



English Communication Problems in Speaking and Listening of Hotel Staffs in Buriram

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to study the problems in speaking and listening of English communication of hotel staffs at Amari Buriram United. The samples used in this study were 30 staffs in Amari Buriram United, consisting of three departments: front office, housekeeping, food, and beverage. They were selected by purposive sampling method. The research instrument were questionnaires used to collect the data about the problems in speaking and listening. The statistics used to analyze were frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The results of the research revealed that regarding the listening problems, the overall problems were at the moderate level. When considering each item, the listening problems were; 1) they did understand the English sentences that

the foreign guests speak complicatedly, 2) they did not understand the accents of foreign guests, and 3) they could not catch the words when foreign guests speak English too fast. Regarding the problems in speaking, the overall problems were at the moderate level. When considering each item, the speaking problems were; 1) they cannot use correct English grammar, 2) they respond with words by words, and 3) they cannot speak with the complete sentence. So that, the staffs at the hotel should take course in speaking and listening skills and practice through the foreign guests or other staffs. They should improve their grammar to develop English skill.

Keywords: Amari Buriram United, English communication, Listening, Speaking

Introduction

English is an international language and an important tool that has been used to communicate with the global community without limitations. English is a tool for disseminating and sharing information in various fields. Consequently, the development of the country in all respects, in order to be progressive and equal to other countries in the world, is important in order to improve the capacity of the population of the country to have the information and the ability to communicate in English. Thailand has always been aware of the importance of using English.

In the global society, learning foreign languages, especially English, is vital important to daily life because the foreign languages are regarded as an important tool for communication, education, seeking knowledge as well as creating understanding of cultures and visions of the world society (The Ministry of Education, n.d., p. 252). Therefore, in order to provide students with the desired characteristics in accordance with the basic education curriculum, the curriculum emphasizes the importance of teaching and learning by students. It is therefore the most important thing that all learners have ability of learning and self-development via the teaching-learning process, aiming to enable the learners to develop

themselves at their own pace and to their full potentiality (Office of the National Education Commission, n.d., p. 10).

The tourism industry is a service industry with large-scale business. If hotel staff are unable to communicate with guests staying at the hotel, there can be difficulties in communication between staff and guests. Communication in English is essential in acting as a medium of communication. English communication is critical for hotel staff employed in the tourism and hotel business sectors (Chachana, Chiowchan, & Thongnen, 2017). However, the importance of the English language of the Thai workers in the receptionist role of the hotel is still difficult to communicate in order to serve foreign clients, which means that the service is not as successful as it should be (Chaiyapantoh, 2008).

Researchers are interested in studying the English communication problems in speaking and listening of staffs in Amari Buriram United, Muang Sub-district, Buriram Province. Visitors to all past events are Thai and foreign tourists. The researchers therefore perceived the importance of the hotel staffs. It is necessary to use English to communicate with foreign guests, especially when speaking and listening to English communication.

Literature Review

Chaiparn, Promkaew, & Seenak (2013) studied Factors Affecting the fourth Year English for International communication Students' Anxieties in Speaking English. This research aimed to study factors affecting speaking English anxieties and to study the level of speaking English anxieties of students studying in the English for International Communication (EIC) program. The population was 78 fourth year students studying in the EIC program. The instrument used for data collection was a three sectioned questionnaire. Data were analysed for percentage, mean and stand deviation. The findings of the study indicated that: Factors affecting anxiety in the English-speaking of 4th year students studying in English for International Communication program indicate that

students have anxieties if they do not pass English speaking courses is at a high level. Levels of anxiety in the English-speaking of fourth year student is at a high level too.

Nawarattanaporn (2014) studied an Analysis of Needs, Problems, Ability, and Forma in Using English Oral Communication Hotel Front Office Staff in Muang district, Loei Province. The purposes of this research were: to identify the needs, problems, abilities and forms in using English for oral communication of hotel front office staff in Muang District, Loei Province. Participants in this study were 43 front office staff from 20 hotels and resorts in Muang District, Loei province. The research instruments used was a five-rating scale questionnaire and an English capability measurement. A mixed methodology was applied with both quantitative and qualitative studies. Quantitative collected data was analyzed by descriptive statistics and a sample t-test while other qualitative data were analyzed by content analysis. The research revealed the results in using English for oral communication at the significant level .05 as follows: 1) Needs were mostly at the high level significantly different. 2) Problems were mostly at the high level significantly different. 3) Communicative abilities were mostly at the moderate level significantly different. 4) Forms and situations were mostly different. In addition, the important research results reflected that the hotel front office staff did not properly understand English and had social and cultural difficulties. The informal language forms were mostly used. Therefore, the developing guide line, the English oral communication as well as cultural training courses for English speaking countries should be provided to improve the potential of front office staff and organizations for offering sustainable services in the future and to prepare the readiness for ASEAN Community in the year 2015.

