

**ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA
IN THAILAND:**
A Case Study of English Used on Signs
in Tourist Domains

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Abstract

English has been used around Thailand for wider communication between Thai and non-Thai speakers. This thesis focuses on the use of English for communication on signs in tourist domains across Thailand. The research aims to, first, analyse the main characteristics of English used in Thailand, so-called Thai English, and, second, find out to what extent Thai English is intelligible to non-Thai speakers. The study was drawn from 1,828 photos of Thai English signs. The signs were first categorised based on grammatical features and lexico-semantic features. Then, 30 signs were selected to make an online questionnaire about the intelligibility of Thai English. They were divided into three levels, namely Level 1: no errors (but socio-culturally unintelligible), Level 2: minor errors, and Level 3: major errors. The questionnaire was done by 456 international and 810 Thai participants. Then 51 in-depth interviews were conducted. The findings showed that signs with Thai English could be fairly understood when they contained no errors (Level 1) or minor errors (Level 2). However, when signs contained major errors (Level 3), neither native nor non-native speakers of English could understand the intended meanings. The key factors contributing to the intelligibility of Thai English were non/native English speaking background and English proficiency of the participants. The research found that native speakers could understand Thai English better than non-native speakers because the former could negotiate the meanings of the Thai English messages better than the latter. Non-native speakers with higher English proficiency could also understand Thai English better than those with lower English proficiency. Finally, the research found that international participants tended to pay more attention to meaning than to form. If they could grasp the meaning of the message, albeit grammatically incorrect, they would still consider the error not serious. Conversely, Thai participants appeared to be pedantic about grammar and would consider the items with grammatical errors more serious than those with lexico-semantic errors. Thai participants accepted that the research into Thai English helped to raise their awareness of using English in everyday life while international participants revealed that this research helped to make them understand the use of English as a lingua franca in Thailand better.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

The first chapter gives an overview of this PhD thesis. It provides some background information about the motivation to do the research and the role of global English in Thailand. The chapter gives detailed information about the research aims and research questions and an outline of the following chapters.

1.1 Background

My interest in doing research into the intelligibility of English used on signs in tourist domains in Thailand was inspired by my interest in the areas of English as a lingua franca and linguistic landscape.

In 2009, I had a chance to conduct a research project titled *Linguistic Landscape: A Case Study of Signs in Major Transport Hubs in Thailand*. The focus of the research was mainly on the role of English as a global language used for wider communication by Thai people in comparison with the roles of other foreign languages in three major public transport hubs (Ngampramuan, 2009). During the data collection and data analysis, I came to realise that signs could also contain other fascinating factors that could reveal some social and cultural information about Thai society and also show some unique characteristics of Thailand as well as the people.

Due to its unique culture, exotic sights, beautiful beaches, friendly people, and being one of the major air hubs in Asia, Thailand welcomes tens of millions of people from all over the world every year. In 2013, Thailand had over 36 million international visitors (Immigration Bureau of Thailand, 2014). In 2012, Bangkok won the World's Best City Award announced by Travel & Leisure magazine, which is a globally well-known travel magazine based in New York City, the United States (Travel & Leisure Magazine, 2013). In order to accommodate a large number of visitors from all over the world, many road signs, billboards, and documents in tourist places are written in English. However, as English is considered as a foreign language of the country, the English used on signs as well as other documents could lead to some communication problems between Thai people and their visitors at times (Huebner, 2006).

Huebner (2006) mainly looks at the role of English as a dominant foreign language in Thai society, the use of code-mixing between Thai and the English script

and the creativity of new English words influenced by the Thai language and written in both Thai and the English script on signs. While doing the detailed analysis of the distinctive features of linguistic landscape in major transport hubs in Thailand, I noticed that there were plenty of signs containing some misspellings, wrong translations and some non-Standard English messages.

These issues triggered my interest in the intelligibility of English used on signs in Thailand and whether they could be well understood by an international audience or not. Because these signs were mainly aimed at visitors to Thailand, I began to wonder to what extent overseas tourists could understand the English language used by Thai speakers. Moreover, I wanted to know about their opinions towards another variety of English in Thailand so-called *Thai English* (Sergeant, Tagg & Ngampramuan, 2012).

According to Baker (2008), although Thai people also use English in various domains, such as, business, education and international relations, the main focus of the research is on tourist domains as they are places where English has its real use as a language for communication between Thai people and their visitors.

1.1.1 Theoretical Frameworks

Due to the fact that the global use of English has led to the development of a wide variety of English influenced by local languages, cultures and ways of thinking of the countries that English has been spreading to (Widdowson, 1997), the widespread use of English in contact with local cultures and people's identities has transformed one English into plural and has become *World Englishes* which refers to the global use of English across cultures around the world (Bamgbose, 1998, Kachru, 1996).

Seidlhofer (2005: 339) also mentions the term *English as a lingua franca* (ELF), which refers to communication in English between speakers with different first languages. Firth (1996: 114) further adds that even when native speakers are part of the interaction, it can still be considered as an ELF encounter because the key concept of ELF is that English is primarily used as a "contact" language between speakers who do not share any native language or culture.

Because this research mainly studies the intelligibility of English used by Thai speakers on signs, it has a close link to another area of study called *linguistic landscape* (LL), which relates to the study of “the language texts that are present in public space” (Gorter, 2006: 1). According to Landry and Bourhis (1997: 25), “the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combine to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory region, or urban agglomeration”. Hick (2002) points out that signs can reflect the tradition, history, and language policy of a particular place. Hence, this research expects that signs in tourist domains should be able to reveal some features about Thai culture as well as other socio-cultural related factors.

This research focuses on the role of English as a lingua franca in Thailand by means of signs in tourist domains. A detailed description of the project can be found in the next section.

1.2 Description of the Research Project

This research project aims to analyse the characteristics of English used by Thais on signs in tourist domains. Then the signs under certain categories are later on used for the study about the intelligibility and the unacceptability of a Thai variety of English, which should be different from other Englishes because it has been influenced by Thai culture and Thainess (Sergeant et al., 2012, Watkhaolarm, 2005). Watkhaolarm (2005) explains that *Thainess* includes the transfer of religious, cultural and social elements; metaphors or fixed collocations; translation; lexical borrowing; reduplication; and hybridization. The use of English by Thai people in Thai ways or with Thainess will be from now on referred to as *Thai English* throughout the thesis.

The study focuses on signs in tourist domains because when people visit a country where they do not know the local language, the first thing that they usually do is get some information from (English) signs. Hence, signs, which are salient to people in tourist places, are considered to be the main source for data collection.

The tourist domains in this research refer to tourist attractions and public transport hubs. Therefore, the data collection sites in this research range from historical and natural places such as temples, national parks, beaches and museums; to modern places, such as, a shopping complex, shopping streets/ shopping areas, markets,

airports and a bus terminal. The selection criteria for the sites chosen are based on the popularity of the places to visit suggested by best-selling tourist guidebooks and trusted websites (Lonely Planet, 2013, Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand, 2014, Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2014a).

The reason why major transport hubs are included is because these places are naturally part of a tourist's journey. Regarding the inclusion of a bus terminal, the reason why signs from the Southern Bus Terminal, so-called Sai Tai, are taken into account is because this bus terminal is more popular among overseas tourists than the other two bus terminals, namely the Northern Bus Terminal (Mo Chit), and the Eastern Bus Terminal (Ekkamai) (The Transport CO. LTD. , 2014). One of the main reasons for its popularity is because Thailand is famous for its beautiful beaches, which are mostly located in the South of the country.

During the fieldwork, the photos of signs were recorded by means of a digital camera and stored on a computer. Afterwards, these photos were used for further analyses about characteristics of Thai English and for the study about the intelligibility and the unacceptability of English used on signs.

To analyse language texts on signs, Scollon and Scollon (2003: vii) suggest that the contexts surrounding the language should be taken into account because "...all signs must be located in the material world to exist. Information and knowledge must be represented by a system of signs- icons, symbols, and indexes; information and knowledge cannot have any independent existence". Therefore, in the online questionnaire about the intelligibility of English on signs for Thai speakers, the participants were given the location where the sign was found so that they could know about the context where the sign belonged and also a photo of the real sign.

1.2.1 Research Methodology

This research is based on mixed methods, which combines both qualitative and quantitative methods together (Blaxter et al., 2006).

First of all, the photos of signs were taken from the actual places where they were located. This implies that the research is partially ethnographic as the photos of signs are/were situated in the real word. In addition, the study also involves

observations and participant interviews (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). After the photos of signs were collected, they were then grouped and analysed for their main characteristics based on the preceding literature and related theoretical frameworks.

After the categories of Thai English had been conclusively established, 30 photos of signs from different categories were selected and made into an online questionnaire about the intelligibility of English used on signs in Thailand with a six-point intelligibility Likert scale. Participants of this online questionnaire came from all over the world. Thai people also did the same questionnaire so that the attitudes between Thais and non-Thais relating to the same issues could be compared. The responses from the questionnaire were analysed by means of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for numerical results followed by in-depth interviews with participants to further explain the statistical results.

