



การวิเคราะห์เรื่องความต้องการในด้านทักษะการสื่อสารภาษาอังกฤษที่จำเป็นของพนักงานฝ่ายการ
โดยสารที่สนามบินสุวรรณภูมิ

NEEDS ANALYSIS IN ENGLISH ORAL COMMUNICATION OF PASSENGER
SERVICE AGENTS AT SUVARANABHUMI AIRPORT

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2018

การวิเคราะห์เรื่องความต้องการในด้านทักษะการสื่อสารภาษาอังกฤษที่จำเป็นของ
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NEEDS ANALYSIS IN ENGLISH ORAL COMMUNICATION OF
PASSENGER SERVICE AGENTS AT SUVARANABHUMI AIRPORT



PHATTHARANIT PANNUAN

A Master's Project Submitted in partial Fulfillment of Requirements
for MASTER OF ARTS (English)

Faculty of Humanities Srinakharinwirot University

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THE MASTER’S PROJECT TITLED
NEEDS ANALYSIS IN ENGLISH ORAL COMMUNICATION OF PASSENGER
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BY
PHATTHARANIT PANNUAN

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This study aimed to investigate the level of need for English speaking and listening skills and to identify these needs in terms of these two skills among passenger service agents in Thailand with different levels of work experience. The participants in this study included one hundred and three passenger service agents from a number of airlines working at the check-in counters and boarding gates at Suvarnabhumi Airport in Bangkok, Thailand. The instrument employed in this study was a questionnaire and the research design was quantitative. The questionnaire was used to collect data about their needs levels in terms of English speaking and listening skills and to identify the needs of participants with different levels of work experience. The findings of this study revealed that English speaking and listening skills were highly necessary for their jobs, with mean scores of 4.39 and 4.41, respectively. In terms of speaking, it was also highly necessary when dealing with passengers and apologizing when mistakes were made, with a mean score of 4.77. However, in terms of listening, being able to understand the needs and wants of passengers was very necessary with a mean score of 4.79. Among the three groups of service agents with different levels of experience, all of the groups agreed that speaking skills were the most required skill for the task of “dealing with passengers and apologizing when mistakes occurred” with a mean score 4.79 with regarding listening skills. However, the groups with one to three years and four to six years of experience agreed to rate the highest need on the tasks as “being able to understand the needs and wants of the passengers” with a mean score of 4.75 and 4.81 respectively. However, the group with six years and over of experience rated the highest need on the tasks “being able to understand what foreign cabin crews said” and “being able to comprehend what a supervisor assigns to do”, with a mean score

4.95. In short, the results of this study may be useful as a guideline to determine the level of oral communication needs in English language training courses.

Keyword : Oral Communication, Needs Analysis, Passenger Service Agents



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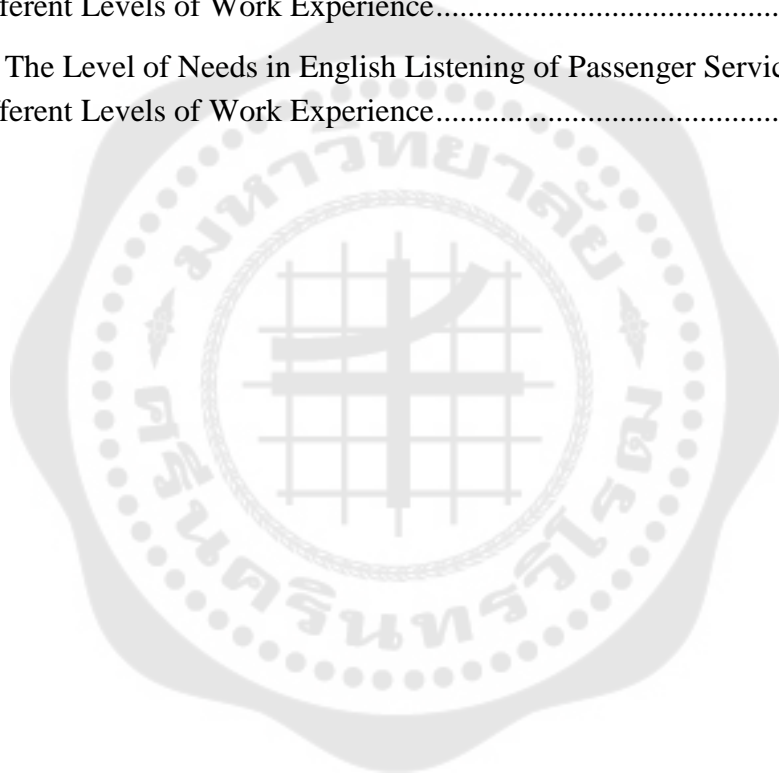
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

In the airline business industry, English has been widely used to communicate with foreigners. As it is the main language used for international communication, English is essential for the airline business in order to deal with passengers (Davidoff, 1994). According to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), English plays an essential role in the airline industry. English is employed globally as the official language of passenger service agents who work with passengers. Therefore, communication in English is necessary for staff in terms of handling passengers during their journey and bringing them safely to their destination.

Additionally, the move towards an ASEAN Single Aviation Market has boosted infrastructure investment and aviation development plans in the region (BOI, 2016). In this way, it can be seen to drive regional competition and has a positive impact on the aviation industry. The Thai government supported the growth of the aerospace industry by providing benefits and encouragement through the Board of Investment (BOI). The Board of Investment incentives bolster the potential of Thailand to attract new aerospace investment projects. Because of the attractiveness of tourism in Thailand, air traffic is currently growing.

In addition, since the establishment of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), one plan of the ASEAN community is to promote English as a common language among ASEAN members (Kirkpatrick, 2010). Thailand also actively participates in this process at an international level. This is an opportunity to improve

their English because English is the official language of ASEAN member countries. The use of English in the airline industry should be a major concern for people who work in this field in Thailand. The airline industry is one of the fields that is considered to have a primary role of development in ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) programs.

Moreover, the role of tourism becomes even more significant (TAT, 2017). Tourism has expanded in Thailand with 37.55 million tourists expected to visit the region in 2018 (Thakral. & Sriring, 2018) As a result of this rise in tourists, they selected Thailand as their destination and the steadily growing numbers of tourists continue to increase. Thailand has set a goal to be an Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) tourism hub in five major areas in 2017, including Sports Tourism, Medical and Wellness Tourism, Wedding and Romance Tourism, Marine Tourism, and ASEAN Connect (TAT, 2017). Thailand itself has sustainable tourism growth, sufficient manpower and the development of air transportation, as well as the unique nature of Thai culture.

Passenger service agents play an important role in supporting the image of the airlines (Law & Doerflein, 2014). Communication with passengers is the first point of interaction between the airline and its passengers (Law & Doerflein, 2014). The first impressions of the passengers will influence their travel experience for the rest of their journey. Notably, passenger service agents need to use appropriate English to communicate properly with passengers from numerous countries (Tangniam, 2006). With a high demand for English within the airline industry, English speaking and listening skills are extremely necessary for universal use (Uraipan, 2011). As a passenger service agent, this is one of the most important jobs

at the airport. Passenger service agents should be informative in terms of providing the correct information to passengers. Passenger service agents performed several functions to fulfill their needs by checking in passengers, verifying travel documents, accepting baggage and assisting at the boarding gate for arriving and departing passengers. As a result, successful communication in English with passengers and a good command of English will create a positive attitude with the passengers.

English speaking and listening skills are important skills required for communication, especially in the international workplace (Jeharsae, 2014). She found that speaking skills tended to play more of an important role in communication. Also, a study by Aunruen (2005) indicated that the use of English was highly important among staff in an international workplace. Speaking and listening skills were also considered to be highly important when staff communicate with tourists. She reported that there was a need for English job training for travel agent staff. Thus, any speaking and listening problems while performing their jobs affected the image of the airline and the trust of its passengers. Also, a study by Phithakphongphan (2016) mentioned that ground staff need the speaking skills most at the highest level followed by listening skills at the same level. The speaking and listening skills among the ground staff are an important concern, especially in terms of face-to-face communication. He found that the skills most used in face-to-face communication included speaking and listening.

Interestingly, in order to perform job effectively, several airlines required their staff to take the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) which needed to be taken before applying for the job. The TOEIC test is specially designed to evaluate the ability of an applicant in dealing with the English language

for business purposes. TOEIC is acceptable used for recruiting applicants in the airline business industry (Sirikanjanawong & Wasanasomsithi, 2018). The score range of TOEIC for passenger service agents varied (Uraipan, 2011). For example, some airlines set minimum standard scores at 550 to 650 points. At present, those who work in the airline industry must hold scores high enough to reach the requirements. However, in reality, those who had a score higher than minimum requirement still encountered problems when dealing with passengers. This is because the TOEIC test does not certify the effectiveness of English oral communication, as speaking is not assessed (Dhanasmithivesn, 2007). Therefore, it is necessary to identify the needs for speaking and listening skills among passenger service agents to improve their performance.

Passenger service agents play a key role in supporting the image of the airline. Notably, passenger service agents needed to use appropriate English to communicate properly with passengers from various countries. Although these passenger service agents were trained to use English in real situations, but problems when communicating with passengers may still occur.

Objectives of the study

This study had the following objectives:

1. To examine the needs of English speaking and listening skills among passenger service agents.
2. To identify the needs in English speaking and listening of passenger service agents with different levels of work experience.

Research Questions

This study is designed to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent do passenger service agents need English speaking and listening skills?
2. What are the needs of English speaking and listening passenger service agents of different work experience?

Significance of the study

This study aims to examine needs for English speaking and listening skills. The findings of this study will enable passenger service agents to have a better understanding of their speaking and listening needs when they communicated with passengers in English. Moreover, the results of this study will be useful for passenger service agents. This may raise awareness of their needs to improve their English speaking and listening skills. In addition, the results of the research may provide helpful information for the Human Resources Department. They can select a suitable way to recruit new staff with good English abilities and also arrange an appropriate English training course.

Scope of the study

The study is limited to investigating the speaking and listening skills of passenger service agents when communicating with passengers. In particular, this study focused on needs for speaking and listening skills. A set of questionnaires will be randomly distributed to 103 passenger service agents working at Suvarnabhumi Airport. All of the participants will be asked to complete a questionnaire.

Definition of Terms

Some technical terms mentioned in this study are commonly used by passenger service agents and essential for those with an interest in this study. In order to share a common understanding, the terms and definitions in this study can be specifically defined, as follows:

English speaking and listening skill needs - The requirements of English speaking and listening skills for passenger service agents include the English speaking and listening skill needs required to communicate with foreign passengers. English skill needs are useful for establishing the levels of English proficiency required by the company to be more competitive and productive.

Passenger Service Agent - A passenger service agent provides a quality service to passengers in terms of boarding, check-in, special services and baggage services as per company standards and safety procedures.

Oral communication - Oral Communication refers to any type of interaction that expresses information through spoken words and can be considered a vital part of the business world. The forms of oral communication organization include face-to-face meetings, telephone calls or speeches.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is an investigation of the needs for English speaking and listening among passenger service agents who work at Suvarnabhumi Airport in Bangkok, Thailand. Consequently, some of the related literature and research was reviewed to obtain sufficient background knowledge for the study. This chapter reviews some previous studies used to support the study. It can be divided into the following four topics:

1. Service Standards of Passenger Service Agents
2. Purpose for Communication
3. Needs Analysis
4. Related Studies

Service Standards among Passenger Service Agents

Air Transport Service Process

The service delivery system for air transportation is presented below in the form of a flow-chart for the entire hospitality and tourism industry, by (Davidoff, 1994) in (Figure 1).

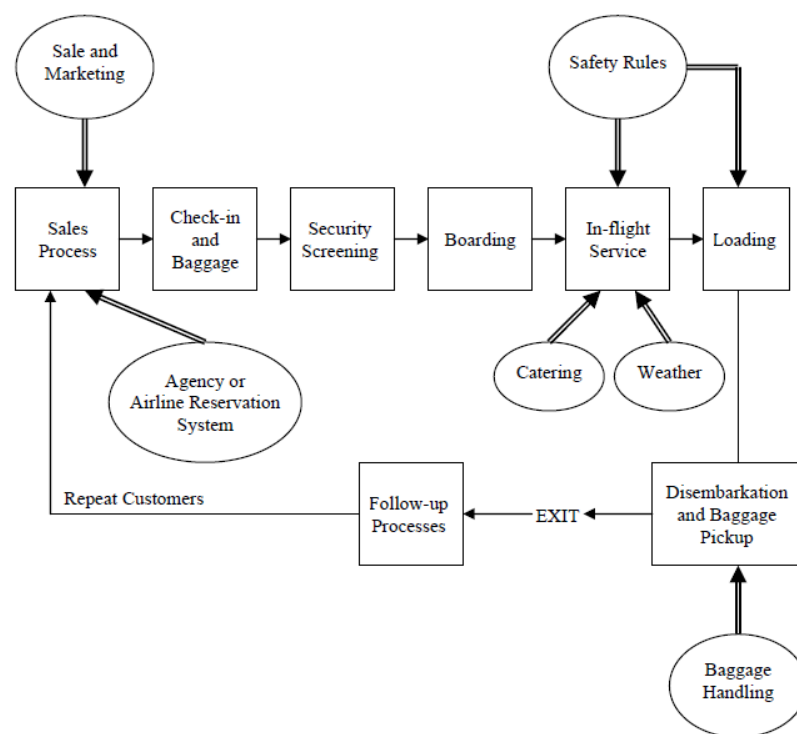


Figure 1: Air Transportation Service Process by (Davidoff, 1994)

1. Check-in Counter

The first process at the airport is usually check-in. Passengers wait in line inside at airport terminal to check in, receive seat assignment and a boarding pass. Some of them have checked in online, but have not received their boarding pass yet. As a passenger service agent, smiling and greeting the passengers is a requirement.

Then, travel documents, tickets, passports and visas are requested from passengers. Check-in counters at airports today have passport equipment scanners that allow passenger service agents to collect passport information directly by scanning the biographical information page of each passport (Honkiss & Intakaew, 2013). The data of passengers will be transferred to the airline system. To reach the correct destination, passenger service agents need to confirm the destination with the passengers. In the case of expectant mothers, disabled or unhealthy passengers, passenger service agents need to verify that their health certificates meet the necessary conditions of passenger acceptance following airline regulations and procedures. After that, passenger service agents ask for seating preferences and accepted baggage, checked name labels, and dealt with fragile and prohibited items. Online check-in is available to reserve seats in advance of the flight. The remaining passengers who were unable to pre-reserve their seats in advance can have their seat assigned at the check-in counter. A seat map is shown to passengers to help them choose from the available seats. Upgrades or up-sells are available when better seats are empty at check-in time. After a passenger is assigned a seat number on the flight, the boarding pass will be printed. Passengers will be asked to accept the condition of baggage, for example, if it has been improperly packed or if there is damage of any kind. Next, a check is made to ensure that all hand luggage meets the individual airline requirements of weight and dimension. For passengers carrying oversized baggage, a guide to the oversize baggage counter is provided or after acceptance the baggage is forwarded through to the oversize counter if appropriate. The last step at the check-in counter is briefing passengers about the sector, seat number, boarding gate number, reporting

time at gate and baggage details on claim tags. Then, the passenger service agent guides the passengers to passport control.

2. Immigration

The main duty of immigration is to control passengers coming in and out of the country. Immigration officers have the authority to accept or refuse passengers. Passenger service agents contact immigration officers when passengers have problems with travel documents.

3. Airport Security

Airport security is located after the immigration area. Airport security officers take responsibility for screening passengers. The next step for passengers is to clear security screening. Airport staff also check the bags carried by the passengers and if passengers are not carrying dangerous items or liquids, they may clear security and pass through immigration to the boarding gate.

4. Boarding Gate

The boarding gate is the area where passengers board their flight. It is located after security and immigration. The duration of boarding time is limited. Normally, it takes fifteen to twenty minutes, but depends on airlines. Teamwork is essential at this stage. The main duties of passenger service agents at the boarding gate are to check travel documents, collect boarding passes and make flight announcements. All passengers are required to present a passport at the boarding gate. While the aircraft is being prepared for boarding, passenger service agents must

complete all of their duties before allowing passengers to pass through the boarding gate. Passenger service agents are required to check the documents of passengers immediately before boarding by matching names and photographs. Then, there will be a boarding gate reading machine installed at the boarding gate. Passenger service agents check passengers on the system as 'board'. Moreover, they had to deal with passengers who were unable to board on time.

To obtain the attention of passengers at the boarding gate area, boarding announcements notify and update passengers on the current boarding stage. The objective of this stage is to ensure the planned boarding sequence and the arrangement for passengers who required special handling. Then, a final boarding announcement was made to emphasize the approaching departure time and to urge passengers who are still on their way to the boarding gate to hurry.

5. In-flight Service

The in-flight service can be considered the exclusive domain of the cabin crew. The satisfaction of customers during the flight may please the passengers.

In-flight service expectations vary depending on the class of service. While the primary purposes for being on the airplane are the safety and security of the passengers, creating satisfaction is also the responsibility of the cabin crew. Generally, first-class passengers, expect more customer services and have higher levels of satisfaction.

6. Arrival

The arrival area is where passengers enter after they disembark from the aircraft. The landing procedure, disembarkation and baggage pick-up are among the steps in the airline service delivery process. Also, they must assist passengers who have connecting flights and a limited time to catch them. As the passengers come off the plane, they may be stressed and in a hurry to catch their flight. Passenger service agents need to be able to handle complaints about turbulent flights, lost or damaged luggage, as well as dealing with special passengers.

7. Check-in Process

The check-in process begins after welcoming passengers and checking passenger's travel documents and ticket (Law & Doerflein, 2014). Passenger service agents will retrieve a flight and add the personal information of the passengers to airline system. The check-in process is presented into the four steps in figure 2 by (Law & Doerflein, 2014).

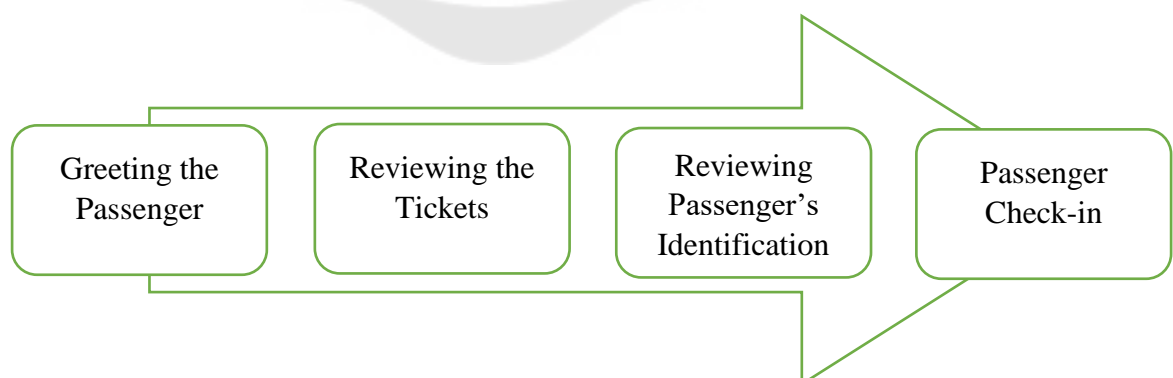


Figure 2: The check in process by (Law & Doerflein, 2014)

7.1. Greeting the passenger

This is the first face-to-face interaction between the passengers and passenger service agents. The main purpose of this stage is to verify that passengers are flying with the correct airline.

7.2 Reviewing the tickets

Passenger Service Agents are required to ensure that passengers have purchased a valid ticket. The reviewing process includes passenger name, flight number, seat number, the departure date, departure city and city of arrival (Law & Doerflein, 2014). There were two types of tickets, which are as follows:

7.2.1. Paper tickets are issued in the form of the flight coupons (Honkiss & Intakaew, 2013). The flight coupons refer to the documents that contain exact flight information. Paper tickets are particularly useful for passengers. In case of a flight cancellation, due to mechanical or weather issues, passengers are allowed to travel on the specific flight indicated on the ticket coupon. After that, passenger service agents will collect the paper tickets.

7.2.2. Electronic Tickets Electronic tickets (E-tickets) are a common of issuing tickets (Honkiss & Intakaew, 2013). Electronic tickets contain the names of passengers, their seats and flight information. Since tickets are issued electronically, passengers need to present their travel documents at the check-in counter. Then, the passenger service agents print the boarding passes. Those passengers who purchased electronic tickets were allowed to check-in online or at the check-in counter.

7.3 Reviewing Passenger's Identification

After reviewing their tickets, the next step is to review of the identification of the passengers and then match them with their identification. Many

types of approved identification include identification cards, passports and visas. In most countries, passengers who travel internationally typically carry passports. Some countries require approved visas before travel to the destination country, in which case, a local embassy or consulate can issue visas. The visa is valid for the duration of their stay. In some cases, passenger service agents insist on seeing a return ticket before issuing a boarding pass.

7.4 Passenger Check-in

After passenger service agents inspect tickets and identification documents, passenger service agents will provide the needs and wants of the passengers. Every passenger needs to hold a passport when travelling abroad in order to identify their nationality, age, gender and place of birth (Honkiss & Intakaew, 2013). Therefore, passenger service agents are strictly required to carefully check-in the passengers. Check-in counters also have scanners that allow passenger service agent to collect passenger data for the airline system. According to Law and Doerflein (2014), the components of the check-in process are in the following three stages:

7.4.1 Arranging seat assignments

Many airlines today accept passengers to pre-reserve seats during the reservation process. However, passengers who are unable to change their seats can require new seats at check-in counter, online and phone. Assigned seats are classified into 5 categories: window, aisle, middle, exit rows, and bulk head.

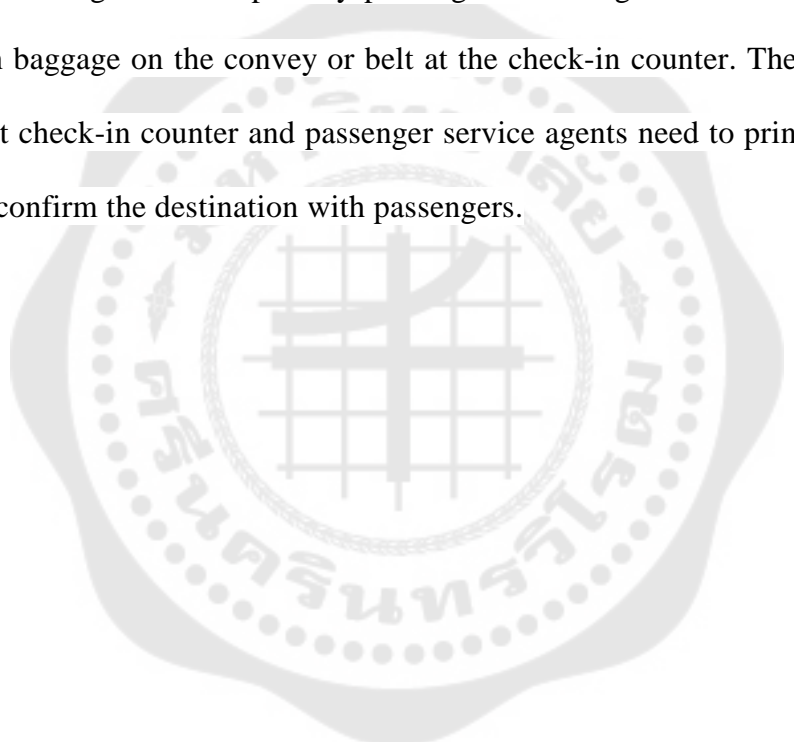
7.4.2 Producing a boarding pass

A boarding pass can be used as proof of a passenger taking a particular flight. All passengers are required to show boarding pass at immigration, at

the boarding gate and on the aircraft. A boarding pass includes details such as the name, flight details, date, gate number and seat number (Honkiss & Intakaew, 2013).

7.4.3 Accepting passenger's baggage

The process of dealing with the baggage is another aspect of the check-in process. Passengers need to know their baggage allowance in each service class (Honkiss & Intakaew, 2013). If a passenger has luggage that is overweight, an additional charge must be paid by passengers. Passengers are asked to place their check-in baggage on the convey or belt at the check-in counter. The weight will be shown at check-in counter and passenger service agents need to print out a baggage tag and confirm the destination with passengers.



Purpose for Communication

The main purpose of communication with passengers is to ensure correct information is given about their flight. The first face-to-face step of interaction usually begins at the check-in counter or the boarding gate. This stage demonstrates the professionalism of passenger service agents. In the business area, the advantage of good communication is that it gains trust, goodwill and a good reputation in their industry (Talukder, 2012). Effective communication at the beginning of an interaction is significant to keep the perceptions of customers on the company image (Jain, Mukherji, & Sethi, 2009). Passenger service agents need to maintain appropriate English oral communication with passengers from all over the world in order to offer services and interact effectively with them. The English communication skills of passenger service agents are essential in being able deliver services to passengers (Davidoff, 1994). Davidoff (1994) divided the purposes for communication services, as follows:

1. Information

Communication is the lifeblood of customer service. Customer service employees obviously used information to serve the needs of customers. In the spoken form, it can be anything that customers need or want such as asking, requiring or ordering. In the written form, it includes everything such as travel documents, itineraries, seat plans and passports. A variety of technological resources were developed to obtain information more effectively.

2. Emotion

Communication is a process that occurs between two or more people. Emotions can be transmitted from one person to another. Emotions are expressed

through physiological functions including facial expressions, expressions of agreement, and behavior, such as crying or aggression. It plays a role in everyday communication. Emotion is an integral part of communicative life. Customers expect to be treated individually and also have unique needs. Without emotion, customer-contact employees would have extreme difficulty interacting with customers. Customer-contact employees were trained to deal with customers with a full range of expressions and in a professional manner. At the same time, understanding the emotional messages of customers is crucial. However, customer-contact employees were not expected to send negative emotional signals to customers. Proper emotional signals can increase the effectiveness of a message. On the other hand, improper emotional signals may lead to ineffective communication.

3. Motivation

Another purpose for communication is to motivate the recipient to take action. Motivation can also be considered crucial because it may encourage customers to achieve their needs. It is essential that customer-contact employees become aware of the organizational goals and understanding how their jobs contribute to meeting customer demand and their performance. This also allows them to determine how much they contribute to the success of the service. Customer-contact employees with high levels of high motivation tend to communicate more openly with their directors or supervisors by suggesting ideas or listening to advice.

4. Control

Communication forms are designed to control the behavior and activities of recipients. Communication can control the flow of people, their actions and how they respond to a given situation. For example, airline staff will board passengers

from the rear of the plane first at the boarding gate or make a public announcement for absent passengers. In many cases, customer-contact employees will make an effort to comply with the requests of the customers. Listening to what customers are saying will make them feel valuable and reinforce their link with the company.

Communication Model

Wilbur Schramm, a leading communication expert, has provided a model of the development of a basic model of communication. (Figure 3). He emphasized the process of encoding and decoding the message. Schramm envisioned this process as a two-way circular communication between sender and receiver. His model is a derivation of the Shannon-Weaver transmission model of communication. While the Shannon-Weaver model is more mathematical and technological, Schramm incorporated the study of human behavior in the communication process. The communication process included eight stages, including sender, messages, encoding, channel, decoding, receiver, feedback, and context. The communication process model by Schramm (1954), which appears in Figure 3, is as follows:

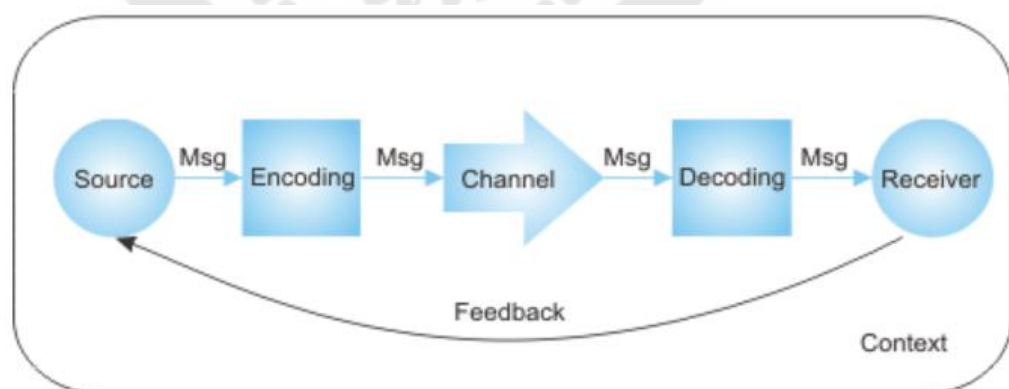


Figure 3: A communication process model by Schramm (1954)

Communication is a process between at least two people that begins when one person wants to communicate with another. The person who wants to

communicate is known as the sender (see Figure 3). To transfer an image to another person, the sender first must transpose or translate the images into symbols that the receiver can understand. Symbols are often words, but can be pictures, sounds or sensory information (e.g., touch or smell). Only through symbols can the mental images of a sender have meaning for others. The process of translating images into symbols is known as encoding. Once a message has been encoded, the next step in the communication process is to transmit or communicate messages to a receiver. This can be done in many ways: face-to-face verbal interaction, over the telephone, through printed materials (letters, newspapers, etc.), or through visual media (television, photographs). The communication process of this model can be detailed as follows:

1. Sender. Senders are people who originate communication. The sender develops the content of the message. In order to transfer an image to another person, the sender first must translate the images into symbols that the receivers can understand. For example, customers become senders when they state their needs (Davidoff, 1994).

2. Message. The message consisted of meaningful words and non-verbal actions. It can be either spoken or written. The message should be the easiest part of the model to understand and easily interpreted.

3. Encoding. Encoding is the process of transferring the message into a series of symbols. Symbols can be verbal (written or spoken words) or non-verbal (body language).

4. Channel. Channel is the method for transmitting messages. This can happen in many ways: during face-to-face verbal interaction, over the telephone,

through printed materials (letters or newspapers), or through visual media (photographs or television).

5. Decoding. After getting the message, the receiver uses symbols to encode the real meaning of the message and translates it back into meaning for the receiver.

6. Receiver. When the message is received, the receiver will interpret the results. When messages are decoded exactly as intended by the sender, the results of the sender and the results of the receiver matches and effective communication occurs.

7. Feedback. Feedback refers to a response from the receiver to the sender. Without feedback, effective communication cannot take place.

8. Context. Context is the situation in which a message is delivered. It can be in a physical or a psychological context. The physical context included environmental factors in communication encounters, such as size, layout, temperature and lighting, all of which influence communication. The psychological context includes the mental and emotional factors in a communication encounter, including emotions such as stress and anxiety.

Speaking Skills

Definition of Speaking

In order to be an effective communicator, speaking is one of language skills that is essential to being mastered by the passenger service agents. One of the verbal uses of language is speaking, which can be used to communicate with others. According to Fulcher (2003), speaking is a process that can be taken for granted through communication. This means that people use speaking skills to utter words, express feelings in words or make a decision or speak (Hornby, 1995). H. D. Brown

(2007) stated that the social contact in interactive language functions is a key, in other words, it is not what you say that counts but how you say it, what you convey with body language, gestures, eye contact and other non-verbal messages. In several workplaces English has a specific role as the language of communication between speakers of different languages. The multilingual and international nature of these passengers are a good example of this. Moreover, there are several other factors that may affect speaking (Underwood, 1989). She clarified that the factors of speaking were as follows:

1. Sounds

Vowels and consonants are the two types of sounds in the English language. Vowels and consonants perform different functions in the syllable. To distinguish the vowel sounds of English, speakers and learners may need to practice, e.g. sit/seat, foot/food, ship/sheep. The consonants surround the vowel. Sometimes the sounds occur in groups. Two consonants occurring at the end of word is called a consonant cluster, such as 'salt', 'fault', 'pass', and 'seat'. Underwood (1989) claimed that some consonant clusters tend to be lost, e.g. 'exactly', where the /t/ sound is barely heard by native speakers.

Linking sounds refer to the way the last sound of one word is joined to the first sound of the next word (Kenworthy, 1987). To produce a linking sound, words are run together to link consonants to vowels, consonants to consonants, or vowels to vowels. Some sounds can be shortened and other sounds are left out altogether. For example, 'not at all' is a phrase. It is a natural way for speakers to move smoothly from the 't' sounds of the word 'not' and 'at' to the beginning of the vowel sounds of 'at' and 'all' without pausing. The last word of the phrase sounds like the word 'tall'.

In short, pronunciation problems with consonants and vowels may first be difficult to identify because the sounds are unfamiliar to foreign listeners. It is worth recognizing this problem and working to improve understanding of the difficulty of pronouncing certain sounds.

2. Stress and Intonation

2.1 Stress

When an English word has more than one syllable, one is given more prominence or stress. The purpose of stress is to highlight words with the main information the speaker wishes to convey. However, changing the stress can alter the meaning of an utterance even if the words remain the same (Underwood, 1989). The most important point is to recognize the stress position of the words. Otherwise, listeners may encounter some difficulties in terms of understanding. The Thai language is considered to be a tonal language (Wei & Zhou, 2002). Stress is one of the main speaking problems experienced by Thai people. In short, it is important to learn the correct pronunciation of stress.

2.2 Intonation

Speakers use intonation to alter the pitch changes in the connected speech of their voice. The pitch of the voice includes a voiced sound known as intonation (Wei & Zhou, 2002). Intonation is an essential factor in spoken English. Additionally, the intonation pattern can also be used for the expression of different intentions and feelings. Intonation has various melodies in terms of voice-pitch. It continually rises and falls and can be divided into several combinations (rise-fall-rise, fall-rise-fall, etc.) (Kenworthy, 1987). In short, the stress and intonation are combined

together to help speakers send a precise message. Some listeners may find it difficult to notice the variety in terms of stress and intonation.

3. Speech Organization

In terms of this factor, the organization of speech can boost the effectiveness of speech. It effectively takes information from speakers to listeners in a logical sequence. Speakers formulate what they are saying to listeners. Unfortunately, with non-native English speakers that spoken discourse is often disorganized. Generally, speakers may not have careful speech organization; for example, changing what they are about to say. This process causes speakers to start with an idea, repeat what they just said, produce ungrammatical utterances and then change the complete idea of the sentence. To cope with this, well- organized speech, followed by the main points and other details is easier to understand.

4. Syntax and Vocabulary in Speech

Many English language learners have a limited vocabulary. Their vocabulary knowledge can be viewed critically as a language tool for second language learners. Listeners who struggle to understand every word often have speaking problems. They tended to become confused and developed less understanding. In spoken English, speakers use a few subordinate clauses, incomplete sentences and interactive expressions like well, um and uh-huh. The comprehension of isolated words do not completely link the main idea of the conversation. More importantly, English language has a grammatical structure. The use of syntax and vocabulary of speech can produce speech and formulate sentences in order to be able to communicate effectively.

5. Speaking with Foreign Accents

Since the transfer and processing of information is a major factor, effective communication will need to be improved. At this point, the various accents of speakers become noticeable. In some languages, the way of speaking is a sign of their original language. There are a variety of styles in pronunciation, which may differ between males and females. The way a person speaks is also a part of their identity. Non-native speakers and listeners are likely to feel stressed by this because they experience difficulty in identifying words accurately. In general, the familiarity of the accent affected their ability to understand. Therefore, overcoming an accent is necessary for communication with foreign passengers. In summary, the five factors of speaking skills, as previously mentioned, played an important role in speaking. By mastering all of the factors, passenger service agents can communicate more successfully with passengers.

Listening Skills

Definition of Listening

Listening skills can be defined as the ability to understand what people are saying. Listening can be defined as the ways in which an individual can be a good speaker (Underwood, 1989). Passenger Service Agents need to pay attention to listening as a mode of performance to clarify what the passengers have said. According to Galvin and Terrell (2001), listening “is an active process that includes receiving, interpreting, evaluating and responding to a message. It takes effort and concentration” (p. 110). Listening is the process of receiving and creating meaning and is not same as hearing. Floyd (2011) stated that, “listening is a process of hearing verbal symbols with caring, understanding, appreciation and interpretation to gain

information, capture the content or message and understand the meaning of communication that have been submitted by the reader through by speech or spoken language.” Listening is as important as speaking. Interactive communication between passenger service agents and passengers starts with listening. According to Underwood (1989), the factors of listening skills that may be encountered are as follows:

1. Lack of Control over the Speed of the Speaker

Listeners have difficulty controlling how quickly a speaker speaks. When the utterances disappear, listeners try to sort out the meaning of what they hear. After that, they may miss the next part. Then, they failed to understand the main idea of the conversation. As a result, they are unable to understand the conversation.

2. Inability to Ask for Repetition

Another difficulty is that listeners are not always in a position to ask the speaker to repeat an utterance. This is particularly true for listeners who were unable to ask for repetition due to the situation.

3. The Limited Vocabulary of Listeners

Speakers can choose vocabulary to communicate first, rather than the listeners. Unfortunately, listeners may be faced with unfamiliar words. Then, if they suddenly stop and try to come up with a meaning, they inevitably miss the next part of the speech. Listeners should learn to develop and improve their limited vocabulary. This is especially necessary for oral communication. In short, the listeners are able to comprehend what speakers said.

4. Problems with Interpretation

The challenges of interpretation may be faced during the course of the job. Listeners and speakers may encounter problems when they lack enough background knowledge to share the context, for example, sayings that have a common meaning in one language may be lost when the context is unfamiliar. The success of the interpretation also depends on whether or not the listeners have understood the purpose of the meaning.

5. Inability to Concentrate

A concentration and lack of focus which are caused by a number of reasons. This is an issue that can play a significant role in the reduction of listening work. Tiredness and emotional stress can cause concentration problems in listeners and making an extra effort can also affect how they think and concentrate. Some interesting topics may attract the concentration of listeners easily, but even a short break can impair comprehension.

Needs Analysis

Many researchers have discussed the definitions and the types of needs through different viewpoints. They had an interest in looking at needs analyses as a strong justification for the language program planners. Additionally, Widdowson (1983) defined needs as what learners are able to do with a language program or goal-oriented, while the process-oriented definition is related to pedagogical objectives. Besides, a distinction of need is divided into target needs and learning needs (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). The target situation may be considered in terms of necessities, wants and lacks. Necessities are something learners need to acquire language in the target situation. Lacks refers to the gap between the proficiency of learners and their needs. Lastly, wants refer to what the learners need to obtain. Learning needs are what the learners need to do in order to learn English.

Moreover, Lawson (1979) noted that one definition cannot be solved in all cases. He defines "need" as "what is finally established as a need is a matter for agreement and judgement, not discovery" (Lawson, 1979). In short, the definition of needs can be diversified in various points.

In the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), there are a number of researchers of needs analysis such as (Munby, 1978), (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Robinson, 1991), (West, 1994), and (Dudley-Evans & John, 1998). The models of ESP needs analysis suggested by these scholars were similar to the investigation of the English language needs of the learners. The term 'needs analysis' was first coined by Michael West in West Bengal, India. He introduced the language in the target situation and how learners should master language during learning. After the introduction of needs analysis in the mid-1970s, needs analysis became essential in

English for Specific Purposes (ESP),(West, 1994). The publication of Communicative Syllabus Design (1978) by Munby is the principal text in terms of needs analysis. Brindley (1989) pointed out that the needs of the learner can be viewed as the result of the needs of an individual in a particular learning situation. He stated that needs analysis is a means of trying to identify and take into account a multiplicity of affective cognitive variables which affect learning, such as the attitudes of learners, attitudes, motivation, awareness, personality, wants, expectations and learning styles. He adopted the work of Richterich (1983) to explain what he referred to as ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’ needs analysis.

Needs analysis of English language can be very useful for researchers who wanted to identify what kinds of specific English use and functions are required for certain occupations (Dudley-Evans & John, 1998); (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). In an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) syllabus, a situational syllabus made sense as an organizing principle in the workplace. “Why do these people need to learn English?” was a question posed by Hutchinson and Waters (1987). ESP courses are based on needs of learners. Thus, the effectiveness of needs analysis leads experts to design relevant tasks for professional situations. This hinges on knowing which problems are typically faced by learners. Since English is a world language in the airline industry, a high standard of English will also benefit candidates for employment. Needs analysis can also be useful for passenger service agents. Without good communication in English, passenger service agents will be faced with aptitude problems and an inability to perform the basic duties of the position.

J. Brown (1995) pointed out that needs analysis is a first step and a key designing a curriculum or syllabus. Furthermore, Nunan (1988) stated that

“information will need to be collected, not only on why learners want to learn the target language, but also about such things as societal expectations and constraints and the resources available for implementing the syllabus”. Dudley-Evans and John (1998) were concerned with which field of English the learners would practice English in while the needs analysis was being investigated.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) looked at target needs in terms of necessities, lacks and wants. They further explain that the necessities include what learners need to do in the target situation. In order to determine the level of lack; experts need to identify what the learner already knows, in order to establish which necessities that a learner lacks, while the aspects of wants deals with cognitive factors. Want is what people build their images of their needs on the basis of individual data. Language use ability is combined with a target situation. They stressed that, learning needs analysis will display “what the learner needs to do in order to learn.” (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). They also pointed out that needs analysis is part of the learning-centered approach. This approach focused on target situation needs and learning needs (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

Regarding to job needs, Mackay and Mountford (1978) claimed that English is applied in order to perform a specific job and the needs of the learners will be enhanced in the future (p.28). Ellis and Johnson (1994) added that needs analysis is a method of obtaining a detailed description of learners and the needs of learners. They said that information can be obtained from a range of different people such as company staff, trainers and learners themselves. Furthermore, Beebe, Mottet, and Roach (2004) claimed that to perform a specific job task, training is a part of the process in the business world. Likewise, Charunsri (2011) added that training is an

effective tool in developing business targets. It can be said that what passenger service agents need in their workplace were essential in order to reach their job efficiency and receive promotions.

Needs analysis begins with an investigation of a particular field. In this study, needs analysis will be used to investigate the needs of passenger service agents. It can be said that needs analysis is a process that gathers information of learners or language courses to find out what language skills the learners need to develop and why and how they need to develop in the best way. If the course designers have appropriate information about learners, they were able to more effectively design a language course. Thus, needs analysis is a suitable tool to identify the needs of passengers and arrange suitable training for service agents.

Needs Analysis Model Framework

Present Situation Analysis (PSA) and Target Situation Analysis (TSA)

Present Situation Analysis (PSA) can be helpful in identifying language proficiency, the strengths and the weaknesses of students at the beginning of language courses (Robinson, 1991). Richterich (1980) suggested three basic sources of information, which included information about the students themselves, language-teaching organizations and the user-institution. Present Situation Analysis (PSA) is needed when students start a course and for investigative purposes during the course. In order to effectively analyze the present situation of a learner, Present Situation Analysis (PSA) displayed the gap between the present and the target. The motivation of learners in the process of studying cannot be neglected (Li, 2014).

Target Situation Analysis (TSA) is mainly focused on the needs of students at the end of a language course (Robinson, 1991). Chambers (1980) stated that Target

Situation Analysis (TSA) means communication in the target situation which identifies the necessity or what the learners need to know in order to function effectively in the target situation. In terms of conducting a needs analysis, it includes surveys, questionnaires, test scores, and interviews. The identification of needs is a process of describing “problems” of a target population and possible solutions to these problems. The identification of the target situation is an essential for the course designers. Then, analysis of the language proficiency of the situation should be carried out following the syllabus of the course.

In addition, the Communicative Syllabus Design by Munby (1978) can be considered as the best well-known work for Target Situation Analysis (TSA) (Li, 2014). In order to analyze needs and a set of procedures using the including ‘Purposive Domain’ (ESP classification), ‘Setting’, ‘Interaction’, ‘Instrumentality’ , ‘Dialect’, ‘Target Level’, ‘Communicative Event’ (activities and subject matter), and ‘Communicative Key’ (the manner in which communicative needs to be carried out) (Li, 2014). The last stage in this model is profile, which refers to the language of the students after using this model. The model is illustrated in Figure 4.

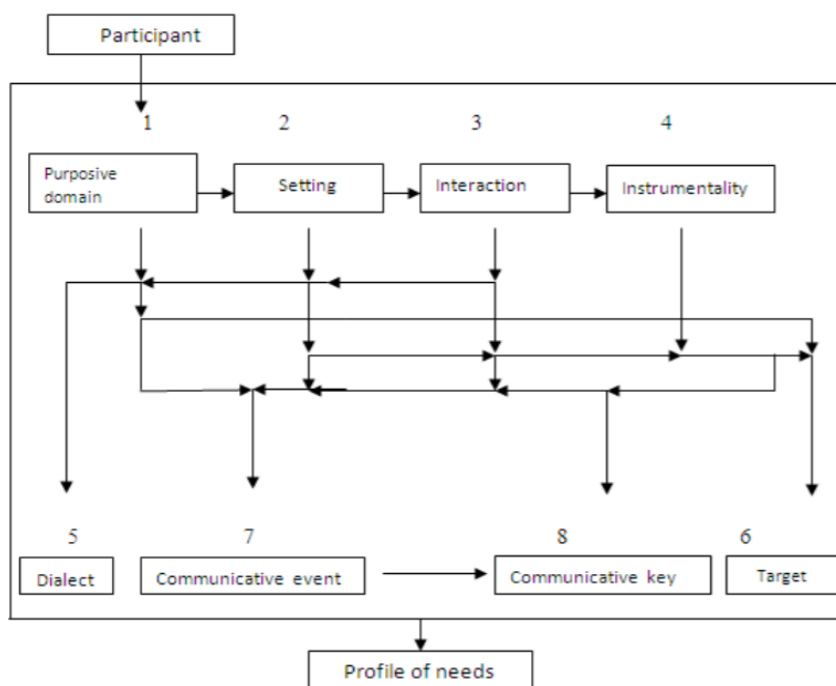


Figure 4: Communicative Needs Processor (CNP) Source: (Munby, 1978)

In summary, the Communicative Needs Processor (CNP) details the needs of students. This model can be adapted and organized to identify the target language needs of any group of learners (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Present Situation Analysis (PSA) and Target Situation Analysis (TSA) are also components of the language course. With the elaboration of the Communicative Needs Processor (CNP), it became easy to design the course for the needs of any group of learners.

Related studies

There have been numerous studies conducted on research regarding English listening and speaking problems. The following outline related studies of English language skills and needs in business fields, e.g. airlines, tourism and banking.

Regarding language function, Tangniam (2006) investigated the four English skills required by Thai Airways ground staff including speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Speaking and listening skills are required by Thai airways ground staff because they need to deal with complaints from passengers. However, reading and writing skills are also required. Moreover, Thai Airways ground staff judged their own English proficiency as only 'fair' in all four skills. The results revealed that the most difficulty experienced with English language skills was with listening and speaking, while reading and writing skills were considered moderately difficult. Hence, course training would serve the real needs of the staff. Almost all of them took part in what were considered insufficient English courses. Most of them indicated that English training courses helped them to communicate with passengers, overcome their problems with English and be promoted.

Dhanasmithivesn (2007) aimed to identify the English language skills most required by Thai flight attendants working for China Airlines. The researcher revealed that reading skills were the most necessary and frequently used by Thai flight attendants. Moreover, the most necessary training for flight attendants with six months to four years and five to eight years of experience required reading skills in order to read manuals and textbooks. In terms of other results, the most necessary training for flight attendants with flight experience of between nine to twelve, as well as listening to lectures for ground school training.

Khamkaew (2009) explored the needs and problems in English listening and speaking skills of metropolitan police officers working at a counter service in Chana Songkram Police Station. The researcher revealed that listening and speaking skills were necessary for use in various situations, including the following: greeting tourists; offering help; asking for personal details; giving directions and safety advice; travel and shopping. The major problem with listening skills was difficulty with accents and catching the words. Additionally, basic expressions, incomplete sentences, and English vowel sounds were considered to be common problems with English speaking skills.

Fahmongkolchai (2011) conducted a study on the needs of selected CIMB Thai bank tellers with regard to their English listening and speaking skills and identified their English listening and speaking problems when communicating with foreign customers. English listening and speaking skills play a necessary role in communicating with foreign customers in the workplace. This was especially true in terms of providing foreign currency exchange services at the highest level of need. A good command of English will help them communicate more effectively with foreigners. Based on the findings of this study, the company should provide an English training course and emphasize the needs of CIMB bank tellers when dealing with foreign customers. In addition to English listening and speaking problems, CIMB bank tellers have to deal with various accents in English because they are unfamiliar with strange accents. Some of the difficulties in knowing English vocabulary, final sounds, speech and the main ideas of foreign customers can also be problematic. As regards speaking problems, one of the major difficulties is correctly selected suitable vocabulary and grammar. Most of them were non-native speakers.

They were aware of making vocabulary and grammatical errors. Another factor that may cause speaking problems is a lack of confidence in speaking English with foreign customers. In brief, to overcome English listening and speaking problems among CIMB bank tellers and foreign customers, who should be trained based on the problems they have.

Phithakphongphan (2016) carried out a survey on the needs of English skills of Air Asia ground staff at Phuket International Airport. The researcher focused on four skills of English: listening, speaking, reading and writing. This study showed that speaking and listening skills were important. Speaking skills were the most necessary among the four skills. To avoid miscommunication and misunderstandings that can occur, they need to experience listening to different accents while providing service. The performance of their job, including face-to-face contact with foreign passengers and tended to lead to an encounter with listening and speaking skills. English speaking skills are the most necessary for the ground staff. Clearly, the ground staff needed speaking skills to provide information on flights, emergency information, when a flight is delayed or cancelled and to welcome passengers appropriately. For the ground staff, reading and writing were similarly less problematic. In addition, English training may enhance the confidence of English conversations among the ground staff.

Barkhordari and Chalak (2017) investigated the English language needs of Iran Air Airport Services staff at Isfahan Airport. English is frequently found among airport employees who worked in Ramp Control, Customer Services, and Baggage Services. The Ramp Control and Customer Service groups tended to use more English communication more frequently than the other sections. Unlike the Baggage Service

group, reading and speaking skills were the most necessary because they used these skills to make or write reports. With regard to the training course, all of the staff members were willing to attend professional courses.



CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of this chapter is to report on the methodology used for the data collection and data analysis procedures. This chapter is divided into four sections: the participants in the study, the research instruments and the data collection and analysis procedures. The details are as follows:

Participants in this Study

The participants in this study consisted of 103 passenger service agents for a number of Middle East airlines and worked at Suvarnabhumi Airport in Bangkok, Thailand. The participants in this study were selected using the convenience sampling technique. All of the passenger service agents were permanent staff members at this company.

Research Instrument

In this study, a questionnaire was employed as an instrument to explore the needs of English speaking and listening of all of the respondents. The questionnaire was prepared in English and divided into two parts.

Part 1: General Information. The first section aimed to ascertain the background information of passenger service agents such as age, gender, educational background and work experience.

Part 2: English speaking and listening skill needs. The participants of this study were asked to identify their level of needs in English speaking and listening skills. The questionnaire was designed by using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Not needed), 2 (Slightly needed), 3 (Somewhat needed), 4 (Quite needed), to 5

(Highly needed). It was comprised of fifteen items dealing with English speaking needs and ten items dealing with needs for English listening skills. To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, a draft version constructed by the researcher was modified and revised based on suggestions from three experts of English at Srinakharinwirot University and Mae Fah Luang University. Also, the Cronbach alpha coefficient test was employed to establish the reliability of the questionnaire. The results of reliability analysis in terms of speaking skills was 0.82, while the result of reliability analysis in terms of listening skills was 0.80.

Next, the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) formula was used to evaluate the content validity. Any item with a value of 0.50 or higher was considered acceptable. The IOC results of the questionnaire was 0.75 in terms of speaking skills and the IOC results in terms of listening skills was 0.70.

A twenty five item questionnaire was piloted with a group of twenty passenger service agents, who did not participate in this research. Baker (1994) noted that 20% of the sample size of pilots had reasonable enough numbers to participate in the pilot test. The aim was to establish the reliability of using Cronbach's alpha coefficient of reliability. Then, the revised questionnaire was used to obtain data for the study.

Data collection

After an official letter was sent for permission and cooperation to collect the data, the specially designed questionnaire was piloted with twenty passenger service agents for comprehensibility and validity before distribution. After some revision, the questionnaires were distributed to the participants at the airport during break times. They were requested to complete the questionnaires truthfully and return them after

they had finished all of it. The completed questionnaires were then collected by the researcher.

Data analysis

The statistical procedures used to analyze the processed data in the form of descriptive statistics. The data was collected, then transformed into statistics and analyzed by percentage, means and standard deviation using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program.

1. Percentage

The demographic data of the participants was reported using a percentage (%).

2. Mean

A five-point Likert scale was employed to rate the needs of English listening and speaking skills. The mean score was used to interpret the level of agreement or disagreement based on the criteria of Likert (1932), as follows:

Scale	Level of Agreement	Mean Range
5	Highly needed	4.21 – 5.00
4	Quite needed	3.41 – 4.20
3	Somewhat needed	2.61 – 3.40
2	Slightly needed	1.81 – 2.60
1	Not needed	1.00 – 1.80

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter outlined the research methodology to clarify how the researcher conducted the study. This chapter included three sections: the participants, the research instrument and the procedures used in the study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the study by answering two main research questions:

The findings are divided into one sections: overview of the data accumulated from the quantitative study. They are presented according to the following two research questions:

1. To what extent do passenger service agents need English speaking and listening skills?
2. What are the needs inf English speaking and listening passenger service agents of different work experience?

The findings obtained from the questionnaires were divided into three parts as follows: a general background on passenger service agents, the level of needs for English speaking skills, and the level of needs for English listening skills.

General Information of the Respondents.

This part presented general information concerning the demographic data of one hundred and three passenger service agents. The information regarding age, gender and educational background and work experience was analyzed and presented as percentages, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: General Information

General Information	Number of participants	%
Sex		
Male	26	25.24
Female	77	74.76
Age		
20-30 years	70	67.96
31-40 years	31	30.10
41-50 years	2	1.94
Other (please specify).....	-	-
Educational level		
High school certificate	-	-
Vocational certificate	-	-
Bachelor's degree	96	93.20
Master's degree	7	6.80
Other (please specify)	-	-
How long have you been working at the airport?		
1-3 years	55	53.40
4-6 years	27	26.21
6 years up (please specify).....	21	20.39
Total	103	100.00

As shown in Table 1, the number of male participants was 25.24%. The number of female participants was 74.76%.

The highest number of participants was the group of 20-30 years old (67.96%) followed by the groups of 31-40 years old (30.10%) and 41-50 years old (1.94%).

Moreover, the majority of the participants had a Bachelor's degree (93.20%) and Master's degree (6.80%). In the Table, the majority of the participants have

worked at the airport for 1-3 years (53.40%), followed by 4-6 years (26.21%) and 6 years up (20.39%).

The Level of Needs in English Speaking Skills and Listening Skills

This section revealed that the overall level of needs in the speaking skills of passenger service agents when communicating in English. The participants were asked to rate their needs in speaking skills using a five-point Likert scale. The data concluded in this section was presented as Mean (M) and standard deviation (S.D.).



Table 2: The Level of Needs in English Speaking Skills.

Speaking skills	\bar{X}	SD.	Level
1. Welcoming and greeting passengers	4.37	.741	Highly needed
2. Providing passenger's needs and wants	4.65	.499	Highly needed
3. Asking passenger's information	4.63	.542	Highly needed
4. Clarifying passenger's questions and repeating their message	4.24	1.005	Highly needed
5. Making public announcements	3.98	1.146	Quite Needed
6. Giving information about flights to passengers/cabin crews	4.57	.709	Highly needed
7. Giving passengers directions	4.36	.790	Highly needed
8. Explaining situation after complaints	4.66	.587	Highly needed
9. Dealing with passengers and apologizing when mistakes occur	4.77	.469	Highly needed
10. Using appropriate vocabulary	4.47	.623	Highly needed
11. Pronouncing words correctly, with correct stress and intonation	4.11	.851	Quite Needed
12. Using correct form of verb tense correctly. (Present, Past, Future)	4.15	.746	Quite Needed
13. Speaking smoothly when communicating with foreign passenger/cabin crew	4.25	.776	Highly needed
14. Controlling the speed of speaking appropriately for a listener	4.11	.839	Quite Needed
15. Clarifying excess baggage fee	4.55	.555	Highly needed
Total	4.39	.405	Highly needed

Table 2 demonstrates the level of needs in terms of speaking. The information was based on the level of agreement rated by participants of this study. The findings of this study indicated that the needs of dealing with passengers and apologizing when mistakes occurred was rated highest ($M=4.77$), followed by the task

of explaining the situation after complaints (M=4.66) and providing passenger needs and wants (M=4.65). However, the task of making public announcements was rated as being the lowest (M=3.98) by all of the respondents. In addition, the total average mean scores of the level of needs in English speaking skills was 4.39 (Highly needed).

Table 3: The Level of Needs in English Listening Skills

Listening skills	\bar{X}	SD.	Level
1. Able to understand passengers' needs and wants	4.79	.478	Highly needed
2. Able to understand passenger's complaints	4.50	.575	Highly needed
3. Able to understand passengers' satisfaction	4.43	.604	Highly needed
4. Able to understand airline announcement/instruction	4.58	.569	Highly needed
5. Able to understand what foreign cabin crews said	4.57	.587	Highly needed
6. Able to comprehend what a supervisor assigns to do	4.57	.620	Highly needed
7. Able to comprehend messages through telephone calls	4.23	.717	Highly needed
8. Able to comprehend specific idioms in English	3.80	1.088	Quite Needed
9. Able to comprehend accents of passengers from different countries	4.18	.849	Quite Needed
10 Able to comprehend airline technical terms	4.49	.655	Highly needed
Total	4.41	.415	Highly needed

Table 3 demonstrated the level of needs in terms of listening skills. It was found that the task of being able to understand the needs and wants of passengers were rated the highest (M=4.79), followed by the tasks of being able to understand airline announcements and instructions (M=4.58); being able to understand what foreign cabin crews said and able to comprehend what a supervisor assigned them to

do ($M=4.57$). However, the task of being able to comprehend specific idioms in English was rated the lowest ($M=3.80$) by all of the respondents. Furthermore, the total average mean scores of the level of needs in English Listening Skills was at 4.41 (Highly Needed).



Table 4: The Level of Needs in English Speaking of Passenger Service Agents of
with Different Levels of Work Experience

Speaking skills	1-3 years		4-6 years		6 years up	
	Mean scores	SD	Mean scores	SD	Mean scores	SD
1. Welcoming and greeting passengers	4.51	.634	4.22	.751	4.19	.928
2. Providing passenger's needs and wants	4.55	.538	4.67	.480	4.90	.301
3. Asking passenger's information	4.65	.517	4.56	.641	4.67	.485
4. Clarifying passenger's questions and repeating their message	4.55	.789	4.11	.974	3.62	1.24
5. Making public announcements	4.18	1.073	4.04	1.09	3.38	1.24
6. Giving information about flights to passengers/cabin crews	4.55	.765	4.52	.509	4.71	.784
7. Giving passengers directions	4.55	.689	4.15	.864	4.14	.854
8. Explaining situation after complaints	4.65	.552	4.67	.679	4.67	.577
9. Dealing with passengers and apologizing when mistakes occur	4.71	.533	4.78	.424	4.90	.301

Table 4. (Continued)

Speaking skills	1-3 years		4-6 years		6 years up	
	Mean scores	SD	Mean scores	SD	Mean scores	SD
10. Using appropriate vocabulary	4.45	.633	4.30	.609	4.71	.561
11. Pronouncing words correctly, with correct stress and intonation	4.33	.668	3.85	.949	3.86	1.01
12. Using correct form of verb tense correctly.(Present, Past, Future)	4.25	.799	4.04	.759	4.00	.548
13. Speaking smoothly when communicating with foreign passenger/cabin crew	4.33	.771	4.15	.770	4.19	.814
14. Controlling the speed of speaking appropriately for a listener	4.42	.712	3.85	.818	3.62	.865
15. Clarifying excess baggage fee	4.49	.573	4.48	.509	4.81	.512
Total	4.48	.407	4.29	.433	4.29	.321

Regarding the respondents with 1-3 years of work experience, the needs of dealing with passengers and apologizing when mistakes occurred was rated the highest, with a mean score of 4.71, followed by the need to ask passengers for information and explaining situations after complaints, with the same mean score of 4.65. However, the need for making public announcements was rated lowest with a mean score of 4.18.

For the respondents with 4-6 years of work experience, the need for dealing with passengers and apologizing when mistakes occurred was rated highest with a mean score of 4.78, followed by the need to provide the passengers with their needs and wants and explaining situations after complaints with a mean score of 4.67. On the other hand, the need to control the speed of speech appropriately for listeners and correct pronunciation, with accurate stress and intonation was rated the lowest with the same mean score of 3.85.

Another finding was that the highest mean score of the respondents with over 6 years up of work experience and rated at 4.90, was based on providing the needs and wants of the passengers, as well as the task of dealing with passengers and apologizing when mistakes occur. Moreover, the need for clarifying excess baggage fees had a mean score of 4.81. Nevertheless, making public announcements was rated in the lowest level with the mean score of 3.38.

All in all, when comparing three groups of respondents with different work experience, it was found that the highest mean score of the level of needs among English speaking of passenger service agents was at 4.90 and rated by respondents with 6 years up of work experience in terms of the tasks of dealing with passengers, apologizing when mistakes occurred and providing the needs and wants of

passengers. However, the lowest mean score was 3.38 and rated by respondents with 6 years up of work experience in terms of making public announcements.

Table 5: The Level of Needs in English Listening of Passenger Service Agents with with Different Levels of Work Experience

Listening skills	1-3 years		4-6 years		6 years up	
	Mean Scores	SD	Mean scores	SD	Mean scores	SD
1. Able to understand passengers' needs and wants	4.75	.480	4.81	.483	4.86	.478
2. Able to understand passenger's complaints	4.45	.571	4.33	.620	4.86	.356
3. Able to understand passengers' satisfaction	4.42	.599	4.22	.641	4.71	.463
4. Able to understand airline announcement/instruction	4.55	.571	4.48	.580	4.81	.512
5. Able to understand what foreign cabin crews said	4.53	.604	4.37	.630	4.95	.218
6. Able to comprehend what a supervisor assigns to do	4.51	.663	4.41	.636	4.95	.218
7. Able to comprehend messages through telephone calls	4.38	.680	4.07	.730	4.05	.740

Table 5 (continued)

Listening skills	1-3 years		4-6 years		6 years up	
	Mean Scores	SD	Mean scores	SD	Mean scores	SD
8. Able to comprehend specific idioms in English	4.15	.891	3.74	1.09	2.95	1.11
9. Able to comprehend accents of passengers from different countries	4.22	.854	4.26	.764	4.00	.949
10 Able to comprehend airline technical terms	4.38	.733	4.56	.506	4.67	.577
Total	4.43	.467	4.33	.373	4.48	.301

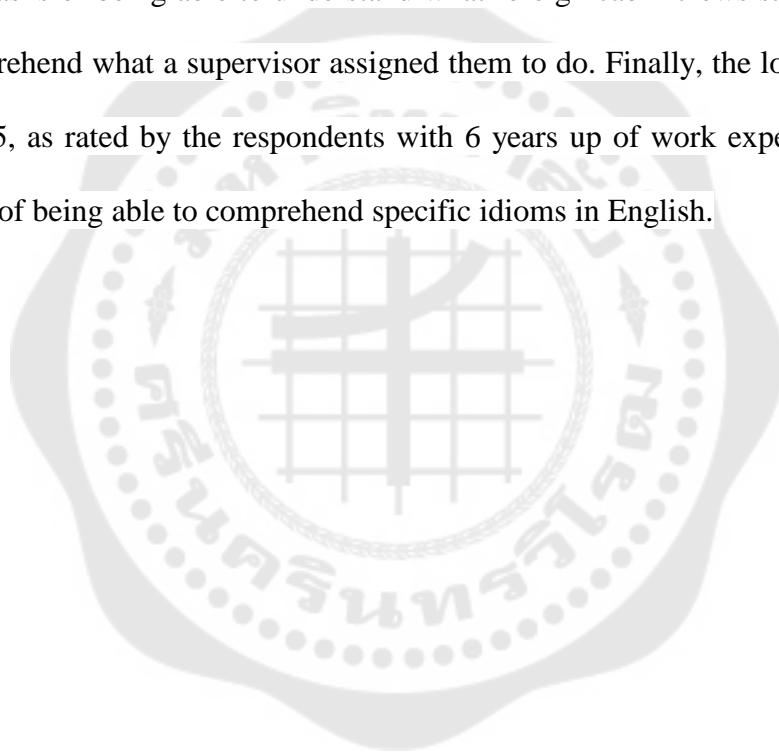
For the respondents with 1-3 years of work experience, the need to be able to understand the needs of the passengers was rated the highest with the mean score of 4.75, followed by the need to understand airline announcements and instructions with the mean score of 4.55. On the other hand, the need to comprehend specific idioms in English was rated in the lowest level with a mean score of 4.15.

Regarding the respondents with 4-6 years of experience, the need of being able to understand the needs and wants of passengers was rated at the highest level with the mean score of 4.81, followed by the need to understand technical terms, with a mean score of 4.56. Nevertheless, the need to understand specific English idioms was rated at the lowest level with a mean score of 3.74.

Moreover, the respondents with 6 years up of work experience revealed that the need to understand what foreign cabin crews said and being able to comprehend what a supervisor assigned them to do was rated highest with the same mean score of 4.95. Interestingly, being able to understand the needs and wants of the passengers as

well as being able to understand complaints had a lower mean score of 4.86. However, this group rated listening and being able to comprehend specific idioms in English with a lowest mean score at 2.95.

In short, in terms of the level of needs in English listening skills among passenger service agents of varying work experience, the highest mean score among the three groups was 4.95 rated by the respondents with 6 years up of work experience for the tasks of being able to understand what foreign cabin crews say and being able to comprehend what a supervisor assigned them to do. Finally, the lowest mean score was 2.95, as rated by the respondents with 6 years up of work experience regarding the task of being able to comprehend specific idioms in English.



CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the conclusions and discussions of major findings, limitations of the study, and recommendations for further studies.

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the oral communication needs of passenger service agents and to also investigate their needs in term of different work experience. The instrument used to collect the data in this study was a questionnaire composed of two sections: (a) general information on the participants, (b) needs for English listening and speaking skills. The participants of this study included one hundred and three service agents working at the check-in counter and boarding gate at Suvarnabhumi Airport. Most participants were female (74.76%). The majority of the participants were in the 20-30 age range (67.96%), and 93.20% of the participants have obtained a Bachelor's degree. Furthermore, 53.40% of the participants reported having 1-3 year working experience, while 26.21% of them had 4-6 year experience and 20.39 % of them had 6 year up of work experience.

In this study, the questionnaire was employed to collect data. The questionnaire was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to identify the English speaking and listening needs of passenger service agents, and to answer the research questions in this study. The details of the findings were as follows:

Discussion

The first part of this section summarized the major findings, based on the two research questions. The conclusion regarding the level of needs for English speaking and listening skills of passenger service agents while performing their jobs, and the needs for these two English skills among the three groups of passenger service agents with varying levels of work experience were presented based on the collected data.

Research question 1: To what extent do passenger service agents need English speaking and listening skills?

In terms of speaking skills, the findings of this study indicated that the need for dealing with passengers and apologizing for mistakes was rated highest ($M=4.77$), while the need for the task of making public announcements was rated lowest ($M=3.98$). The findings showed that the respondents of this study mostly agreed with the idea that dealing with passengers and apologizing when mistakes occurred was the most important. As passenger service agents must have face-to-face communication with passengers while performing their job, speaking skill is a part of effective communication.

This study shares similar results with Tangniam (2006) who studied an analysis of English language needs for Thai Airways ground staff. The results of his study indicated that speaking skills are the most required for dealing with and apologizing to foreign passengers. These findings were also in agreement with Pugdeeyothin (2014) who studied needs analysis for English language improvement at the Royal Forest Department of Thailand. They stated that face-to-face conversation was the most important component of communication.

In terms of listening skills, the findings of this study indicated that the task of being able to understand the needs and wants of the passengers was rated the highest ($M=4.79$), while the task of being able to comprehend specific idioms in English was rated the lowest ($M=3.80$) by all of the respondents. Regarding the task of being able to understand the needs and wants of the passengers was rated the highest and the results of this study were similar to the research of Phithakphongphan (2016) who studied the needs of English skills among airline ground staff and found that understanding requests from passengers was the most important requirement. In terms of meeting the satisfaction of the passengers, listening to basic information, including their personal details and information about seat allocations. To avoid misunderstandings between airlines and their passengers, listening and speaking skills were the most greatly required needs for work. As Fahmongkolchai (2011) who studied needs and problems in English listening and speaking skills among CIMB Thai bank tellers explained that English listening and speaking skills play a necessary role in communicating with foreign customers at work.

Research question 2: What are the needs of English speaking and listening passenger service agents with different levels of work experience?

In terms of the speaking skills of the three groups of respondents, it was found that the highest mean scores in terms of the level of needs among English speaking of passenger service agents was 4.90, as rated by the respondents with 6 years up of work experience in terms of dealing with passengers, apologizing and providing the needs and wants of the passengers. However, the lowest mean scores ($M=3.38$) were rated by respondents with 6 years up of work experience for making public announcements.

In the study, the findings revealed that regarding respondents was significant for respondents in terms of performing job tasks. For example, the task of dealing with passengers and apologizing when mistakes occurred were rated at the highest level among these three groups of respondents because they needed to use English language for dealing with situations encountered by passengers. When mistakes occurred unintentionally, apologizing and explaining what airlines could do for the passengers was the most important. Similarly, the study of Charunsri (2011) revealed that front office staff needed English speaking skills in order to respond to the needs and wants of the customers, problem-solving, giving information, directions, offer help, or even communicate on the phone at work. In order to achieve high satisfaction among passengers, passenger service agents need to communicate with passengers effectively and be able to perform tasks well. Delivering a high quality service to passengers is the core task of airline services, so they need to consider what passengers need from the services. As An and Noh (2009) stated that the relationship between service providers and customers influenced the levels of satisfaction and loyalty among customers.

In terms of listening skills, the three groups of respondents found that the highest mean score of the level of needs in the English listening of passenger service agents with varying work experience was 4.95, as rated by respondents with 6 years up of work experience in terms of being able to understand what the foreign cabin crew said and being able to comprehend what a supervisor assigned them to do. However, the lowest mean score ($M=2.95$) was rated by the respondents with with 6 years up of work experience in the task of being able to comprehend specific idioms in English. The respondents with 1-3 and 4-6 years of experience were rated highest

for the task of being able to understand the needs and wants of passengers. However, the respondents with 6 years up of work experience rated being able to understand what the foreign cabin crew said and being able to comprehend what a supervisor assigned them to do the highest. This is because those who hold senior positions frequently provided flight information and the opportunity to work with foreign cabin crews. It showed that the respondents with more experience, or with more senior positions, had greater competence in terms of handling foreign cabin crews. These consequences were consistent with the findings of Yang and Chang (2012) who conducted a study titled “Exploring the perceived competence of airport ground staff in dealing with unruly passenger behaviors”. They also found that senior ground staff can manage troublesome passengers and execute more complicated tasks better than the junior ground staff.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study were as follows:

1. In this study, a closed-ended questionnaire was employed to collect the data. It may not have revealed anything in terms of in-depth analysis or may not have expressed other aspects of the needs of the participants or were not be able to discuss their needs in terms of English speaking and listening skills. Therefore, the participants did not provide any further feedback or in-depth recommendations.
2. The study focused only on needs for English oral communication. It does not explore other aspects, such as communication problems and communication strategies in order to provide more useful information for airlines.

3. The study only emphasized participants who worked for Middle East airlines and the number of participants in this study was limited; therefore, inferences that can be drawn are limited and the results cannot be generalized.

Recommendations for Further Studies

According to the findings, the following recommendations were proposed:

1. Further research can be focused on interviews and open-ended questionnaire should be used in order to get more information and the results of the study will be more reliable.
2. Further research should emphasize communication problems or communication strategies in order to gain more understanding of oral communication problems and identify appropriate strategies of passenger service agents.
3. A further study should be conducted with the passenger service agents from airlines of different regions to see whether or not such factors give varied results. Also, there should be more participants from different airlines in order to increase the efficiency and reliability of the study.

In conclusion, the findings of this study addressed the level of needs with regard to English oral communication skills among passenger service agents. Additionally, this research provided helpful information for the Human Resources Department to design an English language training course. This will serve the real needs of passenger service agents while performing their jobs. English language training courses will help avoid misunderstandings in communication with passengers and serve to minimize in communication problems.

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APPENDICES



APPENDIX A



The Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed for a graduated research project in Master of Art in English program at Srinakharinwirot University. The main objective of this questionnaire is to identify English listening and speaking needs of passenger service agents. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential and will serve only for the purpose of this study.

The questionnaire is divided into three parts.

Part I - General information.

Part II - The needs in English listening and speaking skills.

Part I: General Information Instructions: Please answer the following questions.

1. Sex () Male () Female
2. Age () 20-30 years () 31-40 years () 41-50 years () Other (please specify).....
3. Educational level () High school certificate () Vocational certificate () Bachelor's degree () Master's degree () Other (please specify).....
4. How long have you been working at the airport? () 1-3 years () 4-6 years () 6 years up (please specify.....)

Part II: The needs in using English skill: speaking and listening

Instruction: Please put X for each statement that most accurately reflects the level of your agreement with each of the following the needs of English speaking and listening.

Note: 5 = Highly needed

4 = Quite needed

3 = Somewhat needed

2 = Slightly needed

1 = Not needed



1. To what extent do you need the following Speaking Skills in your job?

Speaking skills	Highly needed 5	Quite needed 4	Somewhat needed 3	Slightly needed 2	Not needed 1
1. Welcoming and greeting passengers					
2. Providing passenger's needs and wants					
3. Asking passenger's information					
4. Clarifying passenger's questions and repeating their message					
5. Making public announcements					
6. Giving information about flights to passengers/cabin crews					
7. Giving passengers directions					
8. Explaining situation after get complaints					
9. Dealing with passenger when mistakes occur					
10. Using appropriate vocabulary					
11. Pronouncing words correctly, with correct stress and intonation					

12. Using the correct form of verb tense correctly (Present, Past, Future)					
13. Speaking smoothly when communicate with foreign passenger/cabin crew					
14. Adjust the speed of speaking					
15. Clarifying excess baggage fee					

2. To what extent do you need the following Listening Skills in your job?

Listening skills	Highly needed 5	Quite needed 4	Somewhat needed 3	Slightly needed 2	Not needed 1
1. Able to understand passengers' needs and wants					
2. Able to understand passenger's complaints					
3. Able to understand passengers' satisfaction					
4. Able to understand airline announcement/instruction					
5. Able to understand what foreign cabin crews said					
6. Able to comprehend what a supervisor assigns to do					
8. Able to comprehend specific idioms in English					
9. Able to comprehend accents of passengers from different countries					
10. Able to comprehend airline technical terms					



APPENDIX B

Permission Letter

ที่ ศธ 6918/ ๒๕๖๑



บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย
มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ
สุขุมวิท 23 เขตวัฒนา กรุงเทพฯ 10110

๒5 กรกฎาคม 2561

เรื่อง ขอความอนุเคราะห์เก็บข้อมูลเพื่อการวิจัย

เรียน หัวหน้าฝ่ายการโดยสารบางกอกโพลท์ เซอร์วิสเอส

เนื่องด้วย นางสาวภัทราธิษฐ์ พันธุ์วล นิสิตระดับปริญญาโท สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษ มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ ได้รับอนุมัติให้ทำสารนิพนธ์ เรื่อง “การศึกษาเรื่องความต้องการในด้านทักษะการสื่อสารภาษาอังกฤษของพนักงานฝ่ายการโดยสารที่สนามบินสุวรรณภูมิ” โดยมี ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์ณัฏฐา แก้วฉา เป็นอาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาสารนิพนธ์

ในการนี้ นิสิตขอความอนุเคราะห์เก็บข้อมูล โดยใช้แบบสอบถาม เรื่อง “การศึกษาเรื่องความต้องการในด้านทักษะการสื่อสารภาษาอังกฤษของพนักงานฝ่ายการโดยสารที่สนามบินสุวรรณภูมิ” กับพนักงานฝ่ายการโดยสาร เพื่อเป็นข้อมูลในการวิจัย และขอใช้สถานที่ของท่าน ระหว่างเดือนกรกฎาคม 2561 ถึงเดือนสิงหาคม 2561 ทั้งนี้ นิสิตจะเป็นผู้ประสานงานในรายละเอียดดังกล่าว

จึงเรียนมาเพื่อโปรดพิจารณาขอความอนุเคราะห์ให้ นางสาวภัทราธิษฐ์ พันธุ์วล เก็บข้อมูลเพื่อการวิจัย และขอขอบพระคุณ มา ณ โอกาสนี้

ขอแสดงความนับถือ

(ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์ นายแพทย์ฉัตรชัย เอกปัญญาสกุล)

คณบดีบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย

สำนักงานคณบดีบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย

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