

# การศึกษาปัญหาด้านการฟังและพูดภาษาอังกฤษของเจ้าหน้าที่ช่วยเหลือนักท่องเที่ยวประจำสนามบินนานาชาติภูเก็ต

## A Study of English Listening and Speaking Problems of Tourist Assistants at Phuket International Airport

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### บทคัดย่อ

ทักษะการสื่อสารภาษาอังกฤษเป็นทักษะที่มีความจำเป็นสำหรับบุคลากรด้านการท่องเที่ยวในประเทศไทย เนื่องจากต้องอำนวยความสะดวกแก่นักท่องเที่ยวชาวต่างชาติ ปัจจุบันกระทรวงการท่องเที่ยวและกีฬาได้จัดตั้งศูนย์ช่วยเหลือนักท่องเที่ยวท้องถิ่นและชาวต่างชาติในจังหวัดสำคัญทางการท่องเที่ยว ในกรณีนี้เจ้าหน้าที่ช่วยเหลือนักท่องเที่ยวจึงเป็นบุคลากรสำคัญของศูนย์ฯ นี้ อย่างไรก็ตามเจ้าหน้าที่ส่วนใหญ่ประสบปัญหาในการสื่อสารด้านการฟังและการพูดภาษาอังกฤษที่ส่งผลกระทบต่อการทำงานเพื่อช่วยเหลือนักท่องเที่ยว ดังนั้นงานวิจัยนี้มีจุดประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาปัญหาการฟังและการพูดภาษาอังกฤษของเจ้าหน้าที่ช่วยเหลือนักท่องเที่ยวประจำท่าอากาศยานนานาชาติภูเก็ต และนำเสนอวิธีการแก้ปัญหาดังกล่าวจากหลากหลายมุมมองของพวกเขา งานวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพนี้ใช้วิธีการสัมภาษณ์แบบกึ่งโครงสร้าง ผลจากการวิจัยพบว่าเจ้าหน้าที่ประจำศูนย์ฯดังกล่าวมีปัญหาการสื่อสารทั้งด้านการฟังและด้านการพูดภาษาอังกฤษในหลากหลายมิติ นอกจากนี้พวกเขาใช้กลยุทธ์ต่างๆ ในการแก้ปัญหาการสื่อสารเฉพาะหน้าในการทำงานกับชาวต่างชาติ งานวิจัยนี้สะท้อนให้เห็นความพยายามในการพัฒนาประสิทธิภาพการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อการสื่อสารของเจ้าหน้าที่ชาวไทยประจำศูนย์ช่วยเหลือนักท่องเที่ยว

**คำสำคัญ:** ปัญหาการฟัง-พูด, ปัญหาการสื่อสารภาษาอังกฤษ, เจ้าหน้าที่ช่วยเหลือนักท่องเที่ยว, ภูเก็ต

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## Abstract

English communication skills are crucial for Thai tourism staff since they need to assist foreign tourists. At present, the Tourist Assistance Center (TAC) was established by the Thai Ministry of Tourism and Sports to help local and international tourists in certain major tourist provinces. However, they seem to face problems in English listening-speaking skills, which affect their conversation in facilitating foreign tourists. Thus, this research aimed to study their problems in English listening-speaking skills and to present their views on solutions to the problems. This qualitative study employed semi-structured interviews. The results showed that these Thai officers had various dimensions of English listening-speaking problems. Further, they used different strategies in solving those emerging problems while they were working with the foreigners. Overall, this study reflects Thai tourist assistants' attempt to improve their English use for oral communication.

**Keywords:** Listening-speaking problems, English communication problems, tourist assistants, Phuket

## Introduction

Undoubtedly English is used by a number of people with different mother tongues and cultures around the world. It serves functional communication of many people with different careers. Beyond professions, English goes through many other functions around the globe-economics, socio-cultures, education, and politics. This makes English become a middle language worldwide. Consequently, English is considered as a lingua franca of the world population (Rao, 2019).

In Thailand, English is used as an international language. The tourism market in Thailand is classified as one of the most developing country since there are a number of tourists who visit many provinces. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, there were 39.8 million foreign visitors in Thailand in 2020 (Statista, 2022). Moreover, the tourism industry is one

of Thailand's main economic sectors in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) accounting for 6-7% (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands Embassy in Bangkok, 2017).

