

THE STUDY OF FOREIGN CUSTOMERS' SATISFACTION TOWARDS  
THAI AIRPORT GROUND CHECK-IN OFFICERS ENGLISH ORAL  
COMMUNICATION

A MASTER'S PROJECT

BY

SUCHADA THAIPANICH


Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Master of Arts in Business English for International Communication

Srinakharinwirot University

March 2017

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Suchada Thaipanich (2017). *The Study of Foreign Customers' satisfaction Towards Thai Airport Ground Check-In Officers English Oral Communication*. Master's Project, M.A. (Business English for International Communication). Bangkok: Graduate School, Srinakharinwirot University. Project Advisor: Asst.Prof. Nattha Kaewcha.

The study aimed to find out the level of foreign customers' satisfaction when communicating in English with Thai airport ground check-in officers based in Bangkok, Thailand and to find out the points of improvement suggested by foreign customers when communicating in English. The participants of this study were 100 foreign customers who flew with Thai Airways. The survey questionnaire was employed in this study. The questionnaire was analyzed by using mean and percentage. It was found that 97% of foreign customers were satisfied with English oral communication of Thai airport ground check-in officers. According to Thai airport ground check-in officers' job description, the overall satisfaction was rated at high level (M= 3.81). In addition, it was revealed that passengers felt most satisfied with Thai airport ground check-in officers about "Stating flight number and boarding gates clearly" (M= 4.18) while feeling least satisfied with the task "Stating mileage number clearly and correctly" (M= 3.37). Regarding recommendations for Thai airport ground check-in officers to improve, the thing that they should improve most for speaking skill was lack of vocabulary (18%) followed by incorrect pronunciation (13%). For listening skill, the thing that they should improve most was understand different accents (30%), followed by interpretation of content (18%).

การศึกษาเรื่องความพึงพอใจของลูกค้าชาวต่างชาติต่อความสามารถในการสื่อสารภาษาอังกฤษของ

พนักงานตรวจบัตรโดยสารท่าอากาศยานไทย



บทคัดย่อ

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สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษธุรกิจเพื่อการสื่อสารนานาชาติ

มีนาคม 2560

สุชาดา ไทพานิชย์.(2560). การศึกษาเรื่องความพึงพอใจของลูกค้าชาวต่างชาติต่อความสามารถในการสื่อสารภาษาอังกฤษของพนักงานตรวจบัตรโดยสารท่าอากาศยานไทย. สารนิพนธ์ ศศ.ม. (ภาษาอังกฤษธุรกิจเพื่อการสื่อสารนานาชาติ). กรุงเทพฯ: บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ. อาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาสารนิพนธ์: ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์ ญัฐฐา แก้วฉา

งานวิจัยนี้มีจุดประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาความพึงพอใจของลูกค้าชาวต่างชาติต่อความสามารถในการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษของพนักงานตรวจบัตรโดยสารประจำสถานีกรุงเทพ ในด้านการพูดและการฟัง และเพื่อสำรวจข้อเสนอแนะจากผู้โดยสารชาวต่างชาติที่ต้องการให้พนักงานตรวจบัตรโดยสารปรับปรุงเมื่อสื่อสารด้วยภาษาอังกฤษในด้านการพูดและการฟัง เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการวิจัยครั้งนี้คือแบบสอบถาม จำนวน 100 ชุด กลุ่มตัวอย่างในงานวิจัยนี้คือ ผู้โดยสารชาวต่างชาติจำนวน 100 คน ผลการสำรวจแบบสอบถามความพึงพอใจจากผู้โดยสารชาวต่างชาติเกี่ยวกับการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษของพนักงานตรวจบัตรโดยสารตามลักษณะงาน พบว่า ผู้โดยสารชาวต่างชาติมีความพึงพอใจโดยรวมในด้านการพูดและการฟัง คิดเป็นร้อยละ 97 ค่าเฉลี่ย 3.81 หัวข้อที่ผู้โดยสารรู้สึกพึงพอใจมากที่สุดคือการแจ้งหมายเลขเที่ยวบินและประตูขึ้นเครื่องได้อย่างชัดเจนและถูกต้อง คิดเป็นค่าเฉลี่ย 4.18 ในขณะที่การแจ้งหมายเลขสมาชิกสะสมไมล์ได้อย่างชัดเจนและถูกต้อง เป็นหัวข้อที่ผู้โดยสารพึงพอใจน้อยที่สุด คิดเป็นค่าเฉลี่ย 3.37 จากผลสำรวจคำแนะนำจากผู้โดยสารพบว่า สำหรับทักษะการพูด สิ่งที่พนักงานตรวจบัตรโดยสารควรปรับปรุงมากที่สุด คือ การขาดแคลนคำศัพท์ คิดเป็นร้อยละ 18 รองลงมา คือการออกเสียงที่ไม่ถูกต้อง คิดเป็นร้อยละ 13 และสำหรับทักษะการฟัง สิ่งที่ควรปรับปรุงมากที่สุดคือ การเข้าใจสำเนียงที่หลากหลาย คิดเป็นร้อยละ 30 รองลงมาคือ การตีความเนื้อหา คิดเป็นร้อยละ 18

The Master Project

titled

“The Study of Customers’ satisfaction Toward Thai Airport Ground Toward Thai Airport  
Ground Check- In Officers English Oral Communication”

By

Suchada Thaipanich

has been approved by the Graduate School as partial fulfillment of the requirement for the  
Master of Arts degree in Business English for International Communication of  
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## **Acknowledgements**

First of all, I would like to my gratitude to Assistant Professor Nattha Kaewcha, my master's project advisor, for her dedication, patience, useful guidance, and hard work in responding to my work promptly.

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to Assistant Professor Dr. Anchalee Jansem and Ms. Piyawan Kullamai my project committee, for their valuable comments and constructive recommendations which add greatly to my research.

Many thanks to Thai Airways International Public Company Limited and Airport of Thailand Public Company Limited for their support and kind assistance throughout this study.

Lastly, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to all instructors in the Business English for International Communication program for their teaching, my friends for supporting me, and my family for their love, understanding, and moral support during my study.