Thinking Aloud Protocol (TAP) was used as the main tool during the interviews because it could help to reveal the processes of meaning negotiation when interviewees were trying to make meaning of Thai English messages (Bowles, 2010). Participant interviewing could be regarded as part of the triangulation to help validate and crosscheck the results analysed by computer software (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Hence, the discussions and findings in this thesis are based on both quantitative and qualitative data and results.

1.3 Research Aims and Research Questions

There are four fundamental aims and four research questions as follows:

- 1) To find out the main characteristics of English used on signs in Thai tourist domains
- 2) To explore the extent of the intelligibility of Thai English on signs in Thai tourist domains
- 3) To identify the attitudes of non-Thai and Thai participants towards Thai English messages on signs in tourist domains in Thailand

- 4) To identify significant factors contributing to the intelligibility and unintelligibility of Thai English signs in Thai tourist domains based on the perceptions of Thai and non-Thai speakers.

Please note that Thai tourist domains, in this research, refer to tourist attractions and major public transport hubs in Thailand not in other countries. There are some Thai temples and Thai towns in other countries. These places could also be considered Thai tourist domains, but signs in those places are excluded because signs in those places are mainly aimed at Thai people who live in those countries, which are different from signs in Thailand that are aimed at non-Thai people.

To pursue the research aims, the key research questions are as follows:

- 1) What are the main characteristics of English used on signs in tourist domains in Thailand?
- 2) To what extent is Thai English intelligible to international visitors?
- 3) What are the attitudes of non-Thai and Thai participants towards Thai English messages on signs in tourist domains in Thailand?
- 4) What are the relevant factors influencing the degree of intelligibility of Thai English?

1.3.1 Definitions of Intelligibility, Comprehensibility and Understanding

In this research, the word *intelligibility*, along with its adjective form, *intelligible*, which means the ability to understand the gist of the message according to Nelson (2011), will be used throughout the whole work.

Nelson (2011: 2) refers to *intelligibility* as when a language is usefully communicative within the context of situation. The context of situation includes knowledge of a specific event many years in the past which is shared among participants and so does not have to be explained to anyone present but can simply be referred to as a natural part of the discourse (Nelson, 2011: 9). Smith (1992: 76) mentions that *intelligibility* relates to “technical sense” of language interaction not only the text itself but also situations. This is quite similar to the nature of Thai English on

signs for which, in order to fully understand the messages, participants should have some knowledge and technical sense of Thailand and the society. Furthermore, intelligibility does not focus on audience response (Nelson, 2011). As signs are mainly one-way communication, audience reactions from audience are not a major of concern. Based on the mentioned reasons, the term *intelligibility* should better fit with this research than others. However, there are other two terms- *comprehensibility* and *understanding*- that are worth mentioning here because they can confuse readers.

Unlike intelligibility, *comprehensibility* goes a bit deeper to a hearer's understanding of the message (Nelson, 2011). It involves an inclusion of specific circumstances in which the speech event takes place and also further interpretation of the meaning behind the word (Smith 1992: 76), so it also looks at a participant's response to the word/ utterance as well. As this research focuses on a participant's attitude rather than their response, the word *comprehensibility* appears to be too deep for this research.

Collins COBUILD Advanced Learner's English Dictionary (2006: 1579), it is defines the word *understanding* by saying that "If you have an **understanding of** something, you know how it works or know what it means". Nelson (2011: 21) comments that "*understanding* is so general a word as to be virtually useless for any close analysis of speech events".

The concept of this research is to find out to what extent participants could make sense of the Thai English messages shown on signs. The Thai English messages may contain no errors but can be socio-culturally unintelligible or grammatically incorrect with either minor or major errors. In this research, signs with Thai English messages are divided into three groups, namely 1) no errors but socio-culturally unintelligible, 2) minor errors, and 3) major errors. The research could help to reveal kinds of errors that most often lead to misunderstanding when used for communication so that sign makers/ writers could be more aware when making an English sign if they wanted to communicate with non-Thai people through it.

In addition, many Thai teachers of English tend to be very strict about grammatical rules in class, this appears to discourage students from using English for communication because they are afraid of making mistakes (Patanasorn and Tongpoon, 2012). However, if research participants could get the gist of the messages in spite of some errors, this research could help to prove that although the messages are not grammatically correct, international visitors to Thailand could still understand

the English messages of Thai people. Therefore, students should also be encouraged to use English for communicating with non-Thai people although they might not be confident about the forms. Krashen (1982) supports that teachers should focus on meanings rather than forms so that learners can have courage to use English in their real life situations. Hence, Thai learners of English should be supported in a similar way.

The main focus of the research is on the participant's ability to understand the gist of the Thai English messages rather than their responses to the messages, so the term *intelligibility* would be most suitable for this research because the term *comprehensibility* appears to be too deep and *understanding* seems to be too general.

Nevertheless, audience and readers who are not linguists may not know all the differences as mentioned. Therefore, the words *comprehensibility/ comprehensible*, *understanding/ understandable*, and *intelligibility/ intelligible* appear to be interchangeable in the questionnaire about the intelligibility of English used on signs in Thailand (see Chapters 5, 6 and 7) although they are all supposed to mean *intelligibility/ intelligible*.

1.4 Rationale of Study

This research should be useful for other studies about written forms of English as a lingua franca in Thailand and in Southeast Asia because most of the preceding literature into English(es) in Southeast Asia and English in Thailand has focused on spoken language such as the work by Kirkpatrick (2010).

Moreover, most of the studies about English in Thailand were done and analysed by non-Thai scholars who were born in other cultures and contexts. Therefore, they offer analyses from the perspectives of international scholars. This work, however, is different from the previous studies because the data are collected and analysed from the perspective of an insider who was born in Thailand and spent over 20 years living in the country. However, as I did my Master's Degrees and my PhD in England and lived in England for almost eight years, I also had a chance to expose myself to Western cultures and European ways of thinking by both learning from my everyday life and exchanging ideas with international friends. Hence, based on these experiences, I know exactly what Thailand is and how it is looked at.

Being a researcher from Thailand has also helped to open up my opportunities to access other sources of Thai data without requiring assistance from a translator and also to have a chance to interview shop assistants and shop owners, sign makers and government officers whose jobs relate to the existence of Thai English on signs (see Appendix 1 for a summary of the interviews). Therefore, this research also offers an insightful view of Thai people towards their own variety of English.

Because this piece of work is expected to identify the factors that could lead to misunderstanding between Thai people and their visitors when using English as a medium of communication on signs, the results and findings from the research should help to raise awareness of Thai users of English when using the language in Thai contexts and to enhance more effective communication between Thai speakers and speakers of other languages who communicate through English. Hence, in a way, they should also help to reduce communication problems between Thai people and visitors to Thailand.

In addition, research into English as a lingua franca and World Englishes is mainly descriptive. This research could be considered one of the pioneering studies that can quantify and statistically present the results, which should help to counter the criticism against the descriptive analyses of ELF and WE studies.

1.5 Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis is composed of eight chapters. This chapter, Chapter 1: *Introduction*, gives the general background information about the thesis, addresses research aims and research questions. Chapter 2: *Literature Review* presents the review of the preceding literature into World Englishes, English as a lingua franca, linguistic landscape, and other related literature. Chapter 3: *Research Methods and Main Characteristics of Thai English in Thailand* discusses detailed information about research methods used in the studies and the main characteristics of Thai English on signs in tourist domains. Chapter 4: *Questionnaire* reports all the processes of questionnaire design, the items on the online questionnaire, the pilot study and reliability analysis. Chapter 5: *The Intelligibility of Thai English on Signs in Tourist Domains* is regarded as the main study of this work. It focuses on the issues of the intelligibility of Thai English based on the viewpoints of international visitors in

comparison with those of Thai people, and identifies the factors involved with the various degrees of the intelligibility of Thai English for international audiences. Chapter 6: *The Extent of Correct Recognition of the Meanings of the Signs* points out whether participants could recognise the erroneous messages on signs and considers whether these messages are problematic for them or not. Chapter 7: *The Attitudes of Participants towards Thai English Mistakes on Signs* focuses on the attitudes of participants towards the Thai English messages on signs. Chapter 8: *Discussion* presents the implications and limitations of the research and suggestions for further research. Chapter 9 *Summary and Conclusion* summaries the key findings from the studies in Chapters 5-7.

The first chapter has presented an overall picture of this research project. The research aims and research questions are also formally presented followed by the rationale of the study and the organisation of the thesis. The next chapter contains the review of literature in English as a lingua franca and other related fields.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

This chapter first defines the different terms of English/ Englishes then discusses the literature into global English, linguistic landscape and related literature. The literature and frameworks discussed in this chapter are used as analytical frameworks in the main studies reported in Chapters 5 to 7.