Phuket is the popular destination for a plenty of foreign tourists. It is surrounded by several beaches such as Rawai, Patong, Karon, or Mai Khao, etc. Moreover, Laem Phromthep viewpoint in this province is known as the most beautiful sunset in Thailand. Further, fantastic classical architecture also appears in this province, such as the Goom Restaurant. Those are the reasons why Phuket is the popular spot to visit when foreigners come to Thailand. The Phuket Tourist Association president Bhumikitti Ruktaengam said that there are almost 15,000 visitors from abroad visiting Phuket in July, and there are over 450 foreigners arriving Phuket per day. Before the Covid-19

pandemic, the tourism industry used to be the most important factor for Thailand's economy since it was 12% of GDP; there were around 40 million foreigners arriving Phuket in 2019 (Setboonsarng, 2021). As a result, tourism in Phuket is a key element that supports Thailand's national income.

On the other hand, many foreign tourists seem to face many problems travelling in Thailand. For example, many crooks deceive foreign tourists to buy low-quality jewelry with the expensive price (Ngamkham, 2012), etc. Therefore, having tourist assistants to help the tourists is a partial solution to the problem. The director of Thailand's Tourist Assistance Center (TAC) visited Korea and noticed that the country established TAC to help tourists, so he thought there should also be TAC in Thailand. This is because there are international tourists here and there was no specific organization that would take care of those tourists.

However, Thais are not proficient in English. Based on EduFirst (2022), English communication skills of Thais are very low. Thai tourist assistants also have the problems of English communication although it is very important for their job because they have to use it to communicate with foreign tourists. Thus, there is a need to conduct this study to find out the reasons why they have this oral communication problem which will be beneficial for maintaining the economy of the country since international tourists are important to the GDP.

This study realizes problems of listening-speaking skills in English faced by non-native speakers. Indeed, these problems have been conducted in a number of theoretical and empirical studies. Firstly, Gilakjani & Sabouri, (2016) found that non-native English speakers faced particular problems in listening comprehension of foreigners' English. They are quality of recorded materials, cultural differences, accents, unfamiliar vocabulary, as well as length and speed in listening. The last problem concerns inability in controlling the time and speed of English expressed by foreign speakers. Secondly, Phuangmanee (2016) examined problems in English communication perceived by Thai salespeople at a telecommunication company. It was found that they were unable to comprehend fast speech expressed by foreign customers, they could not use correct grammar when communicating, they had the limited knowledge of technical terms for reading, and they could not write English with correct grammar. Thirdly, Tran and Duong (2020) revealed the problems of English listening comprehension faced by Vietnamese high school students and teachers. The problems were about phonological and lexical elements in English, especially high speed rates and challenging vocabulary items. The other semantic, syntactic, and discourse problems about listening were the use of long utterances, implied meaning, unfamiliar topics and idea organization hidden in foreigners' English speech. Fourthly, Khamprated (2012)

found problems of English listening and speaking problems and their causes among private vocational school students in Thailand. They were about difficulties in understanding foreign speakers who speak quickly with the regional accent or poor pronunciation. These problems were caused by their limitation of grammar and vocabulary skills as well as cultural differences. Finally, Jeharsae (2012) studied English oral communication problems and strategies used by Thai employees in an international workplace in Bangkok who communicated with native and non-native English-speaking customers. The problems were about listening comprehension, grammar usage, fluency, accents, word stress, cultural awareness, and voice quality. As a whole, these problems seem to be based on sound, word, meaning, grammar, and discourse components of English uttered by foreigners which are difficult to Thai and other non-native English speakers.

Besides previous studies and concepts in listening-speaking problems, other relevant theories are also pointed to support the present research. First, communication strategies refer to methods for information exchanging which can be visual, verbal and non-verbal communication (Meiners *et al.*, 2022). These strategies are vital tools students use to clarify meaning when they have conversation (Reid, 2018). However, the most working definition accepted by many researchers such as Varadi (1973), Tarone (1977), is that it is “a systematic technique

employed by a speaker to express his [or her] meaning when faced with some difficulty” (Corder, 1981, p.10, Dörnyei, 1995). In other words, communication strategies are certain linguistic devices used to understand or convey messages. They are important for the senders and receivers. Based on the above definitions, they help either the speakers or the listeners understand or convey difficult messages and be able to communicate. However, if the speaker cannot deliver the information, the communication will not complete as the listener do not understand. Hence, communication strategies should not be overlooked. They are three types of those strategies, namely, verbal communication strategies, nonverbal communication strategies, and visual communication strategies (Meiners *et al.*, 2022). Second, the behavioral theory is about “the idea that children are conditioned by their environment and the reinforcement of their communication” as “behavioral perspective states that language is a set of verbal behaviors learned through operant conditioning”. Thus, children learn languages using this theory. For further explanation, “behaviorists believe that language behaviors are learned by imitation, reinforcement, and copying adult language behaviors. They consider language to be determined by selective reinforcements from speech and language models, usually parents or other family members. Behaviorists focus on external forces that shape a child’s language and see the child as a reactor to these forces.” Two other concepts that are crucial for