Suchada Thaipanich

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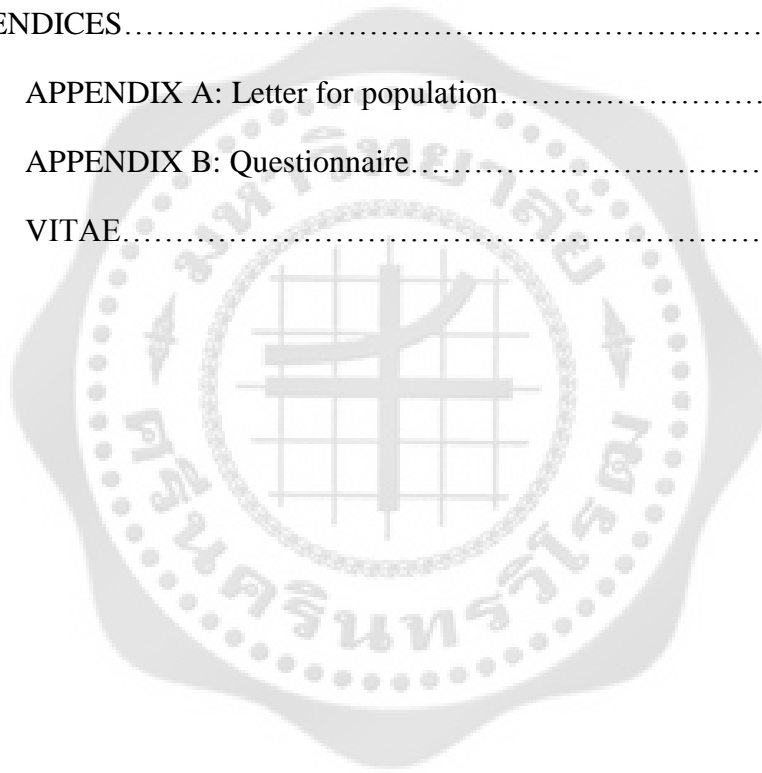
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## **APPENDICES**



**APPENDIX A**

**LETTER FOR POPULATION**



**APPENDIX B**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**



# **QUESTIONNAIRE**



**VITAE**

## **VITAE**

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Background of the Study

At the present time, people tend to use air transportation more than they did in the past, and the increasing number of passengers encourages many airlines to improve their service quality to meet customers' satisfaction. Between January and December 2014 the number of foreign tourists gradually increased from 2,282,586 to 2,841,333. Tourism authority of Thailand (TAT) has been promoted "Amazing Thailand" campaign for many years; especially in 2015 TAT released "Amazing Thailand 2015 discover Thainess" Therefore, TAT believes that this campaign will encourage travel industry to grow incredibly. Tourists can touch Thainess in every part of Thailand because it is very easy to reach northern, eastern, southern and western of Thailand by plane. In addition, there are high competitions among airlines. Customers can experience many services of airlines since they arrive at the airport, beginning from airline officers at check-in counter to flight attendants during the flight. Finally, customers also expect to get the right information and proper action from check-in officers. It means that check-in officers need to communicate very well with customers. In Thailand, English is not an official language; nevertheless, English is used to communicate with foreign customers. English is an important tool to communicate with people around the world. Therefore, successful communication indicates airline image and customers' satisfaction. Since customers have a lot of choices for many airlines both premium and budget airlines, their satisfaction is the main factor to keep customers. When customers are satisfied, they will have a loyalty to airline. Many international airlines require English proficiency in the recruitment for

check-in airport ground officers. Six -hundreds scores for the Test of English for international Communication (TOEIC) is a minimum requirement for Thai airport ground check-in officers.

Communication is the important process for people in the society and all over the world to understand each other. Currently, communication process consists of four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Speaking and listening are two important parts of communication. According to Thai Airways airport ground check-in officers' service standard (KP instructor, 2014), Thai airport ground check-in officers are the first person to meet the customers at the airport. They greet customers, check tickets, arrange seats, check documents, check baggage to customers' destinations and ask for the additional payment in case of their baggage excess. Moreover, they need to give additional information if the customers require. Poor communication in workplace will lead to the negative effects. For example, the companies may lose many customers (Galvin & Terrel., 2001). If Thai airport ground check-in officers cannot communicate with customers very well, the customers may not be satisfied. In addition from the work experience of the researcher as an airport ground check-in officer and a trainer for new check-in officers for nine years, Thai airport ground check-in officers face many problems when they communicate with customers. Therefore, the researcher is interested in the level of customers' satisfaction towards English oral communication and recommendation from passengers in oral communication of Thai airport ground check-in officers when communicating with foreign customers by using listening and speaking skills. This paper can be a guideline for Thai airport ground check-in officers to improve English oral communication skills in order to increase customers' satisfaction and provide a good reputation for the company.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Tourism industry in Thailand has grown rapidly and there is high competition in airline industry. Thailand welcomes tourists from different countries. Tourists have their own native language like Thais use Thai as a native language, so English plays an important role to connect people from different countries to understand each other. English proficiency test is required in the recruitment for Thai airport ground check-in officers. Many international airlines recognize the Test of English for International Communication score (TOEIC) is mandatory qualification requirement for airport ground check-in officers. Although Thai airport ground check-in officers require 600 scores of TOEIC, check-in officers still have many problems when communicating in English. TOEIC has no speaking part, so check-in officers lack of confident in speaking. Moreover, the interview process in English is too short and not an interactive process.. In addition, there are high competitions among airlines; every airline would like to be the first choice carrier. According to Thai Airways' vision, value and mission as the national airline, Thai Airways aims to be the first choice carrier with touches of Thai while focusing on building customers' satisfaction.

## **3. Objectives of the Study**

1. To investigate foreign customers' satisfaction when communicating in English with Thai airport ground check-in officers.
2. To find out the points of improvement suggested by foreign customers when communicating in English.

#### **4. Research Questions**

This study was designed to answer the following research questions

1. What is the level of customers' satisfaction when communicating in English with Thai airport ground check-in officers?
2. What should Thai airport ground check-in officers improve when communicating in English?

#### **5. Significance of the Study**

In Thailand, the numbers of foreign passengers are gradually increasing every year and Thai Airways fly to 33 countries and 61 destinations excluding Bangkok for international destination. English is an important tool to communicate with passengers from Middle East, Asia Pacific, North America and Europe. Thai Airways can use this study as a guideline to improve their employees; or HR can design a new interview procedure. In addition, training department can design an English training course to improve English oral skills for Thai airport ground check-in officers.

#### **6. Scope of the Study**

This study focuses on the satisfaction of foreign customers toward Thai airport ground check-in officers when communicating in English both speaking and listening skills. A set of questionnaire will randomly be distributed to 100 foreign customers both native and non-native English speakers at Suvarnaphumi Airport.

## **7. Definition of Terms**

The terms in this study are specifically defined as follows:

Customers' satisfaction is a state of feeling of pleasure or disappointment that results from experience of current products or services comparing to customers' thought.

English oral communication skills mean the ability to convey information to another effectively and efficiently. They refer to speaking and listening skills.

Thai airport ground check-in officers are Thai, male and female, Bangkok ground check-in officers who work for Thai Airways at Suvarnaphumi Airport.

Foreign passengers are 100 native and non-native English speakers who travel with Thai Airways at Suvarnaphumi Airport.

### **Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter presented the background of the study concerning the importance of English oral communication; especially Thai airport ground check-in officers need to deal with many foreign passengers. Their job involved with listening and speaking skills. Although there is a requirement of Test of English for International for communication (TOEIC) for Thai airport ground check-in officers, passengers may not be satisfied. Therefore, this chapter discussed the objectives, research questions, significance and scope of the study. Definitions of terms used in this study were mentioned.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter presents a review of literature related to the study. It is divided into 6 topics as follows:

1. The Service Standard of Thai Airport Ground Check-in Officers
2. Customer Needs, Wants, and Demands.
3. Customers' Expectation
4. Customers' Satisfaction
5. English Oral Communication Skills
  - 5.1 Speaking Skill
  - 5.2 Listening Skill
6. Related Research.

#### **1. The Service Standard of Thai Airport Ground Check-in Officers.**

According to Check-in officers' service standard, KP instructors (2014) suggest check-in procedure as a service standard as follows:

1. Check-in officers prepare and greet passengers when passengers come at the check-in counters.
2. They ask for documents such as a passport, a ticket and a baggage check in.
3. Check-in officers ask for flight number and repeat flight information.
4. They ask passengers about seats preference and need to confirm the seats with passengers.
5. They ask for membership number (frequent flyer program) and have to reconfirm with

the passengers in case the numbers are in the system. If the passengers do not have membership number, check-in officers should ask passengers to join frequent flyer program.

6. After checking baggage weight, if it is over the limit, they need to ask passengers to pay for extra weight.

7. They give the boarding passes to passengers and confirm flight number, seat number, baggage claim, boarding time and boarding gate.

8 They return all documents to passengers and show the way to the immigration.

9 Before passengers leave check-in counters, check-in officers say good bye and thank you to passengers.

## **2. Customers' Needs, Wants, and Demands**

To meet customers' satisfaction, the companies need to understand core marketing concept. Customers' satisfaction is based on customer needs, wants, and demands of product perceived performance.

### **Needs, Wants, and Demands**

Human needs is a state of felt deprivation including basic physical needs for food, clothing, warmth, safety, and social needs such as belongings, affection, fun, and relaxation. Apart from basic needs, human wants are shaped by culture and individual personality. In Papua New Guinea, a hungry person needs food but wants taro, rice, yams, and porks. In United States, a hungry person needs food but wants hamburger. Compared to needs and wants, demands are the most extra things that may not be necessary for people. However, demands will serve their satisfaction. Customers are willing to pay for a specific or good service with a price. For example, Rich people are

willing to pay for first class or business class air ticket. They believe that they will be treated better than others. (Kotler, Bowen, & Makens, 2014)

### **3. Customers' Expectation (Davidow and Uttal, 1989 , as cited in Sriyam 2010, p17)**

Customers' expectation and Disconfirmation theory are discussed in this part. Customers' expectation directly influences customers' satisfaction.

Customers' expectation is established from many uncontrollable factors which include previous experience with other companies and customers' psychological condition when the service delivered.

#### **3.1 Disconfirmation Theory (Khalifa and Liu, 2003 as cited in Sriyam2010, p18)**

Disconfirmation is the result of customers' judgment when they compare their expectations and their perception of performance received. Disconfirmation theory is used to explain satisfaction.

We can find expectation disconfirmation in three different forms. Positive disconfirmation: occurs when perceived performance exceeds expectation.

1. Confirmation: occurs when perceived performance meets expectation.
2. Negative disconfirmation: occurs when perceived performance does not meet and is less than expectation.

It is predicted that customers will be satisfied if the service performance meets confirmation or exceeds their expectation.

### **4. Customers' Satisfaction**

Kotler & Keller (2013) defined satisfaction as a person's feeling of pleasure or disappointment that result from comparing a product's perceived performance to expectation. When the performance is lower than expectation, the customers are dissatisfied. If the performance meets or is over customers' expectation, the customers are satisfied. Oliver (1981) defined satisfaction as "A person's feeling of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product's perceived performance (or outcome) in relation to his or her expectation". The definition provided by Oliver (1981) has been used for this study. People can access to a variety of information from many ways. They are more familiar with the technology, very well educated and more demanding in the services they required. In conclusion, customers' satisfaction is a result of customers' evaluation to the consumption of products and services compared with former experience and their expectation. The satisfaction is a personal feeling, so there are different levels of satisfaction.

## **5. English Oral Communication Skills**

The importance of oral communication is the action that speakers and listeners interact with each other and try to understand each other while they try to get the point. (Galvin & Cooper.1999:5, as cited in Laungmanee 2007, p3). Oral communication skills are vital for airport ground check-in officers to communicate with customers. The effective oral communication affects customers' satisfaction and good reputation of the airline.

The English speaking and listening skills of airport ground check-in officers are a part of customers' satisfaction because the customers will have the brand loyalty. Keyton (2011) stated that communication is a process to transfer information from one person to another and they both understand each other. Communication is a two way

communication between two or more people. In almost all oral communication situations, the speakers and listeners interact with each other over a period of time, trying to understand what the others mean while trying to get their point across. English oral communication is important for check-in officers because they need to answer and ask customers immediately. Effective Communication depends on hearers' experiences which help them to interpret the meaning ( Busky; Rudolph, 1987);

## **5.1 Speaking skill**

### **5.1.1 Importance of Speaking Skill**

Speaking skill is important for career success and also for personal life of people as it is a means of communication. Therefore, business managers, lawyers, and others try to improve their speaking skill; they should be able to inform, persuade, and direct. Speaking clearly and confidently provides the great opportunity for their business (Busky R. Rudolph, 1987).

### **5.1.2 Definition of Speaking Skill**

Speaking involves with the choice and the appropriateness for the listeners (Galvin & Terrel, 2001). In service industry, Thai airport ground officers need to speak English clearly and proficiently to satisfy customers. Telephone calls and face-to-face communication are interactive speaking situations, and we use both listening and speaking skills. We need to ask for clarification, repetition, and slower speech.

### 5.1.3 Purposes of Speaking

There are four purposes of speaking (Galvin & Terrel., 2001).

#### 1. Informative Speaking

Informative speaking emphasizes giving the information. The goal of informative speaking is listeners and speakers understand information in the same way.

Informative speaking uses facts, logic, and data

There are three types of informative speaking

1.1 Description speeches which describe objects or events.

1.2 Exploration speeches which clarify ideas.

1.3 Demonstration speeches which teach a process.

#### 2. Invitational Speaking

Invitational speaking is similar to informational speaking, but there are some different points. Invitational speaking encourages people to agree with ideas or join the events.

#### 3. Dispositional Speaking

Dispositional speaking does not only want others to agree, but also encourages people to gain beliefs and value.

#### 4. Actuation Speaking

Actuation speaking aims to get people to have an action

## 5.2 Listening Skill

### 5.2.1 Importance of Listening skill

Listening is widely used to connect with speaking, reading, and writing. In addition, it is also a mean of acquiring a second language (L2) (Rost, 1999). Listening skill is a fundamental skill to learn other skills and a second language.

### 5.2.2 Definition of Listening Skill

Listening is an active process by giving the meaning of the message from the speakers. Listening is not just hearing so we need to make ourselves to listen and pay attention to a sound that we hear. Listening is about giving the meaning and respond to what you hear ( Floyd.K, 2011) . In addition, listening is about paying attention and well understanding to speakers what they try to communicate. In service industry, listening is as important as speaking. When a customer comes at the check-in counter, a check-in officer asks the customer destination and at the same time, at this stage the interactive communication will start. The check-in officer needs to listen carefully to a customer's answers.

### 5.2.3 Listening Process

Listening is very important for oral communication because it is an active process . Listening is not only hearing, but listening process consists of six steps (Gamble.T.K & M., 2013).

Hearing is the physical process of listening. The first step happens when sound waves hit your eardrums.

Understanding is the process that the brain interprets the message and defines the meaning.

Remembering is the process that the message will be stored and used later.

Interpreting is the process that the message will be interpreted by each one's experience. This leads to different meanings.

Evaluating is the process which involves examining and making a judgment. The message will be connected with people's experience. People decide whether they will agree or not with the messages.

Responding is a feedback; there are two kinds of feedback: verbal and non- verbal feedbacks. When a speaker sends the message, she or he expects to get feedback. When a listener ignores the message, we call a disconfirming message. In contrast, when a listener responds the message, we call a confirming message.

#### 5.2.4 Types of Listening

According to Gamble (2011), Listening is divided into four types.

##### 1. Appreciative Listening

Appreciative listening is a listening for pleasure and enjoyment; for example, we listen to the music and comedy

##### 2. Comprehensive Listening

Comprehensive listening is a listening to gain knowledge. We need to listen carefully in order to comprehend the messages; for example, we listen to a teacher for a lecture.

##### 3. Critical Listening

Critical Listening is a listening to understand the message of a speaker; for example, we listen to a teacher for a lecture.

#### 4 .Empathic Listening

Empathic Listening is a listening to understand another people's idea and feelings. In our daily life, we always engage with this type of listening unintentionally by listening to trouble's friends and co-workers.

In conclusion, listening and speaking are very important part of communication process. Thai airport ground check-in officers need to be good listeners and speakers in order to give the correct information. In addition, when the communication between customers and Thai airport ground check-in officers is successful, the satisfaction will happen.

#### **6. Related Studies**

Recently, some researchers studied customers' satisfaction on different points. For instance, in 2007, Laungmanee, Janpen conducted a study entitled "A Study of Foreign Clients' Satisfaction towards Thai Bank Staff's English Oral Communication." This study revealed that foreign clients were satisfied with the ability of Thai bank staffs for their listening and speaking skills in general. In contrast, the level of listening and speaking skills of Thai bank staffs were considered as fair in some aspects such as interpretation of content, grammatical structure, and intonation.

Hoang (2011) conducted "Employees' Perception of the Role of Communication with Customers in Service Encounters". The findings showed that bank tellers were aware that communication is important for servicing employees and building relation with customers. In addition, the bank tellers believed that communication impacts directly on customers' satisfaction. They indicated that emphasis on listening and speaking skills could bring effectiveness in communication, and they need to talk with confidence to bring trust to customers.

Runnakit (2007) conducted a research entitled “Customers’ Satisfaction with English Language Communication Skills (listening –speaking) of the Front Desk Staff Case Study: Windsor Suits Hotel.” The main purpose of this research was to investigate customers’ satisfaction with English language communication skills (listening – speaking) of front line desk staff at Windsor Suites Hotel. The data analysis showed that all customers expected hotel front desk staff to have excellent English skills, to be service –minded and courteous. In addition, most customers expressed their opinion that the front desk staff needed an English language communication skill training.

KItcharoen (2013) conducted a study of factors that affect service quality Passenger Service Department in Airlines (Airasia, Thailand). This study showed that language competency of the staff is a major factor affecting service quality of Passenger Service Department in the airline. One of the personal and operational factors was language competency that did not meet customers’ expectation regarding ground services. Language proficiency is a vital factor for airline business and English is frequently used in international business. The study revealed that customers’ satisfaction is a result from language competency of staffs. Lack of language competency can lead to misunderstanding between the staffs and customers.

Uraipan (2011) conducted the study on “ Problems with English Listening and Speaking of Thai Flight Attendants in Economy Class” The results of this study revealed that the majority of participants thought that warning to inebriated passengers and responding to passengers’ complaints were ranked as a moderate problems in English language functions. Regarding grammatical competence, a major cause of listening problem was the diverse accent from passengers and the specific consonant was the major cause of speaking problem

## Summary of the Chapter

This chapter discussed the literature review for the whole study. The researcher provided some explanations regarding customers' satisfaction and English oral communication. There were definition and importance of listening and speaking skills together with purposes and levels of English oral communication. In addition, some previous studies regarding customers' satisfaction towards English oral communication were reviewed.



## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this part, the methodology of the study consisted of three sections which were participants, research instrument, procedures of the study (data collection and data analysis).

#### 1. Participants

The participants of this study consisted of 100 foreign customers who were both native and non-native English speakers. The researcher selected the respondents by randomly sampling method.

#### 2. Research Instrument

A questionnaire was used as an instrument in this study and was applied from Janpen Leungmanee (2007). The questionnaire consisted of three parts as follows:

The first part contained general background which included gender, age, nationality, occupation, purpose of visiting, and frequency of flying with Thai Airways.

The second part was designed to find out customers' satisfaction towards the ability of Thai airport ground check-in officers in English oral communication concerning job description. The five-point Likert scale was applied to measure the level of satisfaction when communicating in English concerning with job description ranging from (5) = Never (4) = Seldom (3) = Sometimes (2) = Often (1) = Always

The third part found out the recommendations from passengers about the things that they would like check-in officers to improve.

### **3. Procedures of the Study**

#### **Pilot Study**

A pilot study was conducted by the researcher from 1<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> march 2016. A first draft of the questionnaire was used to examine how well the respondents can understand and answer all questions. The questionnaire was distributed to twenty Thai Airways' passengers. The respondents were foreign Thai Airways' passengers who were not included in the current study. The result of the pilot study showed that the questionnaire was clear and understandable enough to be used as an instrument in the real study. There was nothing to change in the questionnaires.

#### **3.1 Data Collection**

In order to avoid the bias, the 100 sets of the questionnaires were randomly distributed to the target group while they were waiting for boarding announcement at the boarding gate from March 10 to April 30, 2016. After the questionnaires were completed, the researcher collected them.

#### **3.2 Data analysis**

After receiving all completed questionnaires, the researcher analyzed the data by using the descriptive statistics mean and percentage to answer the two research questions. The data were analyzed to reveal foreign customers' satisfaction towards Thai airport ground check-in officers and recommendations from passengers about the things that they would like Thai airport ground check-in officers to improve. Also, other recommendations offered by customers were grouped and presented. The results of this study were presented in the form of tables with descriptions.

## Summary of the Chapter

This chapter showed research methodology to clarify how the researcher conducted the study. This chapter consisted three sections: participants, research instrument, procedures of the study (data collection and data analysis).



## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

This chapter presented findings of this study by answering two main research questions: 1) What is the level of customers 'satisfaction when communicating in English with Thai airport ground check - in officers? and 2) What should Thai airport ground check-in officers improve when communicating in English?

The findings obtained from the questionnaires were divided into three parts as follows: general background of the passengers, customers' satisfaction on check-in officers when communicating in English concerning job description, and the recommendations from passengers about the things that they would like check-in officers to improve. In the third part, other recommendations offered by passengers were grouped and presented. The value of mean scores was interpreted in the ranges as follows (Pisarnbut, 2007):

1.00 -1.80 = Very Low

1.81 – 2.60 = Low

2.61- 3.40 = Moderate

3.41- 4.20 = High

4.21- 5.00 = Very High

## Part 1: General Information of the Respondents

This part presented the general information concerning demographic data of 100 passengers. The information regarding age, gender, nationality, and frequency of flying with Thai Airways of 100 participants were analyzed and presented in percentage as in Tables 1-4.

**Table 1 Sex**

| Sex          | Number of participants (n) | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| Male         | 50                         | 50             |
| Female       | 50                         | 50             |
| <b>Total</b> | 100                        | 100            |

As shown in Table 1, the numbers of male and female participants were equal. There were 50% of males and females.

**Table 2 Age**

| Age          | Number of participants | Percentage |
|--------------|------------------------|------------|
| Under 25     | 7                      | 7          |
| 25-35        | 38                     | 38         |
| 36-45        | 17                     | 17         |
| 46-55        | 13                     | 13         |
| Over 55      | 25                     | 25         |
| <b>Total</b> | 100                    | 100        |

The highest number of the participants was the group of 25-35 years old (38%) followed by the groups of over 55 years old (25%), 36-45 years old (17%), and 46-55 years old (13%). However, only 7% of them were under 25 years old.



**Table 3 Nationality**

| <b>Nationality</b> | <b>Number of participants (n)</b> | <b>Percentage (%)</b> |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| British            | 41                                | 41                    |
| Australian         | 7                                 | 7                     |
| German             | 6                                 | 6                     |
| Japanese           | 6                                 | 6                     |
| American           | 5                                 | 5                     |
| Indian             | 4                                 | 4                     |
| Singaporean        | 4                                 | 4                     |
| Chinese            | 3                                 | 3                     |
| French             | 3                                 | 3                     |
| Laotian            | 3                                 | 3                     |
| New Zealander      | 3                                 | 3                     |
| Spanish            | 2                                 | 2                     |
| Hong Kong          | 2                                 | 2                     |
| Indonesian         | 2                                 | 2                     |
| Italian            | 2                                 | 2                     |
| Taiwanese          | 2                                 | 2                     |
| Korean             | 1                                 | 1                     |
| Canadian           | 1                                 | 1                     |
| Sri Lankan         | 1                                 | 1                     |
| Portuguese         | 1                                 | 1                     |
| Turkish            | 1                                 | 1                     |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>100</b>                        | <b>100</b>            |

The majority of the participants was British (41%) followed by Australian (7%), German and Japanese (6% each), American (5%), Indian and Singaporean (4% each), Chinese, Laotian, French and New Zealander (3% each), Spanish, Hong Kong, Indonesian, Italian and Taiwanese (2% each), and Korean, Canadian, Sri Lankan, Portuguese and Turkish (1% each).

**Table 4 The Frequency of the Passengers' Flying with Thai Airways**

| <b>The Frequencies of passengers' flying with Thai Airways</b> | <b>Number of the participants</b> | <b>Percentage (%)</b> |
|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1-4 times per year   | 83                                | 83                    |
| 5-8 times per year   | 10                                | 10                    |
| 9-12 times per year  | 1                                 | 1                     |
| More than 12 times per year                                    | 6                                 | 6                     |
| Total  | 100                               | 100                   |

Table 4 shows that 83% of the respondents flew with Thai Airways for 1-4 times per year while 10%, and 6% of them flew with Thai Airways for 5-8 times per year and more than 12 times per year respectively. Only 1% of them flew with Thai Airways for 9 - 12 times per year.

## **Part 2: Customers' Satisfaction on Check-in Officers When Communicating in English Concerning Job Description.**

The data derived from part 2 in the questionnaire were analyzed and presented in Tables 5-6. This section revealed overall customers' satisfaction on check-in officers when communicating in English. The participants were asked to rate their satisfaction on

check-in officers when communicating in English, regarding five - point Likert scale. The data concluded in this section were presented in (M) and standard deviation (S.D.).

**Table 5 Customers' Satisfaction on Thai Airport Ground Check-In Officers When Communicating in English Concerning Their Job Description**

| <b>Ability of English Oral Communication</b>           | <b>S.D.</b> | <b>M</b> | <b>Level</b> |
|--|-------------|----------|--------------|
| Clear question regarding seat preferences              | 1.15        | 3.86     | High         |
| Explain about seat plan clearly                        | 1.14        | 3.95     | High         |
| State mileage number clearly and correctly             | 1.39        | 3.37     | Moderate     |
| Explain about flight information clearly               | 1.19        | 3.93     | High         |
| State flight number and boarding gate clearly          | 1.08        | 4.18     | High         |
| Continue conversation smoothly                         | .79         | 4.04     | High         |
| Communicate with passengers without limited vocabulary | .78         | 3.85     | High         |
| Understand passengers' response.                       | 1.12        | 3.47     | High         |
| Respond passengers' request correctly                  | .82         | 3.94     | High         |
| No need for passengers to repeat requests              | 1.15        | 3.51     | High         |
| Average mean score                                     | .64         | 3.81     | High         |

Table 5 shows that the overall customers' satisfaction on check-in officers when communicating in English concerning their tasks was at the high level (M = 3.81). The customers hardly had problems with check-in officers about "stating flight number and boarding gate" as this task was rated highest (M= 4.18) while the task "State mileage number clearly and correctly" was rated lowest among all the tasks they performed (M= 3.37)

**Table 6 Customers' Satisfaction on Thai Airport Check- In Officers' English Oral Communication Regarding Listening and Speaking Skills**

| Type of communication | Level of Participants' Satisfaction |   |              |   |           |    |                |    |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|---|--------------|---|-----------|----|----------------|----|
|                       | Very Dissatisfied                   |   | Dissatisfied |   | Satisfied |    | Very Satisfied |    |
|                       | No                                  | % | No           | % | No        | %  | No             | %  |
| Listening             | 1                                   | 1 | 2            | 2 | 64        | 64 | 33             | 33 |
| Speaking              | 1                                   | 1 | 2            | 2 | 64        | 64 | 33             | 33 |

As the participants were asked to rate the degree of their satisfaction toward English oral communication skills of Thai airport check-in officers, the findings showed that for both listening and speaking skills, 64% of the respondents were satisfied while 33% of them were very satisfied. However, only 2% of them were dissatisfied and 1% of them was very dissatisfied with these two skills.

To sum up, the finding revealed that most the respondents (97%) were satisfied with the oral communication skills of Thai airport ground check-in officers while only a few of them (3%) were dissatisfied with them.

### **Part 3 The Recommendations for Thai Airport Ground Check-In Officers to Improve in English Oral Communication**

In addition, to improve the services regarding English speaking and listening skill, respondents were asked to give recommendations to Thai airport ground check-in officers to improve when communicating in English as shown in Tables 7-8.

**Table 7 The Recommendations for Thai Airport Ground Check-In Officers to Improve in English Oral Communication Concerning Speaking Skill**

| <b>Recommendations in Each Aspect</b> | <b>No. of the Respondents (100)</b> | <b>Percentage (%)</b> |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Incorrect pronunciation               | 43                                  | 30.7                  |
| Lack of vocabulary                    | 34                                  | 24.3                  |
| Grammatical structure                 | 30                                  | 21.42                 |
| Speaking rate                         | 15                                  | 10.71                 |
| Nothing to improve                    | 12                                  | 8.6                   |
| Others                                | 6                                   | 4.3                   |

Regarding speaking skill, the thing that Thai airport ground check-in officers should improve most was incorrect pronunciation (30.7%) followed by lack of vocabulary (24.3%), grammatical structure (21.4%), and speaking rate (10.7%). Also, regarding further recommendations 4.3% of them indicated that many things should be improved; for example, the officers should speak louder (1.5%), speak more fluently (2.1%), and should be able to speak French (0.7%). However, 8.6% of them indicated that there was nothing to be improved.

**Table 8 The Recommendations for Thai Airport Ground Check-In Officers to Improve in Oral Communication Concerning Listening Skill.**

| <b>Recommendations in Each Aspect</b> | <b>No. of the Respondents<br/>(100)</b> | <b>Percentage<br/>(%)</b> |
|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| Understand different accents          | 46                                      | 34.6                      |
| Interpretation of content             | 39                                      | 29.3                      |
| Sufficient vocabulary                 | 38                                      | 28.6                      |
| Nothing to improve                    | 10                                      | 7.5                       |

Regarding listening skill, the thing Thai airport ground check-in officers should improve most was understanding different accents (34.6%) followed by interpretation of content (29.3%), and sufficient vocabulary (28.6%). However, (7.5%) of them indicated that there was nothing to improve. Moreover, further recommendations concerning listening skill were not proposed by the participants.

In summary, the result showed that customers felt satisfied with Thai airport ground check-in officers' English oral communication with a mean average of 3.81. The item that was rated highest was 'state flight and boarding gate clearly' (M= 4.18) while the item "state mileage clearly and correctly" was rated lowest (M= 3.37). Therefore, the respondents felt satisfied with most of the tasks they performed while there was still a weak point as "state mileage clearly and correctly" was rated lowest (M= 3.37).

On the whole, most participants felt satisfied with their listening and speaking skills (97%) while only a few felt dissatisfied (3%). Regarding speaking skill, the thing that should be improved most was incorrect pronunciation (30.7%). And for listening skill the thing that should be improved most was understand different accents (34.6%).

## **Chapter V**

### **Conclusion**

This chapter presents the conclusion of major findings, limitation of the study, and recommendations for further studies.

#### **Conclusion of Major Findings**

This section summarized the information of the participants and also concluded about customers' satisfaction towards check-in officers when communicating through speaking and listening skills concerning their job description. Furthermore, it also summarized the recommendations from foreign customers about the things they would like check-in officers to improve in terms of speaking and listening skills when communicating in English.

#### **Information of the Participants**

The proportion of participants in term of gender showed that the participants were male and female equally (50% for each). All of the participants were foreign passengers who traveled with Thai Airways. The majority of foreign passengers (38%) were between 25-35 years old and most of them (41%) were British. Also, 83% of participants flew with Thai Airways 1-4 times a year while 10% of them flew with Thai Airways 5-8 times a year.

## **Customers' Satisfaction towards Thai Airport Ground Check-In Officers' English Oral Communication.**

### **Research question 1: What is the level of customers' satisfaction when communicating in English with Thai airport ground check-in officers?**

The finding revealed that foreign passengers rated the overall satisfaction at high level ( $M = 3.81$ ) towards English oral communication of Thai airport ground check-in officers concerning their job description. The task which was rated highest "State flight number and boarding gate clearly and clearly" ( $M=4.18$ ), followed by the task "Continue conversation smoothly ( $M=4.04$ ) and "Explain about seat plan clearly" ( $M=3.95$ ). In contrast, the task that passengers felt least satisfied and needed some improvement was "State mileage number clearly and correctly ( $M=3.37$ ). The reason why they felt least satisfied with this task might be because Thai airport ground check- in officers needed to work in haste, so they forgot to confirm and ask passengers about mileage

### **Research question 2: What should Thai airport ground check-in officers improve when communicating in English?**

In the study, the findings revealed that regarding the recommendations, the things that Thai airport ground check-in officers should improve for speaking skill were incorrect pronunciation (30.7%) followed by lack of vocabulary (24.3 %). In addition, for listening skill, the thing that should be improved most was understand different accents (34.6%) followed by interpretation of content (29.3%).

According to the finding, this study is similar to many previous studies. For example, Kitcharoen (2013) who studied factors that affect service quality of Passenger Service Department in Airlines (Airasia, Thailand) showed that language competency is a major factor affecting service quality of Passenger Service Department in the airline. Language proficiency is a vital factor for airline business and English is frequently used

in international business. In contrast, customers felt satisfied with Thai airport ground check-in officers 'English oral communication, there are many aspect that Thai airport ground check-in officers should improve.. Thai airport ground check-in officer had problems about insufficient vocabulary and understanding different accents, so the passengers need to repeat their requests. Leungmanee (2007) who studied foreign clients' satisfaction towards Thai bank staffs' English oral communication found that the levels of satisfaction towards listening and speaking skill were considered as fair in some aspects such as interpretation of content, grammatical structure, and intonation; therefore, bank tellers also had similar problems as Thai airport ground check-in officers. Another study conducted by Hoang (2011) "Employees' Perception of the Role of Communication with Customers in Service Encounters" showed that bank tellers were aware that communication was important for them in servicing and building relation with customers. In addition, Uraipan (2011) who conducted a study "Problems with English Listening and Speaking of Thai Flight Attendants in Economy Class" found that Thai flight attendants of Thai Airways also found problems of understanding different accents of passengers as Thai airport ground check-in officers did. In this study, the thing that Thai airport ground check-in officers should improve most for listening skill was understand different accent (34.6%) as the passengers were from many countries around the world and they might have different accents of English. Therefore, the check-in officers should be able to understand different accents in order to communicate with passengers effectively. Apart from these, the recruitment process which requires 600 scores of TOEIC cannot guarantee that the applicants will be able to communicate well or not as there is no test of speaking skill. Therefore, an English interview is needed for the recruitment process in order to make sure that they will be able to communicate well when working.

## **Limitation of the Study**

Limitations of the study were as follows:

1. The study was limited by the time of collecting data. As the researcher had to reach the boarding gate to distribute the questionnaire to collect data from 100 participants, the researcher had limited time in approaching the participants before boarding announcement started. Therefore, some passengers might refuse in case that they were in a hurry or were not good at English. In this study, most participants were British as they had a good command of English and could understand the questions in the questionnaire thoroughly without spending much time. This helped them to complete the questionnaire willingly.

2. The study used questionnaire focusing on customers' satisfaction towards check-in officers' English oral communication. It does not provide in depth feedback and informative recommendations because most participants did not provide any further recommendations which may be due to the limited time and their English proficiency. Some respondents were from some countries such as German, Japan, and Spain that had low proficiency in English, so they could not provide the feedback in depth or further recommendations.

## **Recommendations for Further Studies**

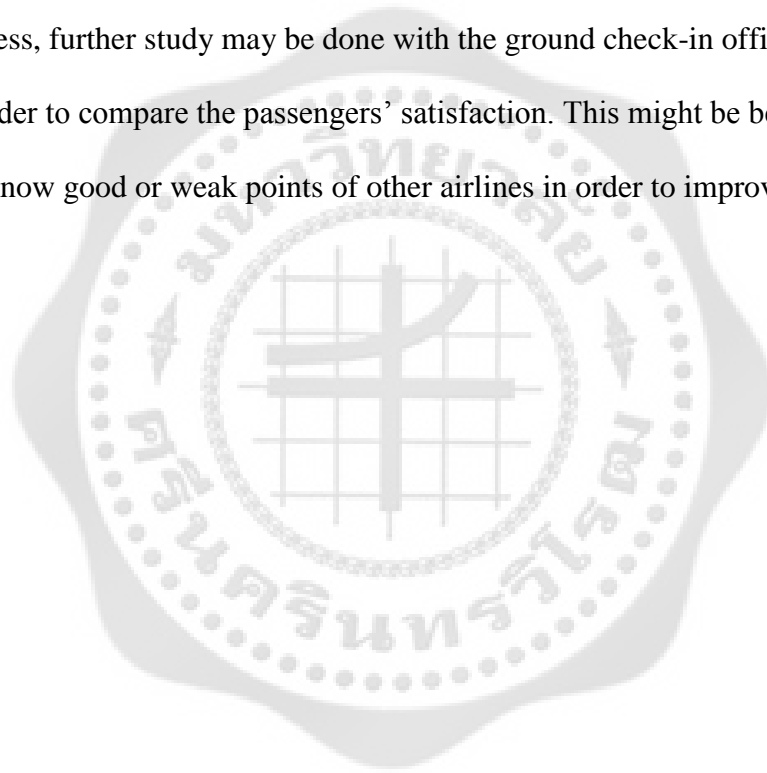
According to the findings, some recommendations were proposed as follows:

1. This study employed 100 sets of the questionnaire because of the limited time and the researcher carried the study alone. Meanwhile, Thai Airways flies to several destinations around the world and there are many flights daily. To increase efficiency and accuracy of the study on customers' satisfaction towards check-in officers, more

questionnaires should be employed to investigate customers' satisfaction at other tourists destination airports such as Phuket, Chiang Mai, and Krabi Airports.

2. For more variety of the participants, especially their nationalities, the questionnaire should be distributed to the passengers in both premium and economy classes, and domestic and international routes.

3. The study focused on customers' satisfaction towards oral communication of Thai Airways ground airport check-in officers. Regarding the competition among airline business, further study may be done with the ground check-in officers of other airlines in order to compare the passengers' satisfaction. This might be beneficial for Thai Airways to know good or weak points of other airlines in order to improve its service.



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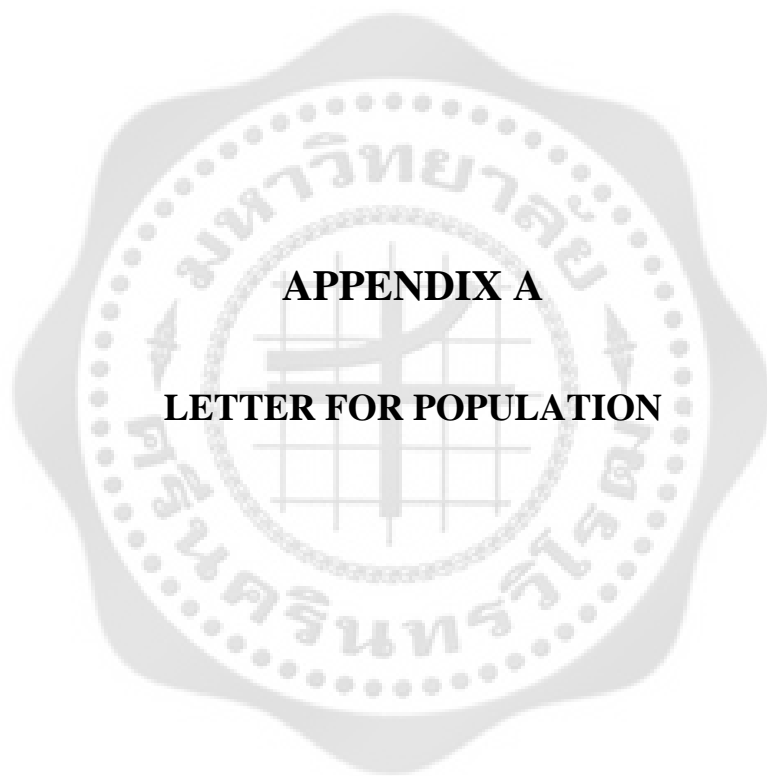
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**APPENDIX A**

**LETTER FOR POPULATION**





บริษัท ท่าอากาศยานไทย จำกัด (มหาชน)  
Airports of Thailand Public Company Limited

ที่ ทอท. 2989 /2559

๒ มีนาคม 2559

เรื่อง การขอความอนุเคราะห์เก็บข้อมูลเพื่อการวิจัย

เรียน คณะคณบดีมหาวิทยาลัย

อ้างถึง หนังสือมหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒที่ ศษ 0519.12/872 ลงวันที่ 17 กุมภาพันธ์ 2559

สิ่งที่ส่งมาด้วย ระเบียบปฏิบัติการแจกแบบสอบถาม การสัมภาษณ์ และการทำวิจัย

ณ ท่าอากาศยานสุวรรณภูมิ จำนวน 1 แผ่น

ตามหนังสือที่อ้างถึง มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒขออนุญาต บริษัท ท่าอากาศยานไทย จำกัด (มหาชน) (ทอท.) พิจารณาให้นักศึกษาสุชาดา ไทพณิชย์ นิสิตมหาวิทยาลัยระดับปริญญาโท สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษ ธุรกิจเพื่อการสื่อสารนานาชาติ เข้าไปดำเนินการแจกแบบสอบถาม เพื่อนำข้อมูลไปประกอบการจัดทำงานวิจัย เรื่อง "The Study of Foreign Customers Satisfaction Towards Check-in Officers English Oral Communication" บริเวณ ห้องโถงผู้โดยสารขาออก และห้องผู้โดยสารขาออก (เขตหวงห้ามเฉพาะ) อาคารผู้โดยสาร ท่าอากาศยานสุวรรณภูมิ (ทสภ.) ระหว่างเดือนมีนาคม ถึง เมษายน 2559 ดังความละเอียดทราบแล้ว นั้น

ทอท.พิจารณาแล้ว ยินดีอนุญาตให้นักศึกษาสุชาดา เข้าไปดำเนินการตามที่แจ้งขอไปได้ โดยขอให้ปฏิบัติตามระเบียบการแจกแบบสอบถาม การสัมภาษณ์ และการทำวิจัย ณ ทสภ.ตามสิ่งที่ส่งมาด้วย อย่างเคร่งครัด ทั้งนี้ นิสิตมหาวิทยาลัยฯ สามารถติดต่อโดยตรงที่ส่วนบริการอาคารผู้โดยสาร ฝ่ายการทำอากาศยาน ชั้น 3 อาคารสำนักงาน ทสภ. โทรศัพท์ 0 2132 9230 เพื่ออำนวยความสะดวกให้ต่อไป

อนึ่ง ทอท.พิจารณาแล้วเห็นว่า ผลการสำรวจวิจัยเกี่ยวกับเรื่องนี้เป็นประโยชน์ต่อการดำเนินงาน กิจการของ ทอท. ดังนั้น จึงขอให้นักศึกษาสุชาดาฯ ส่งสำเนาผลการวิจัยให้กับ ทอท.เมื่อดำเนินการ เสร็จเรียบร้อยแล้ว

จึงเรียนมาเพื่อทราบ

ขอแสดงความนับถือ

(นางจตุภาณิศา ชำนาญเวช)

รองผู้อำนวยการท่าอากาศยานสุวรรณภูมิ ปฏิบัติงานแทน

ผู้อำนวยการใหญ่

ฝ่ายการทำอากาศยาน

โทรศัพท์ 0 2132 9230

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**APPENDIX B**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE**

## **A survey of foreign passengers' satisfaction towards Thai airport ground check-in officers' English oral communication**

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect the information and find out the level of satisfaction of foreign passengers towards Thai airport ground check-in officers when communicating in English.

### **Part 1: General Information**

**Instruction:** Please fill in the questionnaire

1. Gender

...male

...Female

2. Age

...Below 25 years old

... 25-35 years old

...36-45 years old

...46-55 years old

... Over 55 years old

3. Nationality ...

4. How often do you fly with Thai airways?

... 1-4 times a year

... 5-8 times a year

... 9-12 times a year

... more than 12 times a year

## Part 2 : Customers' Satisfaction on check-in officers when communicating in English

## Concerning job description

## Speaking skill

|    | Ability of English oral communication concerning with job description | Never | Seldom | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|----|---|-------|--------|-----------|-------|--------|
| 1  | They have a clear question regarding seat preferences.                |       |        |           |       |        |
| 2  | They are able to explain about seat plan clearly.                     |       |        |           |       |        |
| 3  | The mileage number is clearly and correctly stated.                   |       |        |           |       |        |
| 4  | They clearly explain about flight information.                        |       |        |           |       |        |
| 5  | They state flight number and boarding gate clearly                    |       |        |           |       |        |
| 6  | They continue conversation smoothly                                   |       |        |           |       |        |
| 7  | They could communicate with you without limited vocabulary.           |       |        |           |       |        |
| 8  | They have some difficulties in understanding your request.            |       |        |           |       |        |
| 9  | They verbally respond your request correctly.                         |       |        |           |       |        |
| 10 | You have to repeat your request to check-in officers.                 |       |        |           |       |        |

Please rate your satisfaction of Thai airport ground check-in officer's oral communication in English

|           | Very dissatisfied<br>1 | Dissatisfied<br>2 | Satisfied<br>3 | Very satisfied<br>4 |
|-----------|------------------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Listening |                        |                   |                |                     |
| Speaking  |                        |                   |                |                     |

Part 3: What are the recommendations that you would like check-in officers to improve in oral communication?

Please fill in the questionnaire by putting mark (/) in front of the appropriate items.

What are the recommendations that you would like check-in officers improve to in speaking skill?

... Lack of vocabulary

... Grammatical structure

... Speaking rate

... Incorrect pronunciation

... Others (please specify).....

.....

What are the recommendations that you would like check-in officers to improve in listening skill?

... Sufficient vocabulary

... Interpretation of content

... Understand different accent

... Others ( please specify).....

.....









**VITAE**

## VITAE

Name: Suchada Thaipanich

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