Kalasin (2014) studied Needs and Problems of English Use among Thai Hotel Front Desk Staff in Tourist Attractions of Southern Thailand. The findings revealed that the needs of four English language skills were rated at the high level indicating that listening and speaking were mostly needed listening to customers' inquiries and in welcoming, greeting and leave

taking. Reading and writing followed closely specifically in reading and recording customers' information. The comparison showed that the staff in Phuket and Samui needed to use English significantly more than the staff in Hat Yai due to the large number of foreign customers using English to communicate. Comparatively, the needs for English in Hat Yai were lower than the other areas due to the high number of customers that did not use English as their primary language of communication. In terms of problems in using English. It was found that the perceived problems in using the four skills were moderately serious. Among these. Listening skill was ranked first followed by reading, speaking and writing. The most serious problems included not being able to 1) listen to different English accents 2) to take telephone messages 3) to read short notes or messages and 4) to pronounce English words correctly. The comparison showed that the staff in Phuket faced problems in using the four English skills significantly more seriously than the staff in Hat Yai and Samui. This may be due to the variety and number of customers. Unlike Hat YAI and Samui, Phuket has many different nationalities of customers who speak different English accents. It is likely that the staff in Phuket face more serious problems in their communication.

Kosashunhanan (2016) studied the use of English for communication by Thai Engineers: case study of Japanese companies at Amata Nakorn industrial estate. The research findings reveal that most of Thai engineers who answered the questionnaire had a bachelor's degree. With working experiences from 1 to 5 years and they were in operational level. The frequency of the English usage was every day. Reading was an English communication skill that was mostly used by reading electronic mail and information from the internet. Then it was followed by listening skill that was performed when engineers attended meeting, contacted their boss. Experts or customers as well as listened to other sources such as radios, televisions and CDs. The engineers also performed their writing skill when they wrote business letters in a form of the electronic mails. The final skill that was mentioned was speaking. A chance to speak English in the workplace was rare. Only during meetings when Thai engineers did a

presentation. In terms of participants' position, in general employees in Higher or Executive level had more chances to use English, especially for reading and writing skills. In terms of the frequency, the findings show differences in the frequency of English usage among those engineers. The level of their English performance was also different according to their ability in listening, reading, speaking and writing. The problems and obstacles in using English for communication were lack of vocabulary and grammar comprehension. They could affect Thai engineers' English reading and writing skills.

Chachana et al. (2017) studied English Communication Problems of Receptionists at Hotels in Nan in Foreign Tourists' Perspective. This study aimed to investigate English communication problems of receptionists at hotels in Nan in foreign tourists' perspective. The subject of this study were convenience sampling of 30 foreign tourist who stayed at hotel Nan. The research instrument was a questionnaire. The data collected were analyzed by using percentage, mean and standard deviation. The findings indicated that the overall English communication problems of receptionists at hotel in Nan in foreign tourist' perspective were at high level. Most of speaking skill problems were problem in speaking English with a foreign tourist by telephone, problem in giving enough information about hotel and tourism and problem in speaking complete sentences, respectively.

Research Objective

To study the English communication problems in speaking and listening of staff at Amari Buriram United

Methodology

1. Research Design

This research was a survey research design by conducting a questionnaire to collect the data of the problems in speaking and listening of English communication of staff at Amari Buriram United. This design was chosen to meet the objective of the study that was to study the English

communication problems in speaking and listening of staff at Amari Buriram United.

2. Population and Samples

The populations used in this research were 70 staff members in Amari Buriram United, consisting of 1) Finance officer 2) Human resources 3) Food and beverage 4) Front office 5) Housekeeping 6) Engineering 7) Sales 8) Operations. The samples were 30 staffs of Amari Buriram United. The samples were 30 staffs from three departments: front office 8 persons, housekeeping 14 persons and food and beverage 8 persons. They were selected by purposive sampling. The staffs in this department has the opportunity to use speaking and listening skills.

3. Instrument and Procedures

The research instruments used were the questionnaires. The questionnaires consisted of three parts: the first part was about the personal information of the samples. In this part, the samples were required to answer the questions about gender, department, year of working in this career, age, education level, taking English course before, the second part was about the form of check list., consisting of questions about English communication problems, and the third part was about suggestions and opinions. In this part, the respondents wrote the suggestions about English communication problems.

The researchers reviewed the literature on how to construct the questionnaires as defined by Linker's method or five rating scales. The researchers constructed the draft questionnaires in both Thai and English version. The researchers proposed the advisor the questionnaires to check the correctness and appropriateness. The researchers revised the questionnaires according to the advisor's suggestions and comments. The revised questionnaires were examined by the three experts to check correctness and appropriateness. The researchers calculated the IOC index, and choose the topic with the IOC index between 0.5 - 1.00 for the questionnaires. The total scores from the three experts were 0.95.

4. Data Collection

The questionnaires created by the researchers were used to collect the data as follows:

1. Make a request to cooperate with the Human Resources Manager of Amari Buriram United to request permission and request cooperation in the research, and data collection.
2. Receive a response form for cooperation in research studies and conduct date and time appointments to collect data collection.
3. The researchers brought the questionnaires to collect data with the staffs in the hotel. The researchers collected data after answering all questionnaires.
4. When the data collection is complete, take the questionnaire to check the completion of the answer. Collect to continue analyzing the data.

5. Data Analysis

The researchers used descriptive statistics which consisted of frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation in order to analyze the collected data of the problems in speaking and listening of English communication of staff at Amari Buriram United. The average scores of the factors and the problem criteria with five-rating Likert's scale were used to analyze the data as follows:

4.51 - 5.00	means	most
3.51 - 4.50	means	much
2.51 - 3.50	means	moderate
1.51 - 2.50	means	less
1.00 - 1.50	means	least

Results

The findings were presented in line with research objectives as follows:

Table 1

General Information of the Samples

1. Gender	Frequency	Percentage
1.1) Male	6	20.00
1.2) Female	24	80.00
Total	30	100
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2. Department		
2.1) Front office	8	26.70
2.2) Housekeeping	14	46.70
2.3) Food and beverage	8	26.70
Total	30	100
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3. Age		
3.1) 20-24 years	14	46.70
3.2) 25-29 years	6	20.00
3.3) 30-40 years	6	20.00
3.4) 35-40 years	4	13.30
3.5) more than 40 years	-	-
Total	30	100
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4. Year of work experience		
4.1) 1-5 years	24	80.00
4.2) 6-10 years	5	16.70
4.3) 11-15 years	1	3.30
4.4) 16-20 years	-	-
4.5) more than 20 years	-	-
Total	30	100

Table 1 (continued)

5. Education level		
5.1) High school	9	30.00
5.2 Bachelor's degrees	21	70.00
5.3 Higher than bachelor's degree	-	-
	Total	30
		100
6. Taking English course before		
6.1) Yes	2	6.70
6.2) NO	28	93.30
	Total	30
		100

From the Table 1; the findings showed that most of the samples were female 24 persons (80.0%) and male 6 persons (20.0%). The department were housekeeping 24 persons (46.7%), followed by front office and food and beverage were the same number at 8 persons (26.7%). Maximum age of samples were 20-24 years 14 persons (46.7%), followed by 25-29 years and 30-40 years were in the same number at 6 persons (20.0%). The maximum year of work's experience were 1-5 years at 24 persons (80.0%), followed by 6-10 years at 5 persons (16.7%). The most of education level of samples were bachelor's degrees 21 persons (70.0%) and high school 9 persons (30.0%)

Table 2

Listening Problems of Hotel staffs

Listening Problems	M	S.D.	meaning
1. I have a problem to understand dialogs on the telephone calls.	2.83	0.83	moderate
2. I have a problem to understand the accents of foreign guests.	3.70	0.75	much
3. I cannot understand when a foreign guest speaks English.	3.33	0.84	moderate
4. I cannot understand the slang words that foreign guests use.	3.43	0.77	moderate
5. I have a listening problem of English sentences that foreign guests speak easily.	2.97	1.00	moderate
6. I have a listening problem of English sentences that foreign guests speak complicatedly.	3.80	0.61	much
7. I cannot understand the meaning of vocabulary about the hotel when foreign guests speak.	3.37	0.85	moderate
8. I know a few words when foreign guests	3.43	0.97	moderate
9. I cannot catch when foreign guests speak English too fast.	3.57	0.82	much
Total	3.38	0.83	moderate

From the Table 2, the findings showed that listening problems were at a “moderate” level ($\bar{x} = 3.38$, $S.D = 0.83$). When considering each item, the most listening problems were; I have a listening problem of English sentences that foreign guests speak complicatedly ($\bar{x} = 3.80$, $S.D = 0.61$), followed by I have a problem to understand the accents of foreign guests ($\bar{x} = 3.70$, $S.D = 0.75$), and I cannot catch when foreign guests speak English too fast ($\bar{x} = 3.57$, $S.D = 0.82$), respectively.

Table 3

Problems in Speaking and Listening of Hotel staffs

Problems in Speaking and Listening	\bar{x}	S.D.	meaning
1. Listening problems	3.38	0.83	moderate
2. I have a problem to understand the accents of foreign guests.	3.13	0.91	moderate
Total	3.26	0.87	moderate

From the Table 3, the findings showed that the problems with English use of staffswere at “moderate” level ($\bar{x}= 3.26$, S.D = 0.87). When considering each item, the results showed that problemsstaffswere listening problems ($\bar{x}=3.38$, S.D =0.83), and speaking problems ($\bar{x}=3.13$, S.D = 0.91), respectively.

Discussion

As the results of the study, English communication problems in speaking and listening of staffs at Amari Buriram United, this research aimed to study the speaking and listening problems in English communication of Amari Buriram United hotel staff. The samples used in this study were 30 persons of staffs at Amari Buriram United, which consisted of front office, housekeeping and food and beverage.

The research found that the staffs at Amari Buriram United had listening problems at moderate level. The most problems in listening were the staffs did understand English sentences that foreign guests speak complicatedly, followed by the staffs can't understand the accents of foreign guests and the staffs cannot catch when foreign guests speak English too fast respectively. The result of the research was that because of the lacking of listening skill. According to the research of (Kalasin, 2014), he studied the needs and problems of English use among Thai hotel front desk staffs in tourist attractions of Southern Thailand. The findings revealed that the needs of four English language skills were rated at the

high level indicating that listening was mostly needed with listening to customers' inquiries and in welcoming, greeting and leave taking.

The problems in speaking were at moderate level. The most problems in speaking were the staffs could not use correct English grammar, followed by the staffs respond to the guests with word by word and they could not speak English by using a complete sentence. The result of the research was that because of the staffs at Amari Buriram United encountered with the lack of proper English language skills especially the communication skill and grammar skill. According to the result research of Chaichana et.al, (2017), they studied English communication problems of receptionists at hotels in Nan province in foreign tourists' perspective. The findings indicated that the overall English communication problems of receptionists were at high level. Most of speaking skill problems were speaking English with a foreign tourists by telephone, giving enough information about hotel and tourism and speaking complete sentences, respectively. According to the result research of Chaipan et.al (2013), they studied factors affecting the fourth year English for international communication students' anxieties in speaking English. The finding of the study indicate that: factors were that students have anxieties if they do not pass English speaking courses was at a high level. The level of anxiety in the English-speaking of fourth year student was at a high level too.

From the results of the study, it may be seen that results of problems in using English was found that the staffs at Amari Buriram United used English in listening and speaking skills at moderate level, consistent with the previous study and when sorted, the first problems were of listening skills, followed by speaking skills as well as the research results that the researchers have studied. The comparison results also show that both hotel staffs have moderate levels of English communication skills in listening and speaking. Most problems are the use of correct grammar, listening problems of English sentences that foreign guests speak complicatedly and respond with words by words.

Recommendations

1. Implications

1.1 Hotel staffs should practice speaking English with native speakers or foreign tourists in order to be familiar with native speakers' accent.

1.2 Hotel should have workshop on improving speaking and listening skills of hotel staffs in order to make them feel more confident.

2. Further Studies

The researchers should do the experimental research of speaking and listening communication by comparing the two effective foreigners and hotel staffs with the two groups.

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