understanding the behaviorist ideas of speech and language development are imitation and practice (Hulit, *et al.*, 2011, p.1). This theory can be applied to speech and language learning. Non-native speakers learn foreign languages by remembering new words and imitate them. After that they tried to make sentences as how children learn to speak their first language (Bainbridge, 2021). Last, the selective attention theory is about “the process of directing our awareness to relevant stimuli, while ignoring irrelevant stimuli in the environment.” Moreover, the selection is to focus on what is necessary for listening in the limitation of time. Further, this theory is that “all semantic processing is carried out after the filter has selected the message to pay attention to. So whichever message(s) restricted by the bottleneck (i.e. not selective) is not understood” (Broadbent, 1958, p.1). This theory can be applied to the listening and speaking skill problems in the current study. That is, this theory provides vital linguistic processes leading to the difficulties faced by non-native English listeners, so it can be considered in designing interview questions.

Hence, problems in English listening-speaking and oral communication are theorized as well as other related theories are reviewed as a contribution to the background of this study.

This study is a qualitative one. It focuses on a small scale of the English listening and speaking problems of the tourist assistants at the Phuket International

Airport. As an intern at this workplace, the researcher emphasizes some aural and oral English communication problems of the tourist assistants. Moreover, the researcher found that the tourist assistants had particular English oral-aural communication problems when they were assisting foreigners.

This study is significant. It will be a database for the relevant tourism organizations in Phuket and other major provincial cities. Specific problems in listening-speaking skills and their solutions of the Thai tourist assistants can be used to seek further ways of improvement such as an initiation of training courses for improving their aural-oral communication skills that will benefit the tourism industry of the country.

## Research Objectives

1. To reveal English listening-speaking problems of the tourist assistants at the Tourist Assistance Center at Phuket International Airport.
2. To present the solutions for the English listening and speaking problems of the tourist assistants.

## Methodology

The methodology concerns data source, research subjects, data collection, and data analysis. Each is described.

First of all, the data source of this study was the Tourist Assistance Center (TAC) at Phuket International Airport, where the researcher had worked as a trainee from

November 29, 2021 to March 18, 2022. This center was established helping to solve the tourists' problems, such as, contacting relevant organization, translating, welcoming, announcing information beneficial to the tourists, etc.

Moreover, the research subjects were selected using a quota sampling procedure of 50 percent. There were 15 Thai tourist assistants at this center. There appeared to be eight participants of this study. Only one with the highest position was interviewed for the pilot study while the seven persons were interviewed through the actual data collection. These participants, namely interviewees, were selected according to the criteria set which were (i) their gender; (ii) at least one year of working experience at the center; and (iii) their willingness to join this research.

Additionally, the main instruments used in this study were semi-structured interview, a mobile phone, notes, and Facebook messenger. They were employed to collect the oral interview data about the problems of TAC officers' English listening and speaking skills. In this regard, the interview questions were designed by previous studies, and they were approved by the research advisor. This interview was designed into a separable bilingual form-English and Thai. This was to accommodate the Thai tourist assistants who would feel easier and convenient to give their precise answers. Furthermore, the questions were divided into four parts, namely, "Part One: Tourist

assistants' personal information" (7 questions), "Part Two: Tourist assistants' listening problems" (10 questions), Part Three: Tourist assistants' speaking problems" (10 questions), and "Part Four: Tourist assistants' solutions" (3 questions). Meanwhile, the mobile phone was used to record the interview data, and notes were made by the researcher. Besides, Facebook messenger was used to record the interview data for some interviewees who were not convenient for being interviewed in person.