2.1 Definitions of Englishes

This section discusses the definitions of terms that are frequently mentioned in the study about the varieties of English worldwide as follows:

2.1.1 World Englishes (WE)

The widespread use of English has led to the development of a wide variety of English in association with local languages, cultures and ways of thinking of the countries where English has been spreading. The existence of this worldwide English with the contact of local languages along with local cultures and identities of local people has transformed one English into plural and become *World Englishes* (Kachru, 1985: 28), which refers to the global use of English across cultures around the world (Bamgbose, 1998, Kachru, 1996).

To categorise the circles of Englishes, Kachru (1989) developed a concentric circle model dividing countries around the world into three circles as follows: *Inner Circle* countries where English is a native language (ENL), *Outer Circle* countries which used to be governed by the British Isles or the United States and where English is one of the official languages or a second language (ESL), and *Expanding Circle* countries where English is taught and learned as a foreign language (EFL). According to Kachru (1989), there are 5 countries in the Inner Circle, namely the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Regarding English as a second language countries (Outer Circle), there are 53 commonwealth countries, and the Philippines (The Commonwealth, 2013). Then the other countries in the rest of the world (over 130 countries) belong to the Expanding Circle where English is used as a foreign language (The United Nations, 2014).

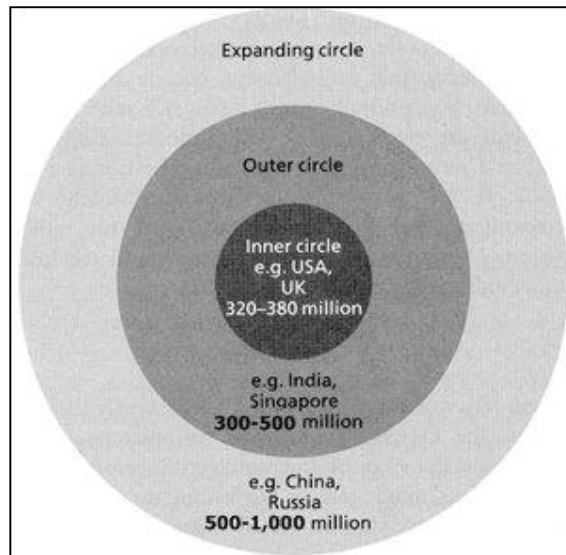


Figure 2.1 Kachru's (1989) three concentric circle model of Englishes

Source: Crystal (2003: 61)

2.1.2 English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)

As regards the three circles, it can be clearly seen that the number of non-native speakers who use English as a medium of communication in various domains, especially business, tourism, and international relations outnumbers the number of native speakers (Crystal, 2003). Because of the large number of non-native English users around the world, the term *English as a lingua franca* (ELF) was coined to explain this phenomenon.

Seidlhofer (2005: 339) explains that “the term ‘English as a lingua franca’ (ELF) has emerged as a way of referring to communication in English between speakers with different first languages”. Firth (1996: 114) further adds that even when native speakers are part of the interaction, it can still be considered as an ELF encounter.

The key concept of ELF is that English is primarily used as a contact language between speakers who do not share any native language or culture. For instance, if a Thai businessman uses English to communicate with his Japanese business partner, English is regarded as the lingua franca. Or, if an American visitor to Thailand uses English to communicate with local people, English is also regarded as the lingua franca.

As English has spread to different countries and has been used by people from different cultures with different mother tongues, the use of English as a lingua franca has inevitably mixed with the identities and cultures of local people (Kirkpatrick, 2010).

2.1.3 World Englishes vs. English as a Lingua Franca

Many people might view ELF and WE as interchangeable. In general, this could be fairly acceptable. However, to be more precise, according to Kachru's (1989) concentric circle model mentioned earlier, World Englishes has been less concerned with the development of English within the Outer Circle (Seidlhofer, 2009). To put it simply, the World Englishes paradigm pays more attention to the process of linguistic nativisation of English developed in the Inner Circle or the countries that used to be governed by the British Isles or the United States and have English as one of the official languages (Bamgbose, 1998: 1). On some occasions, the terms *nativised English*, *institutionalised English*, *indigenised English*, and *localised English* have been interchangeably used as they all refer to the development of the varieties of English in the Outer Circle (Bamgbose, 1998, Jenkins, 2009, Kachru, 1989, Kirkpatrick, 2010a).

2.1.4 English as an International Language (EIL)

The term *English as an international language* (EIL) is often mentioned in literature along with *English as a lingua franca* and *World Englishes* as well. According to McArthur (2001: 3), EIL refers to the two main traditional world norms of American English and British English. The concept of EIL appears to co-exist with the term *World Standard English* (WSE), or the English that is used by native speakers. Nevertheless, Smith (1976: 17) argues that when the word *international* is used with the word *language*, it implies that the language 'is used by people of different nations to communicate with one another' and is considered a means for communication around the world.

Widdowson (1997) regards the international use of English as a global spread of the language. He adds that "the spread of the language just happened in the natural way of things", and the key issue is that when the language spreads, it

cannot be just transmitted without being transformed (Widdowson, 1997: 137). Therefore, it can be concluded that the spread of English outside the Inner Circle is inevitably involved with its transformation in association with the local cultures of speakers who have adopted English as a means for communication (Kramsch, 1993).

There is also another frequently mentioned term, Standard English (SE), which refers to the accepted norms of the use of English in English speaking countries (Bex and Watts, 1999). The most mentioned norms of Standard English are British English (BrE) and American English (AmE) (Crystal, 2003). Apart from these two norms, there are also other Standard norms used in the countries where English is a mother tongue, namely Australian English (AusE) (Moore, 2008), New Zealand English (NZE) (Hay et al., 2008) and Canadian English (CanE) (Kirkpatrick, 2010b). However, in Thailand, when mentioning Standard English, people mainly think of British English and American English as their preferred norms (Ngampramuan, 2009) although the latter is more frequently used than the former (Young and Walsh, 2010). Therefore, in this work, the term *Standard English* explicitly refers to British English and American English.

2.2 Global English

This section presents the spread of English in general (English around the world), on a specific continent (English in Asia) and then in a specific country (English in Thailand).

2.2.1 English around the World

Based on Kachru, (1989) it can be seen that countries across the globe are divided into three groups, namely 1) the Inner Circle 2) the Outer Circle and 3) the Expanding Circle (Kachru, 1989). According to this model, Thailand is fitted into the third category because English is taught, learnt and used as a foreign language.

Although the Kachruvian three-circle model has been regarded as one of the most influential models to describe the expansion of English across the globe, it has been criticised that the division of the circles by geography and genetics cannot reflect the real use of English in the everyday life of people in those circles.

Recently, it has been observed that people in countries in the Expanding Circle such as Sweden and Denmark may more fluently and frequently use English than people in the Outer Circle like in Myanmar and Ghana (Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1999). In some Outer Circle countries like Kenya and Nigeria, not everyone can speak English and it is normally used by the elites and even sometimes has a gatekeeping status in the society (Le Ha, 2005).

In the case of Thailand, the rich and the middle-class are the main groups of people who have access to English, while the poor cannot afford to learn English or send their children to a bilingual school where English is used as a medium of instruction along with their local language. It can be concluded that the ability to use English for Thai people appears to be associated with their family background (Crosbie, 2006).

The popularity of English has gradually increased as an international means of communication among people during the era of globalisation, when borders and distances are no longer an important matter but economic power and the well-being of the nation seem to be a matter of concern (Scholte, 2001, Widdowson, 1997). Strevens (1992: 27-28) confirms that English is the language that is more frequently used within the world community than any other language across the globe. Because English users are mainly non-native speakers, English is now becoming the language that is the most widely taught, read and spoken (McKay, 2002: 9).

Shorts et al. (2001: 1) observe that the countries in the Expanding Circle have adopted English as a foreign language in their communities because it is regarded as a way to connect with the global community. In the case of Thailand, English as a lingua franca seems to fit well with the situation of the use of English around the country because the employment of English by Thai people is chiefly for communicative purposes between the Thais and international visitors. This statement can be supported by statistics of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand (2012) that the number of visitors to Thailand from countries where English is an institutionalised language or a foreign language is far greater than the number of visitors from countries where English is used as a mother tongue.

Apart from being a means of communication, English appears to be associated with other values, especially economic and political (Crystal, 2003,

Kirkpatrick et al., 2008). Crystal (2003: 24) considers that in terms of economic value, English can help countries gain higher economic standing by making the trade markets of the countries more attractive for foreign investors. Furthermore, it is also the language that is regarded as “a window on the world of science and technology” (Stevens, 1992: 30). Crystal (2003: 110) agrees and adds that “English is a medium of a great deal of the world’s knowledge” not only in science and technology but also the business of education. Since the 1960s, many countries including those in the Expanding Circle such as the Netherlands have used English as a medium language of instruction in higher education (Crystal, 2003: 112).

At present, many universities in Thailand also use English as the main language of teaching and require students including those who are studying in Thai programmes to submit an English abstract along with their Master’s dissertations and PhD theses (Mahidol University, 2013). Based on the role of English around the world, English is qualified for the status of a global language because it has achieved a global status and has become the only language that “develops a special role that is recognized in every country” (Crystal, 2003: 3). The main reasons why countries in the Expanding Circle adopt English as the dominant foreign language derive from the values of the language which enable it to be used as a tool for wider communication, to gain economic power, and to access the worlds of science, technology and the business of education (Widdowson, 1997, Crystal, 2003).

