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at anytime.

During the interview, I allow the researcher to record the audio conversation. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications and my data can be revealed to other organizations for academic purposes only.

Above all, I agree to participate in the above study.

The researcher can contact me at telephone number.....  
or at e-mail .....

Signature of participant .....

(.....)

Signature of witness .....

(.....)

Signature of researcher .....

(.....)

## **APPENDIX G**

### **THAI INTERVIEWEE PROFILES**

Den was 23 years old who recently graduated in a Bachelor of Business English in a university in Khon Kaen. When he was in the third year of his bachelor's degree, he did the internship for three months at a hotel in Phang Nga, in the South of Thailand where there were a lot of foreign tourists, especially Westerners. At the time of the interview, he was looking for a job in Khon Kaen and rarely interacted with Westerners. Still, he had seen Westerners in Khon Kaen quite often.

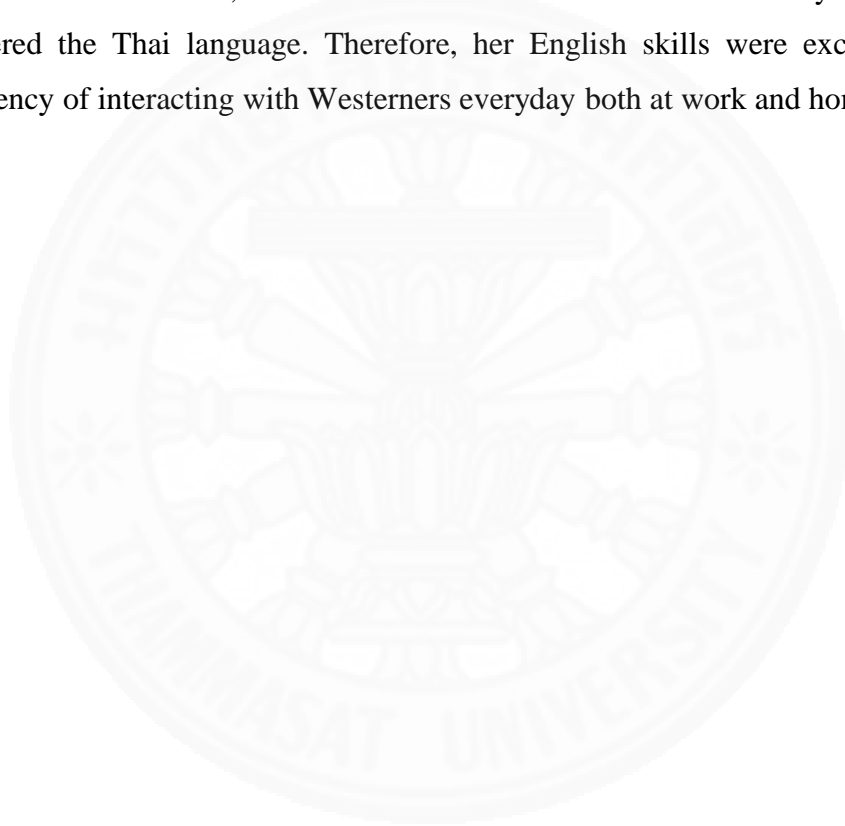
Fha was a 38 year-old woman who used to work for several years at a hotel in Phuket, in the South of Thailand where she got a chance to service many foreigners and practiced her English skills. After that, she moved back to Khon Kaen and worked as a secretary for a couple of years for the Scandinavian international organization where she interacted with Westerners weekdays. At the time of the interview, she was a Thai massage therapist who rarely met Westerners in her daily life but still kept in touch and communicated with her old foreign friends by chatting on the internet almost every day.

Nang was a 55 year-old female hair dresser who used to work in Samui, a touristic island in Suratthani, in the South of Thailand since she broke up with her Thai husband in 2000. She remarried to a Western retiree whom she met at Samui in 2006 and spent a couple of years in Samui after the second marriage. Then, she and her Western husband returned and had settled in Khon Kaen where she opened a hair salon shop and was the only worker in the shop. She used English to communicate with her husband as he had very low Thai language proficiency.