In light of data collection, there are two stages-the pilot study and the actual data collection. The pilot study was done for adjusting and improving the interview questions. After the interview questions was designed with the assistance of the supervisor, the researcher made a trial with the first tourist assistant, who had the highest position working as a tourist assistant. This trial was to ensure whether the questions should be edited. The researcher conducted the pilot study on January 19, 2022, by voice calling due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Eventually, the pilot study was effective because the researcher noticed that some questions should be fixed, added, or modified. For the data collection, the researcher used the final version of the interview questions to collect the actual data from the seven tourist assistants. The researcher interviewed all the targeted interviewees within two weeks-the 1st of February 2022 to the 15<sup>th</sup> of February 2022.

There were two ways the researcher used to collect the interview data: face-to-face interview and the messenger-using interview. The researcher recorded the voice and took notes while interviewing. For the duration of the interview, it took around 20 minutes per an interviewee. After that, the research started to analyze the interview data.

In terms of data analysis, this study relied on transcription. The researcher used the answers of the seven participants to analyze TAC officers' English aural and oral communication problems. The researcher analyzed them by interpreting the answers orally given by the participants from Thai to her written English because they were interviewed in Thai. After that the spoken data from each participant was classified into the same category. The answers of each participant could identify overall dimensions of English listening and speaking problems of the tourist assistants, and it could lead to the solution which is the main purpose of this study. Besides, the results were discussed with the theories and previous studies.

## Results and Discussion

The findings are presented according to three areas. The first is the background information of the participants, and the two others highlight the two objectives-problems in listening-speaking skills as well as their solutions.

### 1. TAC officers' background information

The background information of the selected tourist assistants is revealed. Firstly, these seven interviewees consisted of 3 males and 4 females. Secondly, the participant's youngest age was 24, and the oldest was 32 years old. Thirdly, they graduated with different fields of arts and social sciences degrees. However, they all can speak English. That is, they usually use it; three of them use it almost every day, and the rest use it every day. All interviewees have worked in this position for a minimum of 1 year and a maximum of 7 years with different reasons of working, such as being selected as the officer after the interviewing, requirement of helping tourists, or the requirement of developing their English skills. Even though they are working in the airport, not all of them have taken the course of English for airline communication. On the other hand, although some of them took the course, they only knew the basic information about the language use of this function.

### 2. TAC officers' problems in English listening-speaking skills

This part of the result is divided into two sections of problems-listening and speaking.

#### 2.1 Listening problems

The tourist assistants had several problems in listening in English. They are discussed below.

(1) The difficulties in listening to fast-English speaking foreigners: Most of the officers revealed that listening to fast-English

speaking foreigners was averagely difficult because they could not catch the ideas delivered by the tourists. Some of them said it was not very difficult as they could catch the main idea conveyed by the tourists, and a few officers said that it was very difficult due to the tourists' high speed of speaking as well as the unfamiliar accent of English.

(2) The incapability to understand the foreigners' messages: There was only one staff graduating with a degree in Business English Communication who could always understand the tourists. Meanwhile, the rest of the staff had problems in understanding the tourists. However, their reasons were different. Three of them mentioned about the tourists' speaking speed and the unfamiliar accents. Moreover, one of them did not understand the way the tourists explained their problems in a long dialogue. Additionally, one staff mentioned about the unfamiliar vocabulary items used by the tourists. Lastly, one staff revealed that the tourists explained their problems unclearly.

(3) The way to understand the tourists who did not speak English: All tourist assistants used the body language or gestures to communicate with the tourists who could not speak English.

(4) The difficulties in comprehending slang words: The majority of the staff asked the tourists to explain the slang words or they sought out the meaning of the slangs in the google website. Some of them said that the tourist did not use slangs. Likewise, a few staff did not have any problem with understanding slang words.

(5) The difficulties in understanding complex English sentences: Most of the officers said that they had the problem in figuring out the complex sentences in English uttered by the tourists whereas a few of them did not face any problem,

(6) The difficulties in listening to non-native English tourists: Three tourist assistants revealed that the reason of this difficulty was the unfamiliar accents of non-native English speakers. However, few of them did not have this problem because they could comprehend either native or non-native English speakers who used simple grammatical patterns and vocabulary items. Similarly, a few staff said that this difficulty depended on particular foreign tourists. That is, some non-native English speakers were good at communicating in English; they pronounced clearly and followed the grammar rules. For some officers who did not speak English well, undeniably they put much effort to comprehend non-native English speakers.