Nevertheless, Graddol (1997: 58) predicts that the future of English is uncertain. Although in the 21st century, English might still be the most common shared and preferred language amongst people around the world, the monopolistic position of English might be challenged by other languages, especially Chinese (Mandarin) and Spanish due to regional economic cooperation. However, at present, based on the preceding literature, it appears that the role of other languages still cannot compete with English.

2.2.2 English in Asia

According to Kachru (1989), all countries in Asia belong to the Outer Circle or Expanding Circle. In this region, there are more countries where English is used as a foreign language than countries where it is regarded as an institutionalised

language or official language. Asia contains India, the biggest Outer Circle country, which has around 60-million English users, and China, which is the biggest Expanding Circle country and has over-200-million students learning English as a foreign language (Kachru, 1996: 1). The number of English users in these two countries alone seems to already outweigh the number of English native speakers in the whole Inner Circle.

Tam and Weiss (2004: vii) suggest that from the perspectives of Asian countries, “English has become a means of globalization by which the desire not to be left out of the world is manifested.” This fact can be supported by Kachru’s (1996: 3) work about the case of Japan where English is regarded as a foreign language, but it is the dominant language for trade and commerce in the country. This can be analysed to conclude that the primary use of English in Japan is due to what Crystal (2003) calls *economic value*, which is also one of the main reasons why English is widely used across Thailand (Baker, 2008).

Apart from its economic value, in Hong Kong, English is also regarded as the language of modernity that leads to economic, technological and cultural developments (Parker, 2004: 33). In Thailand, English is also regarded as the language of modernity as stated in the work by Klapper (1992). In Southeast Asia, English also plays a role as the working language of the Association of the Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), most of whose member countries belong to the group of the Expanding Circle (Kirkpatrick, 2010a). Baker (2008: 132) suggests that the use of English as a working language can be seen as having a political role.

The high number of English users in the region has led to a wide variety of Englishes in Asia (Kachru, 1996). In 1996, there was a conference titled *English is an Asian Language* which was held in Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines and officially supported by the Australian Government in cooperation with other countries in the region. It could be possible to say that the conference could reflect the importance of English as an important language in Asia.

The widespread usage of English across the region has reached the point that English has mixed with local languages leading to language transfers, especially in the countries where English has been used as an institutional language. In addition, new Englishes, such as Singlish (Singaporean English) and Filipino

English (Philippine English) have been documented (Gupta, 2010, Llamzon, 1969). In Singapore and the Philippines, the use of English seems different from that in other countries in the same region because English is one of their institutionalised languages. As people in these two countries use English on a regular basis, there are more chances for Standard English to be influenced by the transfers of language and culture until it has become another variety of English for each country (Gupta, 2010, Kirkpatrick, 2010a, Llamzon, 1969).

Nevertheless, the use of English in Thailand has still not reached the point of being another variety of English yet because English is used as a foreign language, and the majority of Thai people do not use English but Thai for communication in their daily life. To have a clear picture, the cases of Singaporean English and Korean English will be used as examples to compare with Thai English. The situations in these two countries are chosen because Singapore represents other countries in Asia that have English as an official language, which is different from Thailand, while Korean has English as a foreign language, which is similar to Thailand.

2.2.2.1 Singaporean English

Singlish (Singaporean English) is defined as “the Singaporean variety of English characterized by a host of words, grammatical structures, speech acts, etc., which come from or originate in the Chinese languages and Malay” (Wong, 2005: 271). It is essentially regarded as a colloquial variety and referred to in some academic literature as *colloquial Singapore English* (Wong, 2005: 271). However, To the Singaporean government, Standard English is preferred. So, in 2000, the government launched the Speak Good English Movement (SEGM) to promote Standard English and support people to use Standard English. So, the government has uploaded downloadable lessons to the SGEM site so that people can learn and use English formally and has also invited people to ask questions if they are not certain about how words or sentences are used in Standard English (Gupta, 2010: 72). The government describes Singaporean English as Singaporean Bundler or “grammar error which is unique to Singapore that may be mistakenly accepted as Standard English (Speak Good English Movement, 2016)”. Despite the government

attempts, Singaporean people still use Singlish in their daily life and in a range of domains.

In addition, the Singaporeans generally regard Singlish as Standard Singapore English that is a little different from general Standard English but has rights to be accepted (Gupta, 2010: 57). It appears that in Singapore, Singlish or the contact of English and local languages, is widely accepted and has become the language that people use for communication in their daily life. In Thailand, the contact of English language with Thai dialects is not commonly accepted because the Royal Thai Government and many Thai people see that Thai people should use Standard English, especially British and/ or American English (Baker, 2008, Young and Walsh, 2010). Therefore, those who can use English properly and efficiently based on the Standard norms are considered better than those who use English mixed with Thai (Glass, 2009, Watkhaolarm, 2005).

2.2.2.2 Korean English/ Konglish

Korea has one official language, which is Korean (Lawrence, 2012). English is only a foreign language. Hence, the first language, Korean, appears to have a marked influence on the way Korean people use English, which is quite similar to the situation in Thailand that Thai people's first language has influenced the way they use English (Huebner, 2006, Kent, 1999, Seargeant et al., 2012).

Lawrence (2012: 72) explains that *Korean English* or *Konglish* "entails a mixture of English and Korean, but defining it is rather difficult". In general, Konglish can be produced through both spoken and written languages. It can be defined via vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. In some cases, it is also classed as *bad English* (Lawrence, 2012). Due to the widespread use of Konglish in Korea, Lawrence (2012: 72-3) argues that the language cannot be described as a *pidgin* or *creole* or a *new English* as it is "the result from the contact of English and local languages". In addition, Konglish can appear or disappear over time and can change and be recombined with other elements of English in unique ways (Lawrence, 2012: 73).

The situation of Konglish or the contact of English and local languages in Korea is rather similar to the situation in Thailand. First, Thai English has not

reached the stage of being a pidgin, creole or another variety of English yet. However, the existence of Thai English is a result of the influence of Standard Thai and the other unique elements of Thailand and Thai society or Thainess on English used by Thai speakers (Watkhaolarm, 2005, Baker, 2008). Moreover, the use of English mixed with some Thai words and phrases can also appear or disappear in different periods of time, too (Seargeant et al., 2012). Finally, Thai English can also be seen in both spoken and written languages like Korean English (Ngampramuan, 2009, Young and Walsh, 2010).

It can be seen that there are some common factors between Korean English and Thai English. It could be because both countries use English as a foreign language and their people do not use English for communication on a regular basis. Hence, the level of the language transfer has still not the same level as in the countries where English is an institutionalised language like Singapore. In addition, the new words mixed between English and the contact languages in Thailand and Korea have not been documented. That is why they disappear and make the status of these Englishes far from being a pidgin or creole.

Based on the information in this section, it is possible to conclude that English plays a dominant role in Asia as it does around the globe. To Asian countries where English is regarded as a second language, an official language or a foreign language, English is considered as a significant language that can help countries to gain economic power (Kachru, 1996, Crystal, 2003). Besides, as a working language of ASEAN, English seems to have a political role in the region, too (Baker, 2008, Kirkpatrick, 2010a). The widespread use of English across the continent has led to the development of a variety of Englishes in various countries where English is used both as an institutionalised and a foreign language.

2.2.3 English in Thailand

Based on Kachru's research (1989), Thailand belongs to the Expanding Circle as English is taught and learnt as a foreign language. The only official language of the country is Standard Thai although there are also other language varieties, such as Northern Khmer and Laotian, spoken within the borders of the country (Smalley, 1994: 13).

Smalley (1994: 25) observes the function of English in Thailand and notes that English is not only a language for wider communication but also a symbol of modernity to connect Thailand with the larger world. The Thai government sees English as an important language and makes it a required school subject (Backhaus, 2007: 44). Although Thailand does not have a second official language; Smalley (1994: 25) makes the claim that “Thailand as a nation has two languages, Standard Thai and Standard English. The first is the internal language of the nation, the second its external language.” Baker (2008: 138) supports that in Thailand, “English is in practice the de facto second language and used in a wide range of domains.”

Due to the fact that part of the main source of the country’s income is tourism and the country is a major hub for global air travel in Southeast Asia, English has been widely used across the country in both the public and private sectors (Huebner, 2006: 33). To accommodate international visitors, it is common to find signs along the streets and menus in restaurants which are available in English apart from Thai (Huebner, 2006).

2.2.3.1 English among Thais

Smalley (1994: 204) observes that “English messages are directed at tourists and others from abroad.” However, after a decade, English has spread all over the country and has been used as a means for communication between not only Thai people and international visitors but also among the Thais themselves in a written form (Glass, 2009). The spread and the frequent use of English all over Thailand have led to the development of English influenced by Thai language and socio-cultural factors, especially the main religion of Buddhism and the hieratical social structure, so-called *Thaiglish* (Baker, 2008: 136). Part of the English used among Thai people comes in the forms of a mixture of English and Thai in the same sentence as well as some lexical borrowings from English into Thai and code switching between English and Thai words (Seargeant et al., 2012).