Poot was a 34 year-old male university staff who graduated in a Bachelor of Arts, major in English. He used to work in Bangkok at a movie equipment rental company where he used to work with many foreign movie units for a couple of years. This job allowed him to be with the foreigners and worked in the intercultural environment. Later, he got married and decided to settle in Khon Kaen, the home town of his wife. At the time of the interview, he worked as a foreign affairs staff at an educational institute for six years. His responsibilities included the services for

international students and staff. His job provided him a chance to interact with foreigners, mostly from East Asia and America.

Tuk was a 31 year-old female staff at a university in Khon Kaen. She graduated from a Bachelor of Arts, Program in English and had worked as a university officer who was in charge of the international staff service for six years at the time of the interview. Her job gave her opportunity to meet and communicate with foreigners, especially Westerners almost every day. Moreover, she recently married with an Australian man, Jason who was also interviewed in this study and has not yet mastered the Thai language. Therefore, her English skills were excellent and the frequency of interacting with Westerners everyday both at work and home.



## **APPENDIX H**

### **WESTERN INTERVIEWEE PROFILES**

Jason was a 42 year-old Australian male web designer. He had live in Khon Kaen for four years at the time of the interview and recently married with Tuk, the Thai interviewee in this study. He traveled to Southeast Asia with his friends several times before he met Tuk three years ago. His Thai language proficiency was quite poor. He was not able to understand the whole sentence of Thai language when heard but he understood some words and was able to guess what was going on around him. He planned to stay in Khon Kaen with Tuk at the moment but in several years, he might consider moving to Australia with Tuk.

Joe was a 70 year-old retiree from Canada. Graduated in a bachelor in economics and sociology, he used to work in the real estate market in California, the United States of America. Then, he had his own business in the last 20 years. After retirement, he met and married a Thai woman for nine years at the time of the interview. He decided to move to Thailand because it was inexpensive to live in and he had settled in Khon Kaen for seven years already. Although he visited his family in his homeland sometimes, he planned to live in Khon Kaen with his Thai family for the rest of his life. At the time of the interview, he worked as a volunteer who taught English to local people. In terms of Thai language proficiency, he was able to communicate in basic conversation like buying food.

Linda was a 24 year-old full-time Russian student at a university in Khon Kaen. Because of a health problem living in a cold country, her parents moved to Chonburi, in the East of Thailand several years before she decided to come to Thailand afterwards. She did not like the environment in Chonburi where there were a lot of foreign tourists. Thus, she decided to study in Khon Kaen and visited her parents regularly when she was free from school. She studied in an international program but she was the only foreigner in the class. At the time of the interview, she had been in Thailand, particularly in Khon Kaen for three years already. She could not communicate in Thai fluently but understood some words and was able to say some useful sentences in Thai. Her plan after graduation was to work and settle in Thailand with her Thai fiancée.

Paul was a 23 year-old male student studying in a Bachelor of Arts, Program in Thai language at a university in Germany. He was an exchange student at a university in Khon Kaen and had been in Khon Kaen for 8 months during the time of the interview. He traveled to Thailand several times with his family and friends before. He loved Thailand, Thai language, food and cultures since then. Thus, he was interested to learn more about Thailand and Thai language. He studied about Thailand and Thai language three years with some Thai teachers in Germany before he decided to participate in a one-year exchange program in Khon Kaen. Undoubtedly, he was able to listen, speak, read and write Thai fluently. Moreover, he could speak Thai with no accent. His plan after the exchange program was to study one more semester in Germany to complete the degree. Then, he planned to continue to study in higher education about linguistics as he would like to become a teacher in the future.

Victor was 32 year-old single French man who visited Khon Kaen the first time as a researcher for two years in 2011 to 2012. After that, he went back to France for one year and came back to Khon Kaen again in 2013 and had stayed in Khon Kaen since then. At the interview time, he was a French lecturer who enjoyed working in a university in Khon Kaen because of the friendly environment and good teamwork. Still, he was not certain about his future whether he could settle in Thailand because of the limited salary and the Thai law that prohibits foreigners to purchase land and houses in Thailand. However, he would love to stay in Thailand as long as he could.

## BIOGRAPHY

Name	Miss Phakhawadee Chaisiri
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Work Experiences	2013 - present: International Relations Officer International Relations Division Khon Kaen University 2010 - 2012: Public Relations Officer Faculty of Engineering Thammasat University