(7) Being unfamiliar with some English accents: Four officers mentioned that Australian English accent was the most difficult to understand. They were unfamiliar with this accent because the speakers barely opened their mouth while speaking, so the pronunciation could be misunderstood. Moreover, two officers said that Russian English accent was the most difficult. Some Russian speakers did not pronounce English clearly, so the meaning or the words could be changed or meaningless, causing the difficulty of comprehension. The



rest of the officers said that Cockney accent (British English accent) was the most difficult because the tourists of this accent omitted the final sounds and they spoke very fast. Additionally, Indian English accent was as difficult as Russian English accent because Indian English speakers had some unique words of Indian languages influencing their oral English.

(8) The complication in listening to non-native English tourists who did not follow the grammar rules but spoke English with the influence of their first language structure: The majority of the officers said that it was not difficult because, normally, they focused on the key words, not on the grammar, to understand the tourists, and they did not focus on the grammar. Therefore, whether the foreign tourists followed English grammar rules, it was not much necessary. Moreover, some of them said that it was difficult because they did not understand what the tourists would like to say. Besides, few of them did not comprehend those tourists' English because of the accent.

(9) The complexity of understanding the consonant and vowel sounds in English articulated by non-native English tourists: Most of the officers did not have any problem because they would repeat every time whether they understood the tourists' needs correctly. On the other hand, some of them had the problem because the tourists' English pronunciation was not phonetically correct.

(10) The complication of comprehending the main idea of what the foreign tourists wanted to convey in English: Most of the respondents mentioned that the tourists explained their problems narratively causing them unable to catch the main idea. Moreover, they also revealed that some tourists' unfamiliar English accents and poor vocabulary use were the causes of this problem. On the contrary, some of the officers said that they did not have the problem as they could attain the key words from the explanation of the tourists, and they would ask for the confirmation of their understanding from the tourists.

The results of these English listening problems faced by the Thai tourist assistants (TAC officers) parallel the studies on non-native English listeners by Gilakjani & Sabouri, (2016), Phuangmanee (2016), Tran and Duong (2020), and Khamprated (2012). Moreover, the selective attention theory by Broadbent (1958) can be applied to this part of the result. Based on the oral interview, the TAC officers could not understand long, fast messages spoken by some foreign tourists, but they caught the familiar words to understand the requirement of the foreign tourists. Hence, their action is compatible with the theory.

## 2.2 Speaking problems

For the speaking problems, the Thai tourist assistants had some difficulties as follows:

(1) The difficulties in creating a complete sentence: All the assistants said

that they had this problem because of some reasons. Four of them were not good at English grammar. Moreover, two of them were not keen at English oral communication. That is, they focused on the comprehension of the listeners, not speaking in complete sentences. Moreover, one of them was not aware of using particular words in English in speaking in complete sentences.

(2) The complexity of word choice when speaking with the tourists: Most of the staff said that it was problematic to think of or choose appropriate English words when communicating with the foreign tourists. All of them could not think of the key words as they did not graduate with a Bachelor's degree in English, so this was difficult for them. However, this was problematic for only a few of them as they communicated with the foreigners using daily vocabulary items, not the technical terms that they were not aware of.

(3) The difficulties in pronouncing English words: Almost all the participants had this problem because they could not follow the phonetic rules of English words when speaking. Mostly they said that it was because of their habit of speaking English thinking in their first language, namely Thai. Their pronunciation of English final sounds were not clear because of the Thai oral influence. That is, these officers did not speak English by stressing the final sound because Thai pronunciation does not focus on the final consonant sound. On the other hand, one participant said that she did not have this problem because she had a major in English.

(4) The difficulties in speaking English with the influence of Thai language structure: The participants who did not graduate with English major did not know the rules of grammar in details. Moreover, they thought in Thai and translated into English, so their English speaking was influenced by Thai grammar structure. However, there was one participant saying that she did not have this problem because she graduated from the major of business English communication.

(5) The complication of conveying English messages with Thai accent: All the participants said that speaking English with Thai accent was not the problem to help the tourists who could understand what they would like to say.

(6) The difficulties in stressing some English words that made the tourists misunderstand or unable to understand the speakers: Five participants said that they stressed the words wrongly because they did not know the exact syllable to stress. Sometimes, they thought they stressed correctly, but non-native English speakers did not understand them. Thus, the important factor was not only the ability to stress correctly, but it also depended on the individual person they spoke with. However, two of the participants had the problem with stressing some English words, but the tourists still understood them.

(7) The incapability in conveying the ideas: All the participants had the problem with understanding what foreign tourists were

trying to say, but they did know how to convey their oral English according to their thoughts. Mostly, it was because of the poor vocabulary use. In contrast, one participant said that she thought in English and spoke what she thought, so she did not have this problem.

(8) The mutual intelligibility of speaking with native or non-native English speakers: Four participants faced this problem. They explained that the non-native English speakers usually used easy words to communicate with them. Two participants said that this problem depended on the individual person whether they are non-native or native English speakers. If they could tell their purpose precisely, it was always compatible to talk to. On the other hand, one of them said that he was compatible talking with the native speakers because they pronounced English words correctly.

(9) The English terms for airport communication: All the officers could use the terms for airport communication to assist the foreigners who had some problems about airport services. They explained that although they had not enrolled the English for airport communication course, they had to know the basic words or the terms used in the airport because the office was located in the airport. The common terms were check-in time, arrival time, departure time, domestic terminal, international terminal, and take off.

(10) The difficulties in creating the formal or complex sentences: Almost all participants encountered this problem because

they had inadequate knowledge about grammar rules and the vocabulary use to make formal or complex sentences when they need to. However, one staff did not have this problem because she was aware of the grammar rules she learned in the university.

It could be said that all these 10 problems of speaking English by Thai staff are similar to the previous research of Jeharsae (2012) because they are non-native English speakers. These problems are the core difficulties faced by Thai staff in a variety of careers.

### **3. TAC officers' solutions to the problems**

There appear to be two different results in this part: The solutions to listening and the solutions to speaking problems.

In light of the listening solution, there are several strategies for solving the problems used by the officers. Most of them watched English movies and listened to English songs. Some of them mentioned that listening to the different foreigners from different countries to be familiar with different accents was the strategy they used. However, one of them took a course and used an application to solve their listening problem.

For the speaking solution, there appear to be several strategies applied by the officers. Trying to be confident and increasing the knowledge of vocabulary were used by most participants. However, taking a speaking course, using body language and gestures, and replacing the wrong pronunciation with

the right one were the methods used by a few officers to solve their speaking problems.

Based on the interview data, some of the solutions to the speaking problems can be discussed with the behavioral theory by Hulit *et al.* (2011). The action of replacing the wrong pronunciation with the right version by imitating the foreigners and increasing the vocabularies by remembering them and creating sentences when talking to foreigners are related to the theory. Thus, the tourist assistants' solutions to the problem are observed in this theory.

However, while interviewing using questions in listening and speaking problems parts, the researcher noticed that some solutions were not mentioned in this part. Those solutions used when they had either listening or speaking communication problems were asking the tourist to repeat what they said, to paraphrase the statement, to explain problems slowly, using body language when they could not think of any word, and using gestures to answer the tourists' questions. They explained that they did that to seek clarification and to keep communicating when they had the communication barrier. These replies fit the communication strategies or techniques to be disposed of the barrier in the communication. These strategies include paraphrasing, asking for repetition, seeking clarification, and avoidance of words, structures, or topics. Moreover, they parallel the study of Meiners *et al.* (2022) in the types of communication strategies section that using body language, facial expressions, physical

distance between communicators, or the tone of your voice is considered as the nonverbal communication strategies. As a result, the Thai staff could understand the foreign tourists as they used the communication strategies to solve their listening problems though they did not know this fact.

## Conclusion

The Thai tourist assistants at the Phuket International Airport had several problems in listening in English when communicating with both native and non-native speakers. The major problems are the difficulties in understanding unfamiliar accents, understanding unfamiliar vocabulary items, and catching meaning in fast and long conversations. Further, the tourist assistants faced the problem in English speaking which concern pronouncing English words correctly, speaking English without the influence of Thai language structure, having a mutual intelligibility, as well as creating complete, complex and formal sentences. Additionally, the solutions to the listening and speaking problems of the tourist assistants were varied. The examples can be watching English movies to be familiar with the speaking speed of the foreign tourists, increasing vocabulary use by listing the new words, or using body language to deliver messages when they had language barrier. These examples can show that they could use communication strategies, behavioral theory, and selective attention theory to solve their communication obstacles.

## Recommendation for Further Research

(1) The further study about the effective solutions to the exist problems found in this research should be conducted. The solutions the tourist assistants used are not the long-term solutions for the problems, so it should be better for them if there are the guidance on solving those unavoidable problems.

(2) The research in the quantitative mode by using a questionnaire can be conducted. Many other problems and strategies of solutions about speaking and listening skills can be more examined.

(3) The oral communication problems in different organizations should be conducted to help the staff find the effective methods to solve their communication problems.

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