When Thai people write to each other in English, they apply the norms of the Thai language to their English writing, such as adding particles after English words or sentences. This kind of Thai English variety can generally be found on

text messages, social networking pages, especially Facebook¹ and Twitter², and email messages. Figure 2.2 illustrates an example of a variety of Thai English used among Thai people taken from the researcher's Facebook page.



Figure 2.2 An example of written Thai English used among Thai people

In Figure 2.2, it can be seen that English is the main language used for conveying the message, but the particle ‘ka’ was also used at the end of the message. In Thai language, particles do not contain any meaning but give interlocutors the sound of politeness, and the lack of use of them may be considered impolite (Becker, 1995).

Glass (2009) supports that in recent years, there have been an increasing number of Thais writing to each other in English, especially in written communication through electronic devices. Glass (2009) conducted his research into the informal English writing among 104 young Thai adults who graduated with an English major. The writing in his research includes all kinds of genres ranging from emails, text messages, online chatting, personal and business letters and memos. The results show that 62.4% of the participants use English to communicate with both Thais and non-Thais on a regular basis (Glass, 2009: 536).

Some participants accept that English is sometimes used because the electronic device they are using does not have a Thai keyboard or does not support the Thai font. On some occasions, only the script is borrowed for transliterating the

¹ www.facebook.com

² www.twitter.com

Thai words. This kind of language is known among Thais as *karaoke language* (Glass, 2009: 539, Sargeant et al., 2012, Baker, 2008).

Sargeant et al. (2012: 519) explains about the use of *karaoke language* that “there is no universal standard for transliterating Thai into the Roman script, when people wish to render Thai into the Roman alphabet they use what is colloquially known as *pasa karaoke* (ภาษาคาราโอเกะ) because it resembles the subtitles used in karaoke videos”. An example of the use of the English script as karaoke language is shown in Figure 2.3.



Figure 2.3 An example of the use of the English script as karaoke language

In the message in Figure 2.3, it says “Happy Birthday!!! I wish you a lot of happiness. May all your wishes come true.” It can be seen that apart from the word ‘Happy Birthday’, the writer used an English/ Roman script for the sounds (karaoke language) but not the meaning.

In Glass’ (2009: 539) research, one interviewee discloses that the karaoke language is regarded as “a way to reinforce the Thainess she shares with her recipient while overcoming her lack of typing ability in Thai”.

According to Watkhaolarm’s (2005) work about *Thainess* in English literature written by bilingual Thai authors, *Thainess* includes the transfer of religious, cultural and social elements, metaphors or fixed collocations, translation, lexical borrowing, reduplication, and hybridization.

Glass’ (2009) study also reveals that, apart from using English informally among friends, many Thai people also use English at work. Based on 14 follow-up interviews, Glass (2009) reports the factors that support Thai people to choose English over Thai when communicating with Thai people. In addition to the reason of the lack of Thai keyboard facilities on the computers at work, other reasons

included to show off their ability to write in English, and the idea that writing in English could help them to improve the other party's English. The use of English could help to communicate more directly with Thai colleagues than when using Thai (Glass, 2009: 540-541).

Watkhaolarm (2005) also predicts that there might potentially be a variety of English in Thailand which could develop and become nativised due to its regular use for everyday communication in professional lives as well as the heart of current study.

Based on the expanding use of English around the country, the variety of English in Thailand can be studied in two domains according to the audience, namely 1) English used among Thai people, and 2) English used between Thai people and non-Thais. However, in this research, the focus will be mainly on the variety of Thai English used between Thai people and non-Thais, especially international visitors because the data has been collected from signs at tourist attractions where English signs are primarily aimed at international tourists.

In terms of Thai English used by Thai people towards an international audience, this variety of Thai English might come in a form with no errors but may be unintelligible to international visitors who do not have the socio-cultural background knowledge of Thailand. Take Figure 2.4 as an example.



Figure 2.4 Smile waffle

According to Figure 2.4, *Smile waffle* is the name of a shop that sells waffles. Based on a personal interview with the shop owner (2012), the word smile was chosen because it referred to the nature of Thai people, as Thailand is also known to others as *Land of Smiles*. The owner added that when people smiled, it

meant they were happy. In this case, *smile waffle* implied that the waffles bought from this shop were delicious and could make people smile and be happy.

2.2.3.2 English and Modernity

Klapper (1992: 5) reports that Thai consumers associate English with modern concepts of products based on his research which indicates that the existence of the English language on a label could help to influence the attitude of Thai consumers to buy the product no matter whether the language could be understood or not. Besides, the research on the use of English on Thai food packaging reveals that more than 50 percent of products use the English script and English names on their packaging (Ngampramuan, 2006). As this research is centred on the use of Thai English between Thai people and overseas visitors, more detailed information and examples of this particular kind of English and main characteristics of English on signs in Thailand will be given in Chapter 3.

2.2.3.4 English in Tourist Domains

This research specifically looks at the use of English in tourist domains, which are composed of tourist attractions and transport hubs because these are places where English is regularly used as a lingua franca between Thai and non-Thai people more than any other place. In addition, tourism is also considered to be the main service that generates income around the country (Cohen, 1988: 226). With its population of 64 million (Gannon and Pillai, 2010: 27), in recent years, Thailand welcomed 22,303,065 international visitors in 2012, 19,230,470 in 2011, and 15,936,400 in 2010 (Department of Tourism, 2013). The World Travel & Tourism Council (2013: 2) reported that in 2012, the total contribution of Travel and Tourism to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Thailand was THB1,896.7 billion (approximately £37.93 billion), accounting for 16.7% of GDP, and it is expected to rise by 6.5% per annum to THB3,833 billion (approximately £76.7 billion) in 2023. In terms of job opportunities and employment, in 2012, 12.4% of total employment (4,818,500 jobs) in Thailand was involved with Travel & Tourism. Furthermore, it is expected that by 2023, the percentage will increase by 3.6% per year to 7,528,000 jobs, which would account for 17.5% of the total GDP (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2013: 2).

Because of the substantial number of international visitors to Thailand, Smalley (1994: 24) points out that the use of English in Thailand is mainly directed at tourists and others from abroad. This claim has been challenged by the work about language contact, language mixing and language dominance on signs in Bangkok by Huebner (2006) who adds that English used on signs in Thailand is not only aimed at overseas tourists but also educated Thai people.

Huebner (2006) compares the role of English with the roles of other foreign languages based on 613 photos of signs taken around Bangkok. From his point of view, this comparison is interesting because Thailand has never been colonised, so people should have the freedom to use any foreign language on signs. Based on the results of the study, Huebner (2006) reveals that Chinese, Japanese, Arabic and French are all used on signs, but their roles are still limited and cannot compete with English. It could therefore be concluded that apart from Thai, English is the most frequent language displayed on signs across different neighbourhood around Bangkok. Moreover, the constant presence of English on Thai signage confirms the leading role of English and “highlights the importance and influence of English as a global language”, which is parallel with its leading role in other parts of the world (Huebner, 2006: 50).

Nevertheless, Huebner (2006: 48) further comments that English messages displayed on signs in Thailand do not only target international visitors. These signs seem to be also intended for a class of educated Thais. This is due to the fact that there are a number of signs displaying messages with English lexicon and/ or syntax, but these messages might not actually be used for communicative purposes. Some words might have been created just to attract the attention of Thai customers, as Huebner (2006: 43) explains, “inclusion of English lexicon and/ or syntax adds a cosmopolitan flair to the message”. The study of Huebner (2006) implies that the use of English in Thailand might not only be targeted at people from other countries as Smalley (1994) has suggested.

2.2.3.5 English and Buddhism

Buddhism is generally considered to have a profound effect on Thai culture, as it acts both as the main religion and as a philosophy of living for Thai people

(Gannon and Pillai, 2010, Plocher, 2011). As around 95% of the population in Thailand is Buddhist, Buddhism appears to have a great effect on Thai ways of life (Gannon and Pillai, 2010). Based on a study about signs in public transport hubs in Thailand, socio-cultural factors seem to have an important impact on the messages displayed on signs and the language used on signs too (Ngampramuan, 2009). Take the sign in Figure 2.5 as an example.



Figure 2.5 A sign for reserved seats for (Buddhist) monks

In this case, the message is grammatically correct, but people who are not Buddhists might not be aware that Buddhist monks are not allowed to have body contact with women. That is why their seats have to be separated. Hence, international visitors should be aware that the use of English in Thailand could sometimes be very culturally specific and some background knowledge about Thai culture and Thai society is required in order for the intended message to be fully understood, as there might be some misunderstanding if they interpret the messages themselves based on their own knowledge background. For successful communication, international visitors to Thailand should also take cultural issues into account (Gannon and Pillai, 2010, Watkhaolarm, 2005).

