



English Language Proficiency of Hotel Receptionists in Hotel Business in Bangkok

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Abstract

Background and Aim: In today's world, using the English language is an important communication skill due to globalization, the information age without borders, and the technology that has made rapid progress. The purposes of this research were 1) to examine the English language proficiency of hotel receptionists in the hotel business in Bangkok. 2) to compare the English language proficiency of hotel receptionists in the hotel business in Bangkok classified by individual factors.

Materials and Methods: The participants of this research were hotel receptionists from 368 hotels in Bangkok. The data was selected by Simple Random Sampling. The research instruments were used to collect and analyze the data. The statistics used for analyzing data were Percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test, and F-test at the significance level.05.

Results: The results found that 1. The English language proficiency of hotel receptionists in the hotel business in Bangkok in overall was at a high level. The highest average English proficiency of hotel receptionists was reading skills. The attitude toward reading skills was at a high level. My speaking skills were at the lowest level. The attitude towards speaking skills was at a moderate level. 2. When comparing the English language proficiency of hotel receptionists in the hotel business in Bangkok, the different gender of hotel receptionists didn't affect the English language proficiency. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills were not different. The different ages and educational backgrounds affected English language proficiency. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing was different at a statistically significant level of .01. The occupation and working experience affected the English language proficiency. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing was different at a statistical significance level of .05.

Conclusions: The English readiness of the receptionists in Bangkok's hotel business, the essential skill is reading skills, followed by writing skills, and the least skill is background knowledge of the cultures.

Keywords: English Language Proficiency; English in Hotel Business

Introduction

In today's world, using the English language is an important communication skill due to globalization, the information age without borders, and the technology that has made rapid progress. Thailand is one of the members of ASEAN in 2015. Thais are preparing for international trade and tourism. One of the skills that Thais need to improve is English language skills, especially communication. English language communication skills are very important when in contact with foreigners. When Thailand has free trade, the hotel business is the main business that has the most rapid growth. Moreover, it is the main business that brings the highest income to the country for a century. When tourists come to Thailand, they are interested in visiting the country's important tourist attractions. The staff and hosts could be able to give the information, and good service to the tourist to make the tourists impressed and come back to Thailand (Piriyasil, 2014).

In the 21st century, English is used as a global language. It is spoken by 1.75 billion people worldwide. This can be defined that English language proficiency plays an important role for Thais and people around the world. People use English as a medium of communication. Moreover, if the speaker can communicate with other people via technology, the language users will get more benefits. Because language and technology are used as a tool to support language users in their careers. This helps the language users work faster and more efficiently.

Learning the English language through technology can help learners develop communication skills. English learners can improve their language skills faster due to the various multimedia. The learners can study the information, and fulfill what they are poor. In addition, English is very useful for tourism or going aboard. Tour operators can manage or deal with the problem that happens aboard by using English to communicate with the native people. For example, language users can ask for directions when they are lost. Use language to ask how to take public transportation or contact with the organization that can help the

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tourists; travel agent, tour operator, tour guide, or front office when necessary. Moreover, If the language users can communicate in a polite and accurate way, they will get good services and products on demand.

It is necessary to practice and improve the English language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening skills are basic skills of effective communication. Speaking skills are beneficial for communicating via telephone or face-to-face. It's a necessity for working in the tourism field. Reading skills are important for reading a brochure, reservation contact, reservation restaurant, and itinerary. These skills are required for proficiency in English for hotels and tourism (Boonyoprakorn, 2022).

Hotel Industry in Thailand is growing. Travelers and investors are interested in the hotel industry and hotel business. A hotel is a business under the condition of free trade in ASEAN. Hotels and accommodations play an important role in The hotel industry. At present, the hotel business in Thailand has co-operated with international to build international service standards resulting in the acceptance and trust of the customers. Some companies cooperate with the international chain. The international chain came to manage the standard. Examples of international chains are International Hotel Group: IHG. The hotel chains under the hotel business are Holiday Inn and Meridian. In addition, the hotel management brands are Westin, Sheraton, and Accor. Many brands are depending on luxury and price. In Thailand, Thai chains are accepted by international tourists. They continuously use the service. Thai chains are ONYX Hospitality Group Chain managing Amaree, Centara, Dusit, etc. The main straightness of Thai chains that are globally accepted is Thai service-minded and Thai uniqueness. These strategies showed that Thailand is outstanding when compared with other countries. Investors from other countries are interested in investing in the hotel business in Thailand. Thailand has joined and opened the country for AEC, and the trends of business and the business network of hotel business in ASEAN members are expanded. Therefore, when the ASEAN Economic Community was liberalized, there will be an increasing level of powerful competition in the market of hotel business especially a group of leading international hotel management networks. This group is the availability of capital and workers. Moreover, this group are having an edge over competitors in the marketplace by having a superior product and service, as well as promoting and distributing in effective ways (Kamwiset, B., 2019).

English skills are essential as the main language for communication with foreign tourists who are visiting and traveling in Thailand. However, the results of the English language proficiency ranking of EF Education First in 2012 found that the English language proficiency of Thais is on the rank of 53 from 54. These results showed that the English language proficiency of Thais is at a very low level. Local people should be encouraged and developed their English language skills to improve the quality of the tourism business, impress tourists, and promote the tourism potential of Thai in general (Piriyasilp, 2014).

English language skills are one of the important skills that can be used as a medium of communication in business, communication with travelers, investors from other countries who use English as an official language, and people from ASEAN member countries. Learning the English language and having language skills are the major keys. The tourism industry is one of Thailand's strengths when compared with the business partners in ASEAN member countries. Since Thailand has a collection of arts, ancient sites, antiques, eco-tourism destinations, beaches, hills, beautiful scenery, and unseen places for tourists to learn and find out. Moreover, there are many natural resources places for investment in the tourism sector. The tourism industry plays an important role in the development of the Thais economy and Thais society. It generates jobs and gains the amount of income in Thailand. In addition, Using the English language to facilitate accommodations or hotels is a necessary skill for tourists and investors. Offering good services can make the first impression. The use of the English language is an important factor in effectively communicating and giving information (Yutthapirut, 2016). Therefore, the researcher regards the English language proficiency of the hotel receptionist in the hotel business in Bangkok as important, and leads to solving the problem or the obstacles. The finding will be a strategy to build the standard way of communication and the English language used for the career of hotel receptionists in the hotel business in Bangkok. to enhance the image of Thai tourism and hotel business and create the hotels' satisfaction for the future, increasing the potential of services and sustainable services quality in the future.

Objectives of the Study

1. to examine the English language proficiency of hotel receptionists in the hotel business in Bangkok.
2. to compare the English language proficiency of hotel receptionists in the hotel business in Bangkok classified by individual factors.

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Literature Review

Listening Skills

The expertise gave the meaning and effectiveness of listening as follows:

Krashen (1983:79-89) gave the meaning of listening to meaningful input factors to the audiences.

Many methods help students get meaningful input factors, for example, Ashchertri's method (Total physical response), this method showed how the instructor instructs students to act or follow directions. Students will not be forced to speak a second language or a target language until they understand.

Widdowson (1983:59-60) said that listening means the ability to understand how a sentence relates to another sentence and how it functions to communicate and to ignore what doesn't need.

Speaking skills

Scott (1981:70) mentioned that speaking skills are important in everyday life, especially in learning a foreign language. Because the language users who can speak, they will be able to understand. However, speaking skills are complicated and need to practice.

Valette (1977:120) said that speaking is a form of daily communication, and speaking skills are essential to communicate because speaking is an expression to make the audience understand in the same ways as the speaker's needs. On the other hand, the meaning of speaking is not only high or low-pitched pronunciation in sentences, word choices, accuracy, and correctness but also making others understand.

Reading skills

Thonglert (2000: 20) assumed that reading is the communication between the author and the readers through the process of interaction between language and thought. The readers needed to understand the feelings and emotions of the author.

Lertpiriyakamol (2001: 23-27) stated the meaning of reading skills is that reading is an important receptive behavior, as same as listening. Reading ability is significant and required to represent the quality of the citizen. It can be seen that international organizations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) will use the literacy skills of the populations as a measurement of the countries' development.

Writing skills

Rojanasai (2005: 42-43) revealed that writing is used to convey knowledge, thoughts, and experiences based on vocabulary, grammar, and proper choice of words through systematic order of thoughts.

Widowsson (1979: 49) defined writing that it was a type of communication activity. This communication conveyed information from one person to another by using language and knowledge as a tool. Using a common knowledge of information and social requirements between messengers and recipients, the writing is a text that expresses the interaction between the author and the reader. The writing must conform to the social requirements to be able to convey meaning to the reader.

The Service Concept of Hotel Receptionists

Baker Hotel, Bradley & Huyton (2000) stated that the hotel receptionist is the easiest noticeable career in the hotel. The guest will focus on the front office which is the reception desk. The reception desk is usually the first to impress guests. It is also the center of communication for the hotel staff.

Theoretical Framework

Independent Variable

Personal Factors

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Educational Background
4. Occupation
5. Working Experience

Dependent Variable

English language proficiency of hotel receptionists in the hotel business in Bangkok

1. Listening Skills
2. Speaking Skills
3. Reading Skills
4. Writing Skills
5. Knowledge about cultures

Figure 1 Theoretical framework





Research Hypothesis

The differences in personal factors affect the differences in English language proficiency of hotel receptionists in the hotel business in Bangkok.

Methodology

Population and Sample

The population was the hotel receptionists in the hotel business from 4,467 hotels one data sampling was selected. (Expedia. 2023: online)

The data sampling in this research was the hotel receptionists in the hotel business in Bangkok. The data was selected by Simple Random Sampling. The researcher used a Taro Yamane formula for calculating the sample size.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

n means the sample size

N means the population of the Study

e means the margin error in the calculation

The total number of data sampling was 368 people.

$$n = \frac{4467}{1 + 4467(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{4467}{1 + 11.17}$$

$$n = 367.05 \approx 368$$

Construction of Instrument and Construct Validity of Instruments

1. Examine documents, concepts, theories, and related research studies.

2. Gain the knowledge from item 1 to create the questionnaire that covers all details.

Define the structural framework and divided The questionnaire into 2 parts as followed:

Part 1 Personal Information

Part 2 Questionnaire on “The English language proficiency of hotel receptionists in the hotel business in Bangkok” used a Rating Scale for measurement.

3. Review and Identified the questionnaire by the experts for validation and accuracy.

4. Review and Identified the questionnaire by the experts from item 3 to find Content Validity and IOC. The IOC was 0.80-1.00.

5. Try out with the 30 hotel receptionists who were not the participants in this research. Query the confidence coefficient of Cronbach’s alpha (α - Coefficient) to measure the consistency and reliability of a set of survey items.

6. Revise the questionnaire and find out the Reliability by using the formula α -Coefficient Cronbach. The $\alpha = 0.936$.

7. Revise the questionnaire from item 6 and use the complete questionnaire to collect the data.

Data Collection: The data was collected by distributing the questionnaire to the hotel receptionists in 364 hotel businesses in Bangkok.

Data Analysis: (1) Percentage, Mean, and Standard Deviation. (2) t-test to compare the differences between the two groups. (3) F-test (One-way ANOVA) to compare the difference between more than 2 variables. The Scheffe method was tested in pairs when statistically significant differences were found.

Results

1. The English language proficiency of hotel receptionists in the hotel business in Bangkok in overall was at a high level. The highest average English proficiency of hotel receptionists was reading skills. The attitude toward reading skills was at a high level. Speaking skills were at the lowest level. The attitude toward speaking skills was at a moderate level, respectively.

2. The result from hypothesis testing, the questionnaire “The English language proficiency of hotel receptionists in the hotel business in Bangkok” classified by personal factors, gender, age, educational background, occupation, and working experiences





The English language proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills of hotel receptionists of different gender were not different.

The different ages and educational backgrounds affected English language proficiency. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing was different at a statistically significant level of .01. The occupation and working experience affected the English language proficiency. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing was different at a statistical significance level of .05.

Discussion

1. The English language proficiency of the hotel receptionist in the hotel business in Bangkok in overall was at a high level may cause of English language to be an important skill of the language users' careers. The hotel receptionists need to have the skills to service the customer, give information not only about the information in hotel services, but also other information about telling directions, the attractive place, and give the suggestion to the tourists effectively related to Kamwiset (2019) studied "Receptionists' English Language Proficiency in Hotels and Accommodations in Phuket Province". The objectives of the study were to: 1) examine the readiness level for English use of receptionists' English Proficiency in hotels and accommodations in Phuket; and 2) to compare receptionists' English usage in hotels and accommodations in Phuket classified by personal factors, education level, professions branch, and hotel location. The result found that the overall availability of English language usage of the hotel services provider and accommodation was at a high level and this study related to Kalasin, S., & Jarumanee, N., (2015) studied "Need and Problems of English Use Among Thai Hotel Front Desk Staff in Tourist Attractions of Southern Thailand." This study raised awareness to get ready for being ASEAN member of Thailand. The hotel front officer needs to have four skills in English; listening, speaking, reading, and writing, these skills are potential for communicating with the tourists. Agree with Chaisuriya (2009) mentioned that the most frequent English language skills that engineers use are reading skills. The documents that are frequently read are emails, text messages, related information on the Website, and the detail of products, respectively. Followed by writing skills. The activities that are frequently written are writing reports, writing business correspondence, and writing the project, respectively. Third is listening skills. Listening skills from media, communicating with colleagues in the working place, communicating for everyday life, and listening to the executive board, respectively. Speaking skill is the least frequently used. The language users speak for asking and answering questions in working, communicating in everyday life, negotiating on the business, and giving the opinion in the meeting, respectively.

2. The results of hypothesis testing, the English language proficiency of the hotel receptionist of the hotel business in Bangkok classified by gender, age, educational background, occupation, and working experience. The hotel receptionists who have different age's English language proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills were not different. For hotel receptionists who have different ages and educational backgrounds the English language proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills were different at the statistically significant level .01. The hotel receptionists who have different occupations and working experiences the English language proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills were different at the statistically significant level.05 related to Chanpram (2023) "English Language Needs of Operational Employee in Chonburi Industrial Estates." The finding showed that when classifying by personal status, it was found that male employees aged between 25 - 29 years old, with a master's degree and more than 16 years of work experience had the highest level of English language needs. The overall differences in the levels of operational employees' English language need to be compared by personal status showed that there was no difference in gender. Employees aged between 25 to 29 had higher needs than those aged between 35 to 39. Employees with a high vocational certificate, bachelor's, and master's degrees had higher needs than those with lower than a high vocational certificate. Employees with 1 - 5 years of work experience had higher needs than those with less than 1 year and 6 -10 years of work experience. Also, employees with 11 - 15 years of work experience had higher needs than those with 6 - 10 years of work experience. According to Kosashunhanan (2016), research findings revealed that most of the Thai engineers who answered the questionnaire had a bachelor's degree, with working experiences from 1 to 5 years and they were at the operational level. The frequency of English usage was every day. Reading was an English communication skill that was mostly used by reading electronic mail and information from the internet. Then it was followed by listening skill that was performed when engineers attended meetings, contacted their boss, experts, or customers, and listened to other sources such as radios, televisions, and CDs. The



engineers also performed their writing skills when they wrote business letters in the form of electronic mail. The final skill that was mentioned was speaking. A chance to speak English in the workplace was rare, only during meetings when Thai engineers did a presentation. In terms of participants' positions, in general employees at Higher or Executive level had more chances to use English, especially for reading and writing skills. In terms of frequency, the findings show differences in the frequency of English usage among those engineers. The level of their English performance was also different according to their ability in listening, reading, speaking, and writing.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Applying the Research Results: Provide training courses for the hotel receptionists and staff. And Practice using the English language for a career in improving communication skills, especially speaking and listening skills. The details of English for a career should consist of the conversation in the tourism and hotel industry, vocabulary about hotel services, tourism, etc.

Recommendations Topic for Further Study: The Causal Factors Influencing the English Language Proficiency of Hotel Receptionists in Hotel Business in Bangkok

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