

**A STUDY OF ENGLISH VERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS OF
HOTEL FRONT OFFICE STAFF AS OBSERVED BY NON-ASIAN
GUESTS**

**A MASTER'S PROJECT
BY
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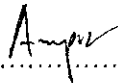
Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
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at Srinakharinwirot University

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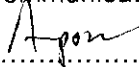
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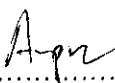
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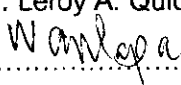
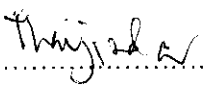
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

English has become a vital communication channel for people from all over the world. In this era of globalization, many international businesses use English as a medium of communication, for example Banking, Import-Export, Shipping, Hospitality and Tourism. English is the principle means of communication among people of different nations (Via; & Smith. 1983 : xi). The English language is extremely important to human interaction because people can reach out to each other and make contact with their surroundings.

Tourism has played an important role in terms of economic and social development in Thailand. Many services are included in the tourism industry: accommodation, shopping, food and beverage, local transport and entertainment. A 2003 Tourism Authority of Thailand report shows that the money tourists spend on accommodation is their highest overall expenditure amounting to eighteenth million baht.

TABLE1: TOURISM EXPENDITURE BY EXPENDITURE ITEM 2003

Expenditure Items	Percentage	Million Baht
Accommodation	32.78	18,292.25
Shopping	29.52	16,477.72
Food & Beverage	16.60	9,262.31
Local Transport	8.02	4,478.72
Entertainment	6.96	3,881.85
Miscellaneous	3.09	1,726.82
Sight Seeing	3.03	1,691.04
Total	100.00	55,810.71

Source: Tourism Authority of Thailand. (2003). **Statistical Report**. 68

Hotels play a major role in the tourism industry because hotels serve as a second home for tourists. There are four categories of hotels in Thailand. These are categorized according to room rates and the facilities provided: Category 1: 3,000 baht/night and over, Category 2: 2,000 baht/night and over, Category 3: 1,000 baht/night and over and Category 4: 500 baht/night and over (Thai Hotel Standard (THA). 2004 : 19). As a result, hotels in Thailand compete with each other in the same category for customers by providing suitable and satisfying hotel services. As this is the case, hotel staff are very important in the hotel industry, especially the hotel front office staff (HFOS). HFOS influence guests positively or negatively, thus increasing or decreasing hotel occupancy/sales. The front office is the nerve centre of the hotel. Not only does it provide on-going services such as messages and information, it is also the first point of contact for incoming guests and the last point of contact for outgoing guests (Paige. 1977 : 15). HFOS are the representatives of the hotel in the eyes of most guests. Communication is a vitally important function stressed in front office operations because the only contact most guests have with hotel employees is with members of the HFOS (Gray; & Liguori. 1980 : 99). HFOS should be well informed, and should be very careful to give clients correct information, not only about the hotel, but also about how to go around the city and around the country. HFOS should know the locality well as sometimes guests have problems with trains, buses and taxi services, locations or details about places. When guests ask for advice about where to obtain something, HFOS should recommend one of the hotel services, if available, to fulfill that need.

Guests are the focus of the tourism industry. Guests visiting Thailand come from different countries. They would like to know and visit the major cities of the country. Communication with guests is important for HFOS who have to face and pay attention to guests who cannot speak the local language.

As tourists who come to visit Thailand are from different countries and cultures, they use the English language to communicate as English has increasingly become the standard language, or lingua franca, for people of different nations to use (Samovar; & Porter. 1995 : 151). Thus, HFOS must have a good knowledge of English and strong communication skills in order to communicate with foreign guests and avoid misunderstandings and misinterpretations. Verbal communication skills, which are listening and speaking, are

important aspects of the way in which HFOS dealing with guests (Manabat. 2005 : Online). However, in fact, there are barriers when HFOS communicate with guests. HFOS' English skills are often not good enough. Some of them do not understand English or cannot speak English effectively because of limitations of vocabulary or choices of words. For example, HFOS cannot give information that guests would like to know or take time to listen to guests' questions. Moreover, grammatical errors and mispronunciation are weaknesses that occur during conversations. If HFOS recognize and understand why misunderstandings occur, they can minimize or avoid them and the barriers that occur during the communication process between HFOS and guests will be reduced.

Further, HFOS should have some knowledge about the countries from where guests come, so they can converse with them. Guests will feel warm and happy that HFOS know their country. If the HFOS are competent in language use, they will provide good service to their guests and make a good impression, which, in turn, will mean a good future for the tourism and hotel industry in Thailand (Arunee Namamuti. 1999 : 5).

Arunee Namamuti (1999) wrote a thesis entitled, "A Study of English Communication between Hotel Front Desk Staff and Asean Guests". This study focused on the problems of the use of the four English language skills in communication between 162 hotel front desk staff and 119 Asean guests. The area for the study was restricted to hotels in Bangkok from all four categories. The result revealed that almost all hotel front desk staff had some difficulties with their English listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, for example hotel front desk staff did not always understand what guests said or what they wanted. They had problems when talking to hotel guests, likely due to limitations in their vocabulary. Sometimes hotel front desk staff have difficulties in writing technical terms, writing short messages, writing complex sentences and filling out application forms. In regard to the need for reading skills, hotel front desk staff sometimes perceived some difficulties with reading complex sentences, reading technical terms about hotel work or tourism, and reading English articles quickly. To compliment this study, the researcher will survey Non-Asian guests using similar research techniques. The population in this study will be focused on Non-Asian guests staying at small hotels with room rates of between 500-1000 baht per night in Bangkok's business area on Silom Road, Suriwongse Road and Sukhumvit Road.

Statement of the Problem

HFOS are important staff in hotels and the English language has become a very necessary tool for HFOS to communicate with guests. In fact, the communication process between hotel guests and HFOS often breaks down because HFOS' English is not good enough. The researcher's family owns a jewelry shop and travel agency in The New Peninsula Hotel. Guests who come to the researcher's shop often complain about HFOS' English skills. Common complaints are that some HFOS cannot understand what the guests say or cannot speak English effectively. They have a limited vocabulary. Some of them cannot understand what guests say on the telephone. The poor English skills of the HFOS can cause misunderstandings and misinterpretations. A wrong word or misinterpreted action can cause untold harm, no matter how much one explains or apologizes afterwards, because words once spoken can never be retracted.

Purpose of the Study

This study was conducted to investigate the English listening and speaking skills of HFOS and the barriers that occurred during conversation by exploring the opinions of Non-Asian guests at hotels in the same category as The New Peninsula Hotel. This study endeavored to identify HFOS' weaknesses and whether HFOS had difficulty or not when they communicated with guests.

Significance of the Study

The result of this study will assist hotel management to realize how important verbal communication skills are for HFOS. It could help hotels to improve the communication skills of front office staff and also enhance hotel business. As a result, HFOS will be better equipped to serve guests by communicating more effectively. In addition, the result of this study can be sent to the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) or the Tourism Ministry. This will be beneficial in planning training courses or the issue the qualification standards of English verbal communication skills that HFOS should possess.

Research Questions

1. How well do HFOS communicate verbally with Non-Asian guests?
2. Which barriers hinder verbal communication of HFOS?

Scope of the Study

This study focused on the barriers that occurred during conversation and the difficulties in English language usage of HFOS of small hotels with the price of the room between 500-1,000 baht per night. The hotels consisted of The White Orchid Hotel, The Leela Inn Hotel, The New Trocadero Hotel, The Manohra Hotel and The Silom City Inn Hotel. The researcher went to each hotel between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. and randomly selected 10 Non-Asian guests in each hotel. The test instrument employed in this study was a questionnaire (See Appendix). A total of 50 questionnaires were collected.

Definition of Terms

1. **HFOS** means hotel front office staff which consist of receptionists, telephone operators, reservation clerks and front office cashiers.
2. **Hotel** refers to a hotel with the price of a room between 500-1,000 baht/night.
3. **Barriers** refers to choices of words, vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation.
4. **Non-Asian guests** refer to guests who come from different countries except Asian.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This study attempts to explore the problems of verbal communication in English between hotel front office staff (HFOS) and hotel guests. The following 4 areas are investigated in this chapter: 1. Verbal communication, 2. English for hotel personnel, 3. Communication barriers and 4. Previous research.

1. Verbal communication

Communication is vitally important and plays an important role for front office HFOS. They have the first and last contact with guests. To establish good communication with the guests is part of this job. HFOS should always be willing to help and understand guests' anxieties and problems. Their job involves customer service, answering the telephone and solving guests' problems. Thus, listening and speaking which are two important skills in verbal communications and are important aspects of the ways in which HFOS deal with guests. Gordon (2005 : online) stated that effective verbal communication requires both good listening and speaking skills. Verbal messages that are used in verbal communication include words, phrases and sentences. Adler (1989 :46) mentioned that words are the vessels that carry most of our ideas to others.

In the communication process, listening and speaking are equally important. HFOS spends much time speaking by giving instructions or explanations, asking questions or answering them, answering the telephone and dealing with customers. Mintzberg (1975 : 35) stated that HFOS spend a great amount of their time in verbal communication. Kotter (1982 : 80) found that most HFOS spend their work days talking and listening to guests. Crowley (1995 :36) reported in his research that approximately one-third of a person's working hours are spent listening - - whether in school, in social relationships, or on the job. Moreover, Young and Gibson (1986 : 22) have supported the idea that listening is extremely important at all levels of employment. Many employees in business and industry rely on listening skills to help them carry out their daily assignments.

Telephone operators, although they work behind the scenes, are considered front office employees. They must be able to give information about the services of the hotel and the prices of all types of rooms. On November 23, 2005, the researcher went to The New Trocadero Hotel in order to observe the volume and intensity of the verbal communication that took place in this hotel. In six hours and twenty-four minutes, the telephone operator was involved in thirty five phone conversations, or about one every eleven minutes. In contrast, the telephone operator spent only ten minutes in written communication, only approximately 10 percent of the time observed. Grace and Paige (1977 : 18) stated that telephone operators must develop telephone personalities. Although they cannot be seen, they can be heard. The spoken words should be clear and distinct, the tone of voice must be friendly, interested and helpful. Philipps (1977 :17) proposed that when HFOS answer the telephone or speak to guests, HFOS must have a large speaking vocabulary, correct grammar and word pronunciation. Mistakes in grammar, pronunciation or a limited vocabulary distract the listener's attention. Jamieson and Arnold (1985 : 31) suggested 3 speaking skills:

1. Speak clearly - language should be simple and direct, words and ideas should be well organized.
2. Speak accurately – words must convey the intended meaning. Facts should be correct.
3. Language should be polite and friendly.

Lucas (1996 : 91) pointed out that HFOS should listen carefully, communicate clearly and concisely.

As already described, HFOS should have English speaking skills because they have to greet, welcome and check in guests, provide general information and communicate with guests. Receptionists in smaller hotels have to take guests to their rooms. Thus speaking skills are very important for them. Conversation should be made on the way to the room by beginning with small talk. Levine; & Adelman (1993 : 84) stated that conversation often begins with "small talk" which is important because it often helps to maintain conversations and it can lead to interesting discussions. White and Beckley (1988 : 49) noted that there are numerous topics which can be raised, such as, the times of meals, the amenities of the

hotel, local attractions. Furthermore, when arriving at the room, the receptionist should be able to show the guest the amenities of the room, where the heating and lighting switches are, the shower, how to operate the TV and radio, and so forth (White; & Beckley. 1988 : 50). However, HFOS do not need excellent English in their profession. According to Kanitta Utawanit (1998 : 49-52), HFOS should be able to understand and give information or messages that guests need such as the direction to places where guests would like to go. HFOS can keep the conversation going effectively although they have to pause for grammatical issues.

Brumfit (1982 : 53) said that HFOS should be able to receive visitors and look after their needs, deal tactfully with awkward situations, deal with complaints, sort out problems, use the telephone as a wider means of communication and convey and receive relatively complex messages.

Bangkok College (1994 : unpagged) suggested the following techniques for giving directions and answering questions: HFOS ought to know the names in English of all of the places that guests would like to visit instead of using local terms because guests may be total strangers to Bangkok, and HFOS should be well prepared to answer questions and give directions by giving information quickly, correctly and courteously.

If HFOS are competent and highly proficient in the English language, they will provide good service and make a good impression on guests. Farrel (1973) suggested in his front office communication research that guest satisfaction and good relations with guests are closely linked to good communication.

Listening and speaking are equally important in the verbal communication between HFOS and guests. In order to communicate effectively with guest, HFOS require both good listening and good speaking skills.

2. English for hotel personnel

It is not only in the two skills in English mentioned above in which HFOS should be competent. Basic hotel industry English is also important to know. In order to make a good impression, HFOS need to familiarize themselves with the language of their profession such

as, room types, how to provide information about the hotel and use the telephone alphabet when spelling to avoid confusion.

There are many types of rooms in hotels. HFOS should know the definition of each type so that they can provide information about the rooms that would be suitable for each guest. Binham; Lampola; & Murray (1982 : 17) suggested that HFOS should know which are single rooms, double rooms, twin rooms, suites, junior suites, connecting rooms and adjoining rooms.

People from different countries have different accents in English and some words are difficult for HFOS to understand, particularly, for the operator who deals with reservations by phone. These staff should know a telephone alphabet in order to minimize misunderstandings, such as B for Baker, D for Dog. White and Beckley (1988 : 51) mentioned that HFOS should use an alphabetic system which is similar to that used by travel agents and airlines. Sorasan Tanpipat (1994 : 137) suggested a telephone alphabet to be used in Thailand for example, M for Mike, N for Nancy, P for Peter.

Kanitta Utawanit (1998 : 13-16) suggested some useful expressions that HFOS can use to communicate with guests when giving information about hotels. HFOS should know some useful expressions that will help them communicate with hotel guests more fluently. For example, reservation clerks must receive bookings from guests and give them information about room rates and hotel services and facilities.

Telephone operators, who often have conversations with guests by phone, also must know certain expressions. Sometimes they cannot hear guests clearly or they would like to tell guests to hold the line. If they are familiar with relevant expressions, their conversations will proceed more smoothly. In addition, when telephone operators answer the telephone, they should say "Good morning", "Good afternoon" or "Good evening" instead of "Hello", and then say the name of the hotel with the appropriate telephone intonation. White and Beckley (1988 : 51) pointed out that when telephone operators answer the telephone, they should identify themselves and should always announce the name of the hotel, with the addition of "Good morning", "Good afternoon", or "Good evening". The additional words, "May I help you?" will give the impression of willingness to serve, which is all important in a

hotel. Schrago-Lorgen (1979 : 108-109) proposed some useful expressions for telephone operators when they must tell guests to hold the line or to speak louder.

While guests are staying in a hotel, they may be dissatisfied with the service or complain about something. HFOS should be able to deal with complaints. In the hospitality industry, everyone's job is to make guests happy and satisfied.

Basic English in the hotel industry is important for HFOS. If they familiarize themselves with the language of their career, they will give correct information to guests and also get the information that they need. Moreover, proper use of English can reduce wasted time.

3. Communication barriers

Communication consists of 3 important elements which are sender, message and receiver. A message in the verbal communication process is verbal language, i.e. the spoken word. Verbal language is the most important code used for communication, and words are the bricks of such language (Peel. 1992 : 18-19). The effective use of a language involves knowledge of its words, the way words combine together, or what is called the grammatical structure and the way words are pronounced. The better HFOS can use the English language, the better HFOS can communicate with guests effectively. The barriers which occur during conversation are the choice of words, vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation.

3.1 Choice of words

The communication process will be effective when both the sender and receiver attach the same meanings to words. If the receiver interprets a word differently than the sender intends, the communication process may breakdown. In order to prevent this barrier, the choice of words is very important. HFOS may have a great pool of words in mind but HFOS are not sure which words are appropriate for them to use. HFOS should use a simple language and avoid jargon. Robbins (1992 : 46) found that one of the biggest barriers to successful communication can be the use of jargon. HFOS can overcome this tendency and open up communication by using basic common language that most people understand. Philipps (1977 : 18) proposed that successful verbal communication is when

the listener immediately understands the message. This can be done by choosing simple words, select short concrete and specific words for clarity, for example, use secretary not amanuensis, and say eat, not consume. A short statement is easier for the listener to follow. Lucas (1996 : 93) mentioned that when dealing with customers, speakers should use terms and explanations that are easily understood. Quible; Johnson; & Mott (1988 : 25) observed that communication problems caused by the meaning of words can be reduced by using words as precisely as possible, using concrete rather than abstract words, and using the simplest possible words. The larger the vocabulary the HFOS have, the easier it is for HFOS to choose accurate, precise and meaningful words.

3.2 Lack of vocabulary

Lack of vocabulary can be a barrier in communication. Some of HFOS have a limitation of vocabulary, so they take a long time to think of vocabulary in order to communicate with guests. HFOS need to familiarize themselves with the vocabulary of their professions in order to give information and answer guest's questions. Philips (1977 : 17) pointed out that when HFOS answer the telephone or speak to a customer, they must have a large vocabulary in order to reflect ideas. Schmidt & Menely (1990 : 53) mentioned that one of the most obvious influences on word choice is the size of vocabulary. The larger HFOS' vocabulary, the greater the pool of words HFOS have to choose from. Limited vocabulary is one of the great barriers in communication.

3.3 Grammar

Quible; & Johnson (1988 : 19) stated that grammatical errors made by the sender of the message can be a barrier in communication. HFOS should use correct grammar. Good grammar helps project a positive and competent image. When HFOS fail to apply good grammar in the communication, HFOS may be perceived as lazy or uneducated. Guests form an image of HFOS and the hotel that HFOS represent simply by listening to HFOS and the way HFOS speak (Lucas 1996 : 122). Philipps (1977 : 17) mentioned that HFOS must have habits of correct grammar. Mistakes in grammar distract the listener's attention and reveal weaknesses in the speaker's education and professional ability.

3.4 Pronunciation

When HFOS answer the telephone or speak to guests, HFOS are not only have habits of correct grammar but HFOS must also have habits of word pronunciation. Lucas (1996 : 121) noted that HFOS must speak clearly by pronouncing words clearly and correctly. Pronunciation is a key language skill. In fact, clean pronunciation is a basic necessity of communication. HFOS should reduce common pronunciation errors and develop more natural stress and intonation patterns by using stress and intonation to make speech comprehensible to a sympathetic native speaker, develop awareness of word stress and place stress on the correct syllable in familiar word, develop ability to place stress on key words in utterances, for example, I only speak a little English. (*English pronunciation*. 2005 : Online). Guests may lack confidence in HFOS who mispronounce comparable (the accent is on the first syllable: com pa r able) while justifying the price of a room by giving the prices of rooms comparable in quality (Phillips. 1977 :17). *Speak with good intonation and stress* (Online : 2005) proposed that HFOS can improve their ability to express themselves orally by speaking more clearly and accurately by rising and falling intonation, syllable stress, so that others can understand them. For instance, "Can I see your passport, please? (with rising intonation)". From this sentence, HFOS indicate politeness by approximately appropriate intonation patterns. Phillips (1977 : 26) concluded that incorrect pronunciation can cause an impression of ignorance, limited ability and carelessness. Using proper intonation when speaking English contributes a great deal to overall intelligibility. Adding extra stress to words or syllables unintentionally can, at times, contribute to misunderstandings, as intonation can indicate something about the speaker's attitude or disposition.

HFOS use words to communicate with guests. These words should be as precise and accurate as possible. If the words are unclear, guests will fail to understand, and there is no communication. Verbal communication can be improved by appropriately chosen words and using correct grammar. If HFOS have a large vocabulary, HFOS have more words from which to choose in order to convey their ideas. Pronouncing words clearly and accurately also can contribute to effective oral communications.

4. Previous research

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher collected previous studies from various experts in the field.

In the study of Piyanat (1990 :37-47), the use of English in the routine work of each department and position in a hotel such as airport representatives, reservation clerks, receptionists, concierges, guest relation officers, business centers staff, floor supervisors, room stewards were investigated, but the study focused on the English used by room stewards. This group of hotel employees needs to know English so as to be able to advise guests about the location and use equipment in rooms such as switches, towels, and cabinets. They also must be able to explain how to use the telephone, both externally and internally. The researcher concluded that all service staff must know how to communicate in English using functional language such as greetings, self-introductions, offering services, explaining food and ingredients, equipment usage and giving directions.

According to the report, "Technical Institute Graduates, English and the Workplace" (Cooper, et al. 1992), a project financed by the Hong Kong Bank Language Development Fund, English was the principal language of communication in Hong Kong business across a wide spectrum of work sectors. In larger firms, proficient speakers of English were utilized for client contacts, and smaller firms lost business because of inadequate English skills among their staff. To improve communication at work, employees needed to engage in more conversational activities, giving personal reactions to something heard, read, or viewed. Their ability to deal with different English accents, cultures, and acceptable norms for English communication were also in need of attention. There was also a need to take into account the changes in the workplace in order to help employees improve their communication skills.

Phenphun conducted a research entitled, "International Tourists' Satisfaction with the Quality of Service in Accommodations in Thailand". The purpose of the study was to survey international tourists' satisfaction with the quality of service in accommodations in Thailand and the factors related to satisfaction problems and the requirements of international tourists. The study was made using questionnaires as a tool. Four hundred European tourists who were in Thailand for the first time were studied. The results of this study

tourists who were in Thailand for the first time were studied. The results of this study revealed that the most common problems were lack of employees' knowledge and English skills. As a result, tourists suggested that HFOS improve their English skill.

Aruneer conducted a study entitled "A Study of English Communication between Hotel Front Desk Staff and ASEAN Guests. This study focused on the problems of English usage in communication between hotel front desk staff and their ASEAN guests. A total of 281 subjects were sampled from two groups: 162 hotel front desk staff and 119 ASEAN guests. Two questionnaires were used to collect the data. One in Thai was addressed to the front desk staff and the other in English was distributed to ASEAN guests. The findings revealed that almost all HFOS had some difficulties with their English speaking, reading, listening and writing skills. It was necessary for hotel front desk staff to listen to many accents and speaking styles, as guests came from various locations. Although they could follow telephone conversations, understand telephone numbers and room numbers fairly well, they quite often perceived difficulties in their own listening abilities. Both the HFOS and the ASEAN guests strongly agreed that English language training in all four skills should be given to the HFOS.

All of this previous research is related to this study as English is very important to the service industry. As presented above, service industry employees have to communicate with guests in English. As also noted above, there is a lack of these skills among service industry employees. Therefore this study can aid this industry as understanding and knowledge of the origins of these communication problems will help the service industry to improve the oral English language skills of its HFOS and thereby not only retain, but increase, their clientele.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology used to investigate listening and speaking abilities and communication barriers that hotel front office staff (HFOS) have when using English to communicate with hotel guests from different countries.

Sample and Sampling

The target population of this study was Non-Asian guests who stayed at The White Orchid Hotel, The Leela Inn Hotel, The New Trocadero Hotel, The Manohra Hotel and the Silom City Inn Hotel. They were selected randomly in December 2005 to answer a questionnaire.

Research Instrument

The instrument used in this study was an English language questionnaire which is shown in Appendix and also on oral interview. This questionnaire was designed for foreign tourists who came from different countries except Asia. Its purpose was to explore the problems of HFOS in using verbal skills and the barriers that occurred during communication. It consisted of 3 parts: General Information, the opinions of Non-Asian guests about the oral English skills of HFOS and communication barriers.

Data collection

The questionnaire was distributed to guest who stayed at The White Orchid Hotel, The Leela Inn Hotel, The New Trocadero Hotel, The Manohra Hotel and The Silom City Inn Hotel in December 2005. The researcher went to each hotel from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. The questionnaire was randomly given to 10 guests from different Non-Asian countries in each hotel. A total of 50 questionnaires were collected.

Data analysis

The results from the data analysis were illustrated in percentages and means, then discussed and summarized with discussion and suggestions for further study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the data analysis in narrative and tabular form. The presentation is divided into 3 parts as in the questionnaire: Part 1, General Information of the Non-Asian guests; Part 2, the Guests' Opinions toward the English Skills of Hotel Front Office Staff (HFOS) and Part 3, Communication Barriers.

Part 1 General information of the Non-Asian guests

Fifty Non-Asian guests who stayed at The White Orchid Hotel, The Leela Inn Hotel, The New Trocadero Hotel, The Manohra Hotel and The Silom City Inn Hotel were selected randomly to answer the questionnaire. General information on the respondents is presented in Table 1.

TABLE: 1 NATIONALITIES OF THE NON-ASIAN GUESTS

Item	Number	Per cent
Nationality		
American	7	14
English	6	12
Iranian	4	8
Canadian	4	8
Australian	4	8
Swedish	3	6
New Zealander	3	6
German	3	6
Swiss	3	6
Brazilian	2	4
Irish	2	4
Belgian	2	4

TABLE 1: (continued)

Item	Number	Per cent
Ethiopian	2	4
Syrian	2	4
Finnish	2	4
French	1	2
Total	50	100

In Table 1 it can be seen that a total of 50 guests from different countries, except Asian, were included in the sample. Fourteen per cent of the guests were from the United States of America; 12 % were from the United Kingdom; 8 % were from Iran, Canada and Australia; 6 % of the guests were from Sweden, New Zealand, Germany and Switzerland; 4 % were from Brazil, Ireland, Belgium, Ethiopia, Syria and Finland respectively. The remainders of the guests were from France (2%).

Guests' recommendation of the hotel

The guests were asked whether or not they would recommend the hotel to their family and friends. The data are tabulated in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2: GUESTS' RECOMMENDATION OF THE HOTEL

Recommendation	Number	Per cent
Yes	35	70
No	8	16
Maybe	7	14
Total	50	100

Most of the guests (70%) said that they would recommend the hotel where they had stayed for their family and friends while 16% said they would not. Forteen said, "Maybe".

Part 2 The Guests' Opinions toward the English Skills of HFOS

The collected data of the guests' opinions toward the English skills of HFOS are presented in Tables 3-17. The Raw Scores and Mean Scores which are presented in the tables below are calculated base on the level of opinion offered on the scale: 4 = Highly Agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree and 1 = Highly Disagree. The number of respondents multiplied by the number on the scale, then add together equals the Raw Score. The Mean Score is the Raw Score divided by the number of respondents (50).

The Mean Scores in this study are divided into 4 levels which are >3.50 (Highly Agree), 2.50-3.49 (Agree), 1.50-2.49 (Disagree) and 1.00-1.49 (Highly Disagree).

Table 3 presents the responses of the respondents to the statement, "The HFOS could understand a face to face communication".

TABLE 3: FACE TO FACE COMMUNICATION

	Highly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Highly Disagree	Number of Answers	Raw Score	Mean Score
The HFOS could understand a face to face communication.	9	28	11	2	50	144	2.88

Table 3 shows that guests agreed (mean score 2.88) when asked their opinion about how much the HFOS understood a face to face communication. The highest level of opinion was that guests agreed that the HFOS could understand face to face communication skills, 28 (56%) respondents; 9 (18%) highly agreed; 11 (22%) disagreed and 2 (4%) highly disagreed.

Telephone conversation

Table 4 presents the responses of the respondents to the statement, "The HFOS could understand and follow what the guests said on the telephone conversation".

TABLE 4: TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

	Highly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Highly Disagree	Number of Answers	Raw Score	Mean Score
The HFOS could understand and follow what guests said on telephone conversation.	4	20	23	3	50	125	2.50

Table 4 reveals that the guests agreed that the HFOS could understand a telephone communication with a mean score of 2.50. Four (8%) highly agreed with the telephone communication skills of HFOS; 20 (40%) agreed that the HFOS could understand a telephone communication; 23 (46%) disagreed, and 3 (6%) highly disagreed.

Guests' questions or requests

Table 5 presents the responses of the respondents to the statement, "The HFOS could answer the guests' questions or requests in a correct and clear manner".

TABLE: 5 GUESTS' QUESTIONS OR REQUESTS

	Highly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Highly Disagree	Number of Answers	Raw Score	Mean Score
The HFOS could answer guests' question or requests in a correct and clear manner	10	23	15	2	50	141	2.82

Table 5 illustrates that the guests agreed that the HFOS could answer their questions or requests in a correct and clear manner with a mean score of 2.82. Ten (20%) highly agreed; 23 (46%) agreed; 15 (30%) disagreed, and 2 (4%) highly disagreed.

Speaking skill

Table 6 presents the responses of the respondents to the statement. "The HFOS could speak English fluently, smoothly and effectively".

TABLE 6: SPEAKING SKILL

	Highly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Highly Disagree	Number of Answers	Raw Score	Mean Score
The HFOS could speak English fluently, smoothly and effectively.	5	14	25	6	50	118	2.36

The guests disagreed that the HFOS could speak English fluently, smoothly and effectively with a mean score of 2.36. This is illustrated in table 6.

Catching telephone conversations

Table 7 presents the responses of the respondents to the statement, "The HFOS were able to catch what guests said on the telephone and converse with guests".

TABLE 7: CATCHING TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS

	Highly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Highly Disagree	Number of Answers	Raw Score	Mean Score
The HFOS were able to catch what guests said on the telephone and converse with guests.	1	24	22	3	50	123	2.46

Table 7 indicates that 24 (48%) agreed that the HFOS were able to catch what the guests said on the telephone and converse with them; 22 (44%) disagreed. Only 1 (2%) highly agreed. Guests disagreed that the HFOS were able to catch what the guests said on the telephone and converse with the guests with a mean score of 2.46.

Answering guests' call

Table 8 presents the responses of respondents to the statement, "The HFOS answered guests' call swiftly, courteously and efficiently".

TABLE 8: ANSWERING GUESTS' CALL

	Highly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Highly Disagree	Number of Answers	Raw Score	Mean Score
The HFOS answered guests' call swiftly, courteously and efficiently.	8	21	17	4	50	133	2.66

Table 8 demonstrates that 8 (16%) of the guests highly agreed; 21 (42%) agreed; 17 (34%) disagreed, and 4 (8%) highly disagreed. Overall the guests agreed that the HFOS answered their call **swiftly**, **courteously** and **efficiently** with a mean score of 2.66.

Continuing conversation

Table 9 presents the responses of the respondents to the statement, "The HFOS could continue a conversation smoothly".

TABLE 9: CONTINUING CONVERSATION

	Highly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Highly Disagree	Number of Answers	Raw Score	Mean Score
The HFOS could continue the conversation smoothly.	6	20	20	4	50	128	2.56

Table 9 shows that 6 (12%) highly agreed that the HFOS could continue a conversation smoothly. Twenty (40%) agreed and disagreed and 4 (8%) highly disagreed. The guests agreed that the HFOS could continue the conversation smoothly with a mean score of 2.56.

Hotel services and outside services' information

Table 10 presents the responses of the respondents to the statement, "The HFOS could give information and provide details about hotel services and outside services".

TABLE 10: HOTEL SERVICES AND OUTSIDE SERVICES' INFORMATION

	Highly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Highly Disagree	Number of Answers	Raw Score	Mean Score
The HFOS could give information and provide details about hotel services and outside services.	6	21	19	4	50	129	2.58

Table 10 indicates that the guests agreed that the HFOS could give information and provide details about hotel services and outside services with a mean score of 2.58. Six (12%) highly agreed; 21 (42%) agreed; 19 (38%) disagreed, and 4 (8%) highly disagreed.

Directions of places

Table 11 presents the responses of the respondents to the statement, "The HFOS could give the guests information or directions to places that guests wanted to go".

TABLE 11: DIRECTIONS OF PLACES

	Highly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Highly Disagree	Number of Answers	Raw Score	Mean Score
The HFOS could give guests information or directions to places that guests wanted to go.	6	19	17	8	50	123	2.46

Table 11 illustrates that the guests disagreed that the HFOS could give information or directions to places that they wanted to go with a mean score of 2.46. Of the guests, 6 (12%) highly agreed, 19 (38%) agreed, 17 (34%) disagreed and 8 (16%) highly disagreed.

Choice of word

Table 12 presents the responses of the respondents to the statement, "The HFOS' choice of words was easy for guests to understand".

TABLE 12: CHOICE OF WORD

	Highly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Highly Disagree	Number of Answers	Raw Score	Mean Score
10. The HFOS' choice of words was easy for guests to understand.	4	31	12	3	50	136	2.72

Guests agreed that the HFOS' choice of words was easy for them to understand with a mean score of 2.72. The largest number of guests respondents agreed, 31 (62%); 4 (8%) highly agreed; 12 (24%) disagreed; and 3 (6%) highly disagreed.

Limited vocabulary

Table 13 presents the responses of the respondents to the statement, "The HFOS could communicate with guests without the difficulties of limited vocabulary".

TABLE13: LIMITED VOCABULARY

	Highly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Highly Disagree	Number of Answers	Raw Score	Mean Score
The HFOS could communicate with guests without the difficulties of limited vocabulary.	4	19	22	4	50	122	2.44

Table 11 shows that the guests disagreed (mean score 2.44) that the HFOS could communicate with them without the difficulties due to limited vocabulary. Four (8%) highly agreed or highly disagreed; 19 (38%) agreed; 22 (44%) disagreed.

Grammar

Table 14 presents the responses of the respondents to the statement, "The HFOS could communicate with guests without the difficulties of limited vocabulary.

TABLE 14 GRAMMAR

	Highly	Agree	Disagree	Highly	Number of	Raw	Mean
	Agree			Disagree			
The HFOS used correct grammar when speaking with guests	1	14	27	8	50	108	2.16

Table 14 demonstrates that guests disagreed that the HFOS used correct grammar when speaking with them with a mean score of 2.16. Only 1 (2%) highly agreed; 14 (28%) agreed; 27 (54%) disagreed, and 8 (16%) highly disagreed.

Pronunciation

Table 15 presents the responses of the respondents to the statement, "The HFOS pronounced words clearly and correctly when speaking with guests".

TABLE 15: PRONUNCIATION

Item	Highly	Agree	Disagree	Highly	Number	Raw	Mean
	Agree			Disagree			
The HFOS pronounced words clearly and correctly when speaking with guests.	3	14	23	10	50	110	2.20

Table 15 indicates that 3 (16%) of the guests highly agreed; 14 (28%) agreed; 23 (46%) disagreed; and 10 (20%) highly disagreed that the HFOS pronounced words clearly and

correctly when speaking with guests. The guests disagreed about this with a mean score of 2.20.

Stress

Table 16 presents the responses of the respondents to the statement. "The HFOS place stress on the correct syllable or key words when speaking with the guests".

TABLE 16: STRESS

	Highly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Highly Disagree	Number of Answers	Raw Score	Mean Score
The HFOS places stress on the correct syllable or key words when speaking with guests	1	19	22	8	50	113	2.26

Table 16 reveals that the guests disagreed (mean score 2.26) that the HFOS placed stress on the correct syllable or key words when speaking to them. Only 1 (2%) highly agreed; 19 (38%) agreed; 22 (44%) disagreed, and 8 (16%) highly disagreed.

Intonation

Table 17 presents the responses of the respondents to the statement, "The HFOS spoke clearly and accurately with rising and falling intonation".

TABLE 17: INTONATION

	Highly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Highly Disagree	Number of Answers	Raw Score	Mean Score
The HFOS spoke clearly and accurately by rising and falling intonation.	2	17	22	9	50	112	2.24

Table 17 shows that the guests disagreed that the HFOS spoke clearly and accurately by rising and falling intonation with a mean score of 2.24. Two (4%) of the guests highly agreed; 17 (34%) agreed; 22 (44%) disagreed, and 9 (18%) highly disagreed.

In summary, the guests responded quite similarly to the statements which are the basic of Tables 3-17. All responses fell between Agree and Disagree: Agreed with mean scores of 2.88, 2.50, 2.82, 2.66, 2.56, 2.58 and 2.72; Disagree with mean scores of 2.36, 2.46, 2.44, 2.16, 2.20, 2.26 and 2.24. The total average mean score was 2.48. The respondents considered that overall the language skills of the HFOS were adequate. It was not excellent and it was not very poor.

Part 3 Communication barriers

Respondents were asked to classify the barriers that took place during conversations with HFOS and the barriers that caused misunderstanding when guests communicated with HFOS. Moreover, respondents were asked to classify the barriers which are the most important for HFOS to communicate with guests.

Table 18 presents the responses of the respondents to the statement, "Barriers that took place during conversation with HFOS".

TABLE 18: BARRIERS DURING CONVERSATION

Situation	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Barriers that took place during conversation with HFOS:		
-Choice of words	14	28
-Lack of vocabulary	15	30
-Grammar	6	12
-Pronunciation	15	30
Total	50	100

Table 18 shows that thirty per cent of the respondents said that lack of vocabulary and pronunciation were the barriers that most often took place during conversations with HFOS, followed closely by choice of words (28%), of least importance was grammar (12%).

Barriers that caused misunderstanding during conversation

Table 19 presents the responses of the respondents to the statement, "Barriers that caused misunderstanding during conversations between guests and HFOS"

TABLE 19: BARRIERS THAT CAUSED MISUNDERSTANDING DURING CONVERSATION

Situation	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Barriers that caused misunderstanding during conversation between guests and HFOS;		
-Choice of words	15	30
-Lack of vocabulary	17	34
-Grammar	4	8
-Pronunciation	14	28
Total	50	100

Table 19 demonstrates that 34 per cent of the guests thought that lack of vocabulary was the barrier that caused misunderstanding during conversation between the guests and HFOS while 30 per cent thought that the barrier was choice of words and 28% said that pronunciation was the barrier.

The most important barrier for HFOS

Table 20 presents the responses of the respondents to the statement, "Barriers which are the most important for HFOS to communicate with guests".

TABLE 20: THE MOST IMPORTANT BARRIER FOR HFOS

Situation	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Barriers which are the most important for HFOS to communicate with guests;		
-Choice of words	17	34
-Lack of vocabulary	16	32
-Grammar	4	8
-Pronunciation	13	26
Total	50	100

Table 20 demonstrates that choice of words (34%) was the most important for HFOS to communicate with guests, while 32 per cent of the guests replied that lack of vocabulary was the most important for HFOS to communicate with them.

In summary, choice of words and lack of vocabulary are the barriers that took place during the conversations and caused misunderstandings when guests communicated with HFOS. These 2 barriers are the most important for HFOS to communicate with guests.

The level of understanding of the staff's communication

The guests were asked how well they understood the communication level of HFOS. The data are tabulated in Table 21 below.

TABLE 21: THE LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING OF THE STAFF'S COMMUNICATION

	Very well	Well	Poorly	Very poorly	Total %
Guests understand the communication level of the staff	16%	58%	26%	0	100

As seen in Table 21, 58 per cent of the guests said that they well understood the communication level of the staff while 26 per cent of the guests said that they poorly understood the communication level of the staff.

Guests' opinion toward communication skill of HFOS

Table 22 presents the responses of the respondents to the statement, "The communication level of HFOS should be improved".

TABLE 22: GUESTS' OPINION TOWARD COMMUNICATION SKILLS OF HFOS

	Yes	No	Total
The communication level of HFOS should be improved.	84%	16%	100%

Table 22 shows that 84 per cent of the guests said that the communication level of HFOS should be improved, while 16 per cent of the guests said that the communication level of HFOS was satisfactory.

Training course

Table 23 presents the responses of the respondents to the statement, "The hotel should provide the English training course in listening and speaking for HFOS".

TABLE 23 TRAINING COURSE

	Yes	No	Total
The hotel should provide the English training courses in listening and speaking for HFOS.	90%	10%	100%

Table 23 shows that 90 per cent of the guests thought that the hotel should provide English training courses in listening and speaking for HFOS.

In summary, most of the guests said that they would recommend the hotel where they had stayed for their family and friends. Most of the guests' responses toward the statements about the HFOS English language skills fell in the area of Agree or Disagree, i.e. they felt that the English language skills of the HFOS were adequate. Choice of words and lack of vocabulary were 2 barriers that took place during conversation and caused misunderstanding when guests communicate with HFOS. Although guests are well understand the communication level of HFOS, the communication level of HFOS should be improved and the hotel should provide the English training course in listening and speaking for HFOS.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, conclusions are drawn with regard to the two research questions of the study. The conclusions are followed by discussion and recommendations for further study.

Conclusions

The conclusions of the study are presented below with regard to each of the two research questions of the study.

Question 1: How well do HFOS communicate verbally with Non-Asian guests?

Overall, the opinions toward the English skills of HFOS of all respondents in the study from Tables 3-17 fall between Agree and Disagree.

When the respondents were asked about their level of understanding of the staff's communication, 58% of the respondents said that they understood well the communication of the staff, 16% said that they understood very well, 26% said they understood poorly while no one said they understood very poorly.

A summary of the findings shows that HFOS communicated verbally with Non-Asian guests rather well. Overall, the respondents considered that the language skills of the HFOS were adequate. Their communication was not excellent because no respondent highly agreed with the questionnaire statements and it was not very poor because no respondent highly disagreed with the questionnaire statements.

Moreover, fifty-eight per cent of the respondents answered that they understand well the communication of the staff. No respondents answered that they understood very poorly.

Question 2: Which barriers hinder verbal communication of HFOS?

Based on Tables 18-20, lack of vocabulary and pronunciation were the barriers that took place during the conversations between the guests and HFOS, followed closely by choice of words.

The barriers that caused misunderstanding during the conversations between the guests and HFOS were lack of vocabulary and choice of words. Furthermore, the

respondents responded on Table 20 that choice of words and lack of vocabulary were the most important for HFOS when communicate with guests.

In conclusion, choice of words and lack of vocabulary were the 2 barriers which hindered the verbal communication of HFOS.

Discussion

Hotel front office staff (HFOS) are the representatives of the hotel in the eyes of most guests because the only contact most guests have with hotel employees is with the HFOS. Thus, communication, especially verbal communication, is an important aspect of the way in which HFOS communicate with guests. However, there are barriers when HFOS communicate with guests such as lack of vocabulary and choice of words. The purpose of the study was to investigate the English verbal communication skills of HFOS and the barriers that occur during conversation.

As has been mentioned in Chapter 1, this research is a complimentary study of Miss Arunee Namamuti who wrote the thesis entitle, "A Study of English Communication between Hotel Front Desk Staff and ASEAN Guests". It was not surprising that the findings of this research study were similar with Miss Arunee's thesis. The main problems were in listening and speaking abilities, for example, hotel front desk staff did not always understand what the guests said or what they wanted. They had problems when talking to hotel guests, likely due to limitations in their vocabulary. Guests strongly agreed that English language training should be given to the hotel front desk staff. the conversation. Guests well understood the communication level of the HFOS. If the hotel provide the English training course in listening and speaking for HFOS, the communication level of HFOS will be improve.

The findings of this research study showed that for the opinion toward the English skills of HFOS, most of the responses to statements about the HFOS' English language skills were ranked in the level of Agree or Disagree with a total average mean score of 2.48 on the border between Agree and Disagree.

The guests disagreed that the HFOS could speak English fluently, smoothly and effectively. Sometimes the HFOS cannot keep the conversation going effectively. HFOS

have to pause for grammatical issues or take time to think of vocabulary that they will use to communicate with the guests. The HFOS were not able to catch what the guests said on the telephone and converse with the guests. As the guests from different countries have different accents in English and some words are difficult for HFOS to understand, so HFOS perceive difficulties in their own listening abilities. HFOS could not get the main idea of the conversation or sometimes they cannot hear the guests clearly. So the guests must speak slowly and use simple word in order to help HFOS more understanding. If HFOS know some certain expressions or can use a telephone alphabetic system, their conversations will precede more smoothly.

In addition, the findings of this research study show that the guests disagreed that HFOS could give guests information or directions to places that guests wanted to go. HFOS' duties are not only greeting, welcoming or checking in the guests, HFOS have to provide information that the guests want to go. Sometimes the guests have problem with buses or taxi but HFOS could not provide and information to them. HFOS do not know the names of places in English and take a time to think of vocabulary in order to provide the information to guests. It was not surprising that the findings of this research paper shown that the guests disagreed that HFOS could communicate with the guests without the difficulties of limited vocabulary. HFOS have a limitation of vocabulary both technical terms and general vocabulary, i.e. when HFOS must provide information for guests. HFOS take a long time to think of vocabulary.

The findings also reveal that the guests disagreed that HFOS used correct grammar when speaking with guests. When guests use the correct grammar to speak with HFOS, HFOS do not understand what guests say. HFOS could not pronounce words clearly and correctly which confused foreigners. Mispronunciation and grammatical errors can be distracting the listener's attention and reveal weaknesses in the speaker's education and professional ability.

Furthermore, the findings of this research show that choice of words and lack of vocabulary are two barriers that occurred during the conversation. HFOS were unable to use the proper words to express their ideas in a fluent form.

Although the overall findings show that guests well understood the communication of the staff and the language skills of the HFOS were adequate, there are some barriers and some difficulties which occur during the conversation as mentioned earlier. It was not surprising that the findings of this research paper reveal that the communication level of HFOS should be improved and the hotel should provide the English training courses in listening and speaking for HFOS.

Suggestion

Based on brief interviews, guests suggested that the HFOS needed to know and learn more English. HFOS should be trained as well as possible oral English skills. Oral English courses for the HFOS are beneficial.

Recommendations

1. Further research concerning verbal communication skills at other departments in the hotel, such as Bell Service or Food and Beverage, should be conducted because the staff of these departments also have to communicate with foreign guests.

2. A wider survey of Verbal communication skills of hotel front office staff should be conducted in a guesthouse or homestay or at major tourism cities throughout Thailand such as Chiangmai, Pattaya and Phuket.

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APPENDIX

Appendix
Questionnaire for the Hotel Guests

Questionnaire for Hotel Guests

This questionnaire is part of a graduate research project at Srinakarinwirot University on the English skills of Hotel Front Office Staff (HFOS) in hotels in Bangkok. The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential.

Part 1: General information

1. Your nationality is.....
2. Would you recommend this hotel to your family and friends?.....

Part 2: Survey of guests' opinions toward the English skills of HFOS

Item	Highly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Highly Disagree
1. The HFOS could understand and follow what you said in a face to face conversation.				
2. The HFOS could understand and follow what you said in a telephone conversation.				
3. The HFOS could answer your questions or requests in a correct and clear manner.				
4. The HFOS could speak English fluently, smoothly and effectively.				
5. The HFOS were able to catch what you said on the telephone and converse with you.				
6. The HFOS answered your call swiftly, courteously and efficiently.				
7. The HFOS could continue a conversation smoothly.				
8. The HFOS could give information and provide details about hotel services and outside services.				

Item	Highly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Highly Disagree
9 The HFOS could give you information or directions to places that you wanted to go, for example, locations in the surrounding area, shopping centers, restaurants, etc.				
10. The choice of words that the HFOS made to converse with you were easy for you to understand.				
11. The HFOS could communicate with you without the difficulties of limited vocabulary.				
12. The HFOS use correct grammar when speaking with you.				
13. The HFOS pronounced words clearly and correctly when speaking with you.				
14. The HFOS place stress on the correct syllable or key words when speaking with you.				
15. The HFOS spoke clearly and accurately with rising and falling intonation.				

Part 3: Communication barriers

1. What kinds of barriers took place during conversations with HFOS?

.....choice of wordslack of vocabularygrammarpronunciation

2. What caused misunderstandings during conversations between you and HFOS?

.....choice or wordslack of vocabularygrammar

.....pronunciation

3. In your opinion, which of the following 1. choice of words 2. lack of vocabulary 3. grammar 4. pronunciation are the most important for HFOS to communicate with hotel guests?.....

4. Do you understand the communication level of the staff?

.....very wellwellpoorlyvery poorly

5. Should the communication level of the staff be improved?.....yesno

6. Do you think the hotel should provide the English training course in listening and speaking for the HFOS?.....yesno

VITAE

VITAE

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**A STUDY OF ENGLISH VERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS OF
HOTEL FRONT OFFICE STAFF AS OBSERVED BY NON-ASIAN
GUESTS**

AN ABSTRACT

BY

MISS KASARIN JAISUTTHI

27 011 258

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Master of Arts Degree in Business English for International Communication
at Srinakharinwirot University

March 2006

Kasarin Jaisutthi. (2006). *A Study of English Verbal Communication Skills of Hotel Front Office Staff as Observed by Non-Asian Guests*. Master's Project, M.A. (Business English for International Communication). Bangkok: Graduate School, Srinakharinwirot University. Project Advisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Amporn Srisermbhok.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the English listening and speaking skills of hotel front office staff (HFOS) and the barriers that occur during conversation by exploring the opinions of Non-Asian guests and also to identify HFOS' weaknesses and whether HFOS have difficulty or not when they communicate with guests. The subjects consisted of 50 Non-Asian guests. The data were collected by questionnaires and then analyzed by percentage and means. The findings were as follows:

1. HFOS did well communicating verbally with Non-Asian guests.
2. Choice of words and lack of vocabulary were two barriers which hindered verbal communication of HFOS followed by pronunciation and grammar respectively.

From the findings, it is suggested that the HFOS could learn more English. HFOS should be trained as well as possible to speak English. Extra oral English courses for the HFOS is beneficial.

การศึกษาคำความคิดเห็นของผู้ใช้บริการซึ่งไม่ใช่ชาวเอเชียที่มีต่อพนักงานต้อนรับส่วนหน้าของโรงแรมใน
การใช้ทักษะการฟังและการพูดภาษาอังกฤษ

บทคัดย่อ

ของ

นางสาวกษรินทร์ ใจสุทธิ

เสนอต่อบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ เพื่อเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตร

ปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษธุรกิจเพื่อการสื่อสารนานาชาติ

มีนาคม 2549

กษรินทร์ ใจสุทธิ. (2548). การศึกษาความคิดเห็นของผู้ใช้บริการซึ่งไม่ใช่ชาวเอเชียที่มีต่อพนักงานต้อนรับส่วนหน้าของโรงแรมในการใช้ทักษะการฟังและการพูดภาษาอังกฤษ. สารนิพนธ์ ศศ.ม (ภาษาอังกฤษธุรกิจเพื่อการสื่อสารนานาชาติ). กรุงเทพฯ: บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ. อาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาสารนิพนธ์: ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์ ดร. อัมพร ศรีเสริมโภค

การศึกษาวิจัยฉบับนี้มีจุดประสงค์ เพื่อสำรวจทักษะการฟังและการพูดภาษาอังกฤษของพนักงานต้อนรับส่วนหน้าของโรงแรม และปัญหาที่เกิดขึ้นในระหว่างการสนทนาระหว่างพนักงานต้อนรับส่วนหน้าของโรงแรมกับลูกค้า โดยการสำรวจความคิดเห็นของผู้มาใช้บริการชาวต่างชาติ ยกเว้นชาวเอเชีย โดยรวบรวมข้อมูลจากแบบสอบถามจากผู้ให้บริการชาวต่างชาติจำนวน50คน ข้อมูลที่ได้นำมาแปลงเป็นเปอร์เซ็นต์และค่ากลาง ได้ผลดังนี้

1. พนักงานต้อนรับส่วนหน้าต้อนรับส่วนหน้าสามารถสื่อสารภาษาอังกฤษด้วยทักษะการฟังและการพูดกับลูกค้าชาวต่างชาติที่ไม่ใช่ชาวเอเชียในระดับดี
2. การเลือกใช้คำศัพท์ และ การขาดความรู้ทางด้านคำศัพท์ เป็น2อุปสรรคสำคัญที่พนักงานต้อนรับมีปัญหาในการสนทนากับลูกค้าชาวต่างชาติ ตามด้วยสำเนียงการออกเสียงและ ไวยากรณ์ตามลำดับ

ข้อเสนอแนะในการวิจัยนี้คือ พนักงานต้อนรับส่วนหน้าควรมีการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษให้มากขึ้น ควรมีการฝึกอบรมให้กับพนักงานโดยเฉพาะ คอร์สเกี่ยวกับการพูดภาษาอังกฤษ