In summary, English is considered a language for wider communication with a prestigious status given to it and is used in a wide range of domains, especially in business, tourism and education across Thailand (Smalley, 1994, Backhaus, 2007). In addition, in recent years, there has also been an increase in the number of the users of English among Thai people for the purpose of showing a glimpse of modernity or as a neutral language for communication, which helps to deal with the issues of age and hierarchy between or among interlocutors. It is also

predicted that in the future, English in Thailand could be further developed and may reach the stage of nativisation (Watkhaolarm, 2005).

2.3 Linguistic Landscape

In the first section, the general concept of a linguistic landscape will be introduced. The second section contains information about the linguistic landscape in Asia, as it is the continent where Thailand belongs. Finally, the last section discusses the literature into linguistic landscape studies in Thailand.

2.3.1 Linguistic Landscape

Linguistic landscape (LL) relates to the study of “the language texts that are present in public space” (Gorter, 2006: 1). Landry and Bourhis (1997: 25) define that linguistic landscape by saying “the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combine to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration”.

In the case of more than one language displaying on the signs, linguistic landscape can also reveal the social context or the multilingualism of the society (Gorter, 2006: 1). As LL is concerned with the written form of language(s), the data are normally collected from urban areas where there are more signs to be seen than in the countryside. For this reason, it is also known as *linguistic cityscape* (Gorter, 2006: 2).

Gorter (2006: 81) points out that in recent years, scholars in sociolinguistics and applied linguists have paid more attention to linguistic landscape as evidenced by the increasing number of publications, individual papers and colloquia at conferences due to the fact that signs can reveal many stories of the studied areas such as tradition, history and language policy (Hick, 2002). As this research is concerned with an analysis of English used on signs by Thais, it has a close link with the linguistic landscape area.

The previous studies about LL were mainly conducted under the theme of multilingualism in order to find out which language is dominant in multilingual

cities as discussed in the work by Cenoz and Gorter (2006), and Ben-Rafael et al. (2006). However, in cities where there is only one official language, the foci could be on the influence or role of a foreign language in a country or a particular area or the power and solidarity of people through the use of the same language. In some studies, data are categorised according to the ownership of the signs to see a sign coding scheme or a language policy of the study area (Laundry and Bourhis, 1997, Gorter, 2006, Shohamy, 2006). However, the terms and categories used might be different according to the researchers' viewpoints. For instance, in Ben-Rafael et al.'s (2006) work about LL in Israel, the signs are categorised into *top-down* which refers to the LL items issued by national and public bureaucracies and *bottom-up* which refers to the signs issued by individual social actors (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006: 14).

Shohamy (2006) also divided the signs in her study into the groups of top-down, representing items issued by the state and/ or central bureaucracies, and bottom-up, representing items issued by autonomous social actors, selected by individuals and representing a number of domains: names of shops, private announcements, business, etc.' In the same way, Backhaus (2006: 56) categorised the signs in Tokyo into *official* and *nonofficial* referring to the signs set up by governmental organisations and those belonging to citizens respectively.

Research methods in linguistic landscape, in general, appear to be based on quantitative studies, as results are shown in numbers and calculated in percentages (Gorter, 2006, Huebner, 2006, Backhaus, 2007). However, LL study is not purely statistical, but it appears that the statistical data are used as evidence that leads to analysis under various perspectives such as applied linguistics, sociolinguistics and sociology (Gorter, 2006: 87). The study of LL allows researchers to apply various kinds of methodology and multidisciplinary approaches for a better understanding of the linguistic landscape depending on each individual's study, such as the study of power and solidarity, the study of code-mixing between/among languages, and the study of symbolic construction of public space through the existence of languages (Backhaus, 2006, Huebner, 2006, Ben-Rafael et al., 2006).

As there has not been any perfect methodology or a framework given for conducting LL research, Gorter (2006: 2) suggests that the methodology use for

linguistic landscape studies has to be developed further. In this research, both quantitative and qualitative methods, mixed methods, are used so that the research can yield better results. Nevertheless, as this research is not a pure linguistic landscape study, but signs are used as some of the tools to analyse the intelligibility and the unacceptability of Thai English. Hence, the categories used in the aforementioned LL studies will not be used here.

2.3.2 Linguistic Landscape in Asia

Regarding the literature into LL in Asia, there are some studies into multilingual signs in Japan (Backhaus, 2006), the relationship between social identity and properties of indexicality of language scripts in Taipei (Curtin, 2009) and cosmopolitanism in Taipei (Curtin, 2014).

As regards the work by Backhaus (2006), Tokyo was selected because it is regarded as “one of the prototypes of a monolingual society” (Backhaus, 2006: 52). Despite being a monolingual society, multilingual signs can still usually be found around the city. In the study, the signs were divided by the sense of ownership into groups of *official* and *nonofficial* signs for the study of power and solidarity in the society.

The study statistically reveals that both official and nonofficial multilingual signs contained more English than Japanese despite the fact that English is regarded as a foreign language in Japan. Besides, there were also other foreign languages existing on the signs, such as Chinese, Korean and French. Nevertheless, the roles of these languages were not significant and could not compete with the role of English.

2.3.2.1 Linguistic Landscape in Taipei, Taiwan

Curtin (2009: 221) did research into “the relationship between *social identity* and properties of *indexicality* of language scripts” in Taipei, Taiwan, which was selected because Taipei is regarded as a country where the issues of ethnicity, culture, linguistics, politics and (trans)national identities are still controversial issues. The research focuses on the use of the systems of Romanized Chinese scripts on official signs. The study divides public signs into 1) signs displaying non-

Chinese languages, so-called *vogue display languages* and 2) signs mainly containing various kinds of Romanization of Chinese.

In terms of methodology, the research mainly relied on ethnography and discourse analysis by collecting examples of non-Chinese scripts on signs from four major sections of the city to get various data based on the (working) class and age of residents. The data were collected from vehicles, posters, window displays and items from social settings such as magazines, school notebooks, address books and T-shirts.

According to Curtin (2009), the use of simplified and traditional Chinese characters indexes the geopolitical entities in Taiwan. The traditional characters are usually used by Taiwanese people, while simplified characters are mainly used by people from China and Singapore. Although European languages such as French, Spanish and Italian were also found, American English appears to be the most frequently used language for shop names, which index Taipei's internationalisation (Curtin, 2009: 227).

In 2014, another study about orthographic scripts was conducted in Taipei. Curtin (2014: 157) points out that at present many aspects of LL such as shop signs, advertising and product labels are generally aimed at cosmopolitan consumers.

Curtin (2014: 158) observes that the multilingual/ multi-script (and image) interplay on signs in Taipei shows a cosmopolitanism that embraces cultural multiplicity and challenges conventional models of identity and belonging. In general, errors in spellings as well as the presence of entirely nonsensical or nonreferential lexical items could be found (Curtin, 2009).

Official signs at the airport and other transport hubs contain both Mandarin and English. This allows non-locals to find their way around the city more easily than in the past. In addition, French, Japanese, Korean, Thai, Vietnamese, Indonesian and other European languages, namely Italian, German, Danish, Spanish and Hungarian as well as a bit of Russian and Mongolian were also found on Taipei's signage (Curtin, 2009). The reasons for having more multilingual scripts are to convey information to international visitors and overseas tourists and to show creative language play on signs.

2.3.2.2 Linguistic Landscape in Korea

Lawrence (2012) did a study into the existence of English, Korean, *Konglish* (a mixture between English and Korean), and Chinese on public signs in seven regions of Seoul, which is the capital city of Korea, and four other Korean cities. The selection of particular areas of Seoul and cities in Korea involved consideration of different social statuses and the numbers of overseas visitors. The signs were analysed based on 1) language (English, Korean, Konglish, and Chinese), 2) location (city districts, markets, theme parks, public transportation and bridges), and 3) domains (main streets, alleys, inside stores and on street vendor signs).

Lawrence (2012: 75) expected that the percentage of English, Korean, Konglish and Chinese signs would change in different domains and cities. The study found that the two main languages displayed on signs were English and Korean. However, the quantity of English signs and Korean signs can be different depending on the districts and cities. For example, for public transportation, the number of Korean signs was greater than the number of English signs.

The study reveals that there is an inverse correlation between English and Korean. If English signs increase, Korean signs will decrease, and vice versa. On the other hand, there is a positive correlation between English and Konglish, so if English signs increase, Konglish signs will increase. The presence of Chinese on signs does not show any relation with the other three languages (Lawrence, 2012)

As regards the domains, the frequency of English on the main streets in different areas fluctuates and does not seem to correlate with the number of overseas visitors as hypothesised. Some particular domains such as most tea rooms, traditional medicine stores, Korean and Japanese restaurants and guest houses, show both Korean and Chinese signs. In some shops where the places and products are associated with luxurious and modern living, English is present at higher frequencies than any other language. Lawrence (2012: 90) finally concludes that “in the linguistic landscape of contemporary Korea, English served as a marker of modernity, luxury and youth.”

According to the linguistic landscape literature in Asia, it can be seen that there are some links between the two selected countries and Thailand. First of all,

Japan, Taiwan and Korea have just one official language. English is regarded as a foreign language like it is Thailand. The linguistic landscape studies in Tokyo, Taipei and Korea show that apart from English, other foreign languages can also be found on signs. However, English is the most dominant foreign language across the three studies. This finding appears to correlate with the literature into English in Asia, which shows that English plays a role as the most significant foreign language in the region. In Taipei, the presence of English signs implies that English has been adapted as a lingua franca to convey messages to international visitors. Nevertheless, in Korea, the presence of English on signs and other products is mainly not for communication but for being a marker of modernity, luxury and youth.

2.3.3 Linguistic Landscape in Thailand

This section focuses on the linguistic landscape studies in Thailand carried out by Huebner (2006), Backhaus (2007), and Ngampramuan (2009).

2.3.3.1 Huebner (2006)

In Huebner's (2006) research, fifteen areas (fourteen in Bangkok and one in another province) were explored to find out about language contact, language mixing and language dominance by focusing on the influence of English as a global language on Thai society.

The analysis was done based on information from 613 signs. Huebner expected that the study would be able to provide a linguistic framework for analysing types of codemixing between English and Thai (Huebner, 2006: 37). In his research, signs were divided according to the sense of ownership into the groups of *government* and *nongovernment* to see which language plays a leading role on signs owned by the two groups. The statistics show that in the group of government signs, there are more monolingual Thai signs than bilingual Thai/Roman signs (Huebner, 2006: 39).

Huebner (2006: 50-51) explains that "Technically English is written in the Roman script. To put it simply, *Roman* or *the Roman script* are used to refer to the language that looks like English in terms of scripts but does not have any meaning

in English as spelt. On the other hand, nongovernment signs display more Thai-Roman script than monolingual Thai signs. In his analysis, Huebner (2006: 39) observes that the result reflects that Thai is used as the official language but “English is used as the official language of wider communication internationally.”

Huebner (2006) also tried to study the extent of linguistic diversity in Bangkok by going to the areas dominantly lived/ worked in by people of Chinese, Japanese and Middle Eastern origins. The statistical results show that apart from English, other foreign languages did not play a vital role on Thai signs. Therefore, Huebner (2006: 48) makes the claim that English has an influence on Thai society in both lexical borrowing and in the areas of orthography, pronunciation and syntax. He also concludes that the study of signs in each neighbourhood presents “a picture of the social structure, the power relations and status of various languages within individual neighbourhoods and the larger community” (Huebner, 2006: 50).

2.3.3.2 Backhaus (2007)

Backhaus (2007) did a study of signs in Bangkok with a focus on overt and covert language policies in 2007. His work is based on the idea of linguistic diversity in Thailand suggested by Smalley (1994). There are three areas with a high density of Thai people of Chinese origin, a high density of international visitors, and without any influence from any minority group. Backhaus (2007) divided the signs by the sense of ownership into the groups of *government* and *nongovernment* as Huebner (2006) did. Based on his study, the languages displayed on the nongovernment signs show a relationship with people living in the studied areas. In the Chinese-dominant area, there were more Chinese scripts used on the signs than Roman and Thai ones, but in the area of foreign residences, there was a higher prominence of signs in the Roman script than English and Thai. In the non-dominant area, signs containing Thai were more frequently found than the signs with English or Chinese languages (Backhaus, 2007: 44).

The results demonstrate that 59.4% of the government signs in all areas contain only Thai script and 33.7% display both Thai and Roman scripts (Backhaus, 2007: 45) including other languages written with the Roman alphabet, such as French, German and Japanese transliterated into English.

2.3.2.3 Ngampramuan (2009)

Ngampramuan (2009) conducted research into the major transport hubs in Thailand in 2009. The paper centres on the role of English as a global language for wider communication by Thai people in three major transport hubs, namely 1) Suvarnabhumi Airport in Samut Prakarn, 2) Don Muang Airport in Bangkok and 3) Barommaratchachonnani Bus Terminal in Bangkok as case studies. There were 606 photos of signs across the three sites. The signs were categorised based on 1) the sense of ownership, namely official and commercial to see the leading role between Thai and English 2) the purpose of use, namely information and advertising to see which language is frequently used for giving information and for advertisement, and 3) the languages they display, namely monolingual, bilingual, trilingual and multilingual to see the role of foreign language(s) on Thai signs in these transport hubs. The results show that 1) English is becoming a dominant foreign language on signs in the main transport hubs in Thailand and, 2) the existence of English on signs is associated with the intended target audience and the number of international visitors at each data collection site.

The research results reveal that on official signs, English plays a role as the *de facto* official language because it is the language that is the most frequently found on official signs apart from Thai. In addition, bilingual official and commercial Thai-English/ English-Thai signs are the most commonly found at all data collection sites. In terms of commercial signs, English plays the leading role as the dominant foreign language and means for wider communication. Although other foreign languages such as Chinese, Japanese, Arabic and French are present on the signs, their roles are not as significant as the role of English.

In summary, from the linguistic landscape studies in Thailand, it can be concluded that although other foreign languages are present on the signs, English is considered the dominant foreign language, which is rather similar to the LL study in Tokyo (Backhaus (2006). Huebner's (2006) work found creative usages of English and codemixing between Thai and English used in Thai contexts. This is rather similar to the work by Curtin (Curtin, 2009) in terms of the English creativity on signs in Taipei. The presence of English on Thai signs could possibly be seen as a result of English being a global language for wider communication across the

country (Smalley, 1994). However, as English is taught and learnt as a foreign language, English used in Thai contexts and some creative usages of English can generally be found on signs across the country.

2.3.4 Information about Data Collection Sites

Because this research mainly relies on signs in tourist domains in Thailand, it will be clearer to have the word of ‘signs’ defined from the beginning.

2.3.4.1 Definition of ‘Signs’ in this Research

What is counted as a sign in this research project? It is important that the term ‘sign’ is clearly defined for a mutual understanding between the researcher and audience.

According to Landry and Bourhis (1997: 25), linguistic landscape refers to the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings. In addition, in some studies, graffiti is also included (Pennycook, 2010). Some scholars also consider other ordinary everyday objects, such as cigarette packets, disposed tickets, postcards, motif T-shirts, advertisements on busses/ other kinds of public transports and monuments/ statues as their landscape data (Abousnnouga and Machin, 2010, Coupland, 2010, Kallen, 2010).

Based on the suitability of the landscape in Thailand, the linguistic items to be excluded in this research are 1) graffiti, 2) billboards, 3) mobile signs and 4) multimedia signs. The reasons why the four categories are not counted as signs in this project are as follows:

First, graffiti is excluded because it is illegal to draw graffiti in public places (Ministry of Justice of Thailand, 2013). If graffiti is found, especially in a tourist area, the police/ authorities will try to remove it as soon as possible.

Second, billboards are not included as signs in this research because they are mainly situated along roadsides. Based on previous personal research experience, the best way to get the whole pictures of billboards is to be on expressways or elevated ways, where cars run with high speeds and drivers are not

allowed to stop at any point until the end of the way. According to the code of practice for the safety of social researchers (2014) by Social Research Association, under the section of ‘assessing risk in the fieldwork site’, getting photos of billboards from expressways is considered unsafe.

Third, this research excludes mobile signs such as advertisements on the sides of buses and other kinds of public transports due to the fact that, in general, they are particularly targeted at the local audience. Hence, the main language used is Thai. Besides, it is not easy to capture a photo of an advertisement on a bus or taxi because they are usually mobile. In reality, it might be said that not many people, including tourists, have enough time to see the whole advertisements or read all the messages since the vehicles are moving.

Fourth, regarding multimedia signs, to actively promote a product or inform people through this kind of sign, adequately advanced technological systems and a large budget are needed. Due to the lack of digital technology throughout the whole country and financial issues, multimedia signs are not considered worthwhile to investigate (personal interview with a marketing officer, 2011).

2.3.4.2 Tourist Attractions in Thailand

According to MacCannell (1976: 41), a tourist attraction is defined as “an empirical relationship between a tourist, a sight, and a marker- a piece of information about a sight.” To consider whether something should be called a tourist attraction, Gunn (1972: 37) emphasises that “an attraction is magnetic. If it does not have the power of drawing people to enjoy its values, it fails to be an attraction.” Based on information from the Tourism Authority of Thailand (2014a), Thailand has various kinds of tourist attractions as follows:

- historical, religious, and cultural sites, which include palaces, temples and museums
- natural attractions, which include beaches, mountains, gardens, small towns and villages
- shopping areas, which include department stores, and markets

- places to go for nightlife, which include clubs, bars, and discotheques

Although Thailand has been trying to present itself as a country with various kinds of cultural, historical and natural places, it is still recognised as a country with sex tourism (Bishop and Robinson, 1998: 5). In fact, some tourists come to Thailand to visit brothels and some massage parlours (Bishop and Robinson, 1998). According to the code of practice for the safety of social researchers by the Social Research Association (2014), collecting data from places where international travellers go for nightlife and sites for sex tourism is considered unsafe and risky for a female researcher. Hence, places to go for nightlife are not included as part of the data collection sites.

2.3.4.3 Background Information about the Provinces Selected for Data Collection

Thailand is located in Southeast Asia and regarded as one of the main tourist destinations in the Asian region (Klinchan, 2007). It is comprised of 76 provinces, but not every province is well-known and frequently visited by international tourists. According to the statistics on the top most frequently visited provinces by the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand (Department of Tourism, 2013), in 2010, the top ten provinces that welcomed visitors the most are those shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Top ten most frequently visited Thai provinces in 2010

Province	Visitors
1 Bangkok	30,037,911
2 Chon Buri	5,649,895
3 Kanchanaburi	4,583,630
4 Chiangmai	4,343,090
5 Nakornrachisima	3,929,523
6 Petchaburi	3,919,908
7 Ayutthaya	3,583,231
8 Rayong	3,417,196
9 Phuket	3,375,931
10 Songkla	2,609,045

Although this research focuses on tourist domains across Thailand, it seems difficult for all ten provinces to be visited because they are located in different parts of the country. Therefore, three main provinces have been selected, namely Bangkok, Chon Buri, and Ayutthaya. They have been selected because Bangkok is the capital city of Thailand (Klinchan, 2007), Chon Buri has many famous beaches and one of the most popular tourist destinations, called Pattaya, and Ayutthaya, the previous capital city of Thailand is famous for its famous temples and historical places (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2014a). Both Chon Buri and Ayutthaya are highly visited by tourists, and many hotels and travel companies in Bangkok also offer a day tour to take tourists from Bangkok to these two provinces (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2014b). In addition, two provinces, namely Tak and Sukhothai, which are famous among local and international tourists but are not on the top-ten list have also been included so that the data collected from the provinces highly visited by international visitors and those regularly visited by local people can be compared and contrasted.

In general, Bangkok is considered the main data collection site because it is the capital city of Thailand and has the highest number of international visitors based on Table 2.1, so the density of English signs in Bangkok is higher than in the other provinces.

The background information about each province is provided in alphabetical order, namely 1) Ayutthaya, 2) Bangkok, 3) Chon Buri (Pattaya), 4) Sukhothai, and 5) Tak as follows:

Ayutthaya

Ayutthaya was the capital city of Thailand for 417 years between 1350 and 1767 (Klinchan, 2007). After that, the capital city was moved to Thonburi, which is now part of Bangkok, and then to Bangkok (Klinchan, 2007).

Ayutthaya is famous for its temples and pagodas. From December 1991 onward, the ancient city part has been on the list of UNESCO World Heritage (Klinchan, 2007). Due to its long history as a capital city, Ayutthaya is full of temples, which used to be regarded as the centre of communities, and there are

many historical stories associated with the temples and other attractions (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2014a).

During the past few years, floating markets in Ayutthaya have also become popular among tourists, especially local visitors. One of the most lively and well-known floating markets is called ‘Ayothaya Floating Market’. This market has become popular due to the availability of inexpensive handicrafts, and various kinds of food and beverages at reasonable prices (Ayothaya Market, 2012).

Ayutthaya is about 90 kilometres north of Bangkok (Klinchan, 2007). The province can be reached by car, coach, train and boat (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2014a).

Data collection sites:

I first went to collect my data from Wat Yai Chai Monkol, which is one of the most famous temples in Ayutthaya and in Thailand. This temple is regarded as one of the must-visit places for international tourists in Ayutthaya because it contains pagodas, and there is history attached to the place. Then, I went to the Ayothaya Floating Market or Sien Chang Floating Market for further data collection as it is increasingly popular and considered among Thai people as a ‘hip’ market (Ayothaya Market, 2012). To Thai people, ‘hip’ is a loanword and a slang word, which means ‘trendy’ or ‘fashionable’.

Bangkok

Bangkok is the current capital city of Thailand, and is regarded as one of the most popular province visited by international tourists and as the Thai centre of finance, business and education (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2014a). Furthermore, the main airport of the country, Suvarnabhumi International Airport, is known as one of the main aviation hubs in Asia (Suvarnabhumi Airport, 2014). Some passengers, such as those who take a flight from London to Taipei by EVA airways and vice versa, have to transit or travel via this airport in order to travel to their final destination (Eva air, 2014). Some airlines allow their passengers to make stopover in Bangkok for up to a week without any additional cost by paying a small amount. ‘Suvarnabhumi Airport’s Railway Link’ or the ‘Airport’s Rail Link’,

makes it easier for travellers to commute from the airport to the city centre of Bangkok in less than 30 minutes (Bangkok Airport Train, 2014).

Bangkok can be easily reached by all kinds of transport including plane, train, boat, bus, and car (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2014a). Besides, it is rather convenient for visitors to travel around the city by public transports such as an elevated train network called the BTS Skytrain; an underground train service called the MRT; and public buses, boats, taxis and motorcycle taxis (Bangkok Mass Transit System Public Company Limited, 2014, Bangkok Metro Public Company Limited, 2014).

Data collection sites:

As regards the main province for data collection, I collected the data from different domains including shopping areas, historical places, and business areas where international companies are located. The data collected in the main shopping areas were from 1) Platinum Mall, 2) Pinklow, 3) The Circle, 4) K Village, and 5) Siam Square. In terms of historical places, the data were gathered from one of the main tourist attractions of Thailand, 6) the Grand Palace. In addition, for the business areas, the data collection took place in the city centre, namely 7) Sathorn and Ploenchit and 8) Victory Monument.

Chon Buri (Pattaya District)

Chon Buri is one of the main industrial cities of Thailand (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2014a), but its most well-known tourist district is called Pattaya, which seems to be both locally and internationally famous among travellers due to its location on the east coast of the Gulf of Thailand (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2014b).

Pattaya, which is known among foreign tourist as 'Pattaya City', is a self-administrating municipality. Therefore, some regulations and rules of Pattaya City are different from other parts of the country or even Chon Buri. Pattaya City covers the areas of 4 sub-districts in Chon Buri, namely 1) Nong Prue, 2) Na Kluea, and parts of 3) Huai Yai, and 4) Nong Pla Lai (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2014b).

There are many people from overseas who reside in Pattaya because of their Thai spouse or doing business.

Pattaya appears to be famous and infamous for its vibrant nightlife and sex industry (Bishop and Robinson, 1998). Although prostitutes and sex services are illegal in Thailand, according to Thai laws (Ministry of Justice of Thailand, 2013), they can still be found in some massage parlours and spas, which can generally be found throughout the country. Some massage parlours are designed to be just a front for prostitution (Bishop and Robinson, 1998). Even though they are not obviously advertised, tourists and visitors know about the services by word of mouth. Pattaya can be reached by car and bus (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2014a). It takes about 2-3 hours by car or bus from Bangkok.

Data collection sites:

The data were gathered from the city centre of Pattaya and Pattaya's Floating Market.

Sukhothai

Sukhothai used to be the capital city of Thailand before Ayutthaya and Bangkok (Klinchan, 2007). This province is known as the first capital of the Kingdom of Siam. It has been on the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites due to its historical towns that contain a number of fine monuments (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2014). The province is located in the northern part of Thailand. It is approximately 427 kilometres away from Bangkok (Klinchan, 2007). Sukhothai can be reached by car, bus, train and plane, but the airport is rather far away from the town centre (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2014a).

Data collection site:

The data were gathered from Sukhothai Historical Park, which is the main attraction of the province (Klinchan, 2007).

Tak

Tak is a province in the north-western part of Thailand. It shares a land border with the Shan State of Myanmar (Ministry of Tourism and Sports of

Thailand, 2014). It is the second biggest city (after Chiang Mai) among the 16 provinces in the northern region (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2014a).

Tak was chosen because of its mixture of residents, who are Burmese and Thai. Therefore, the influence of the Myanmar language upon English in the areas is expected.

Tak is about 426 kilometres away from Bangkok (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2014a). It took me about 6 hours on a van from Bangkok to Tak. The main attractions in this province are the Bhumibol Dam, the main electric dam of Thailand, Tee Lau Sue waterfall, Rimmoei Market and Muser Market (Klinchan, 2007). Tak can be reached by car, coach, train and plane (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2014a).

Data collection sites:

The data were collected from the Bhumibol Dam, Rimmei Market, and Maesot – the sub-district that shares a land border with Myanmar.

2.4 Related Literature

In addition to the theoretical frameworks about World Englishes, English as a lingua franca and linguistic landscape, there are related frameworks to be used in the analysis as follows:

2.4.1 Intercultural Communication

According to Hua (2011: 1), intercultural communication “is concerned with how people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds interact with each other, and what impact such interactions have on group relations, as well as individual’s identity, attitudes and behavior.”

It can also be interchangeably used with the term ‘cross-cultural communication’ (Gudykunst, 2003). For Scollon and Scollon (2001), the term ‘Interdiscourse Communication’ is more preferable than the term ‘Intercultural Communication’. Scollon and Scollon (2001: xii) explain that interdiscourse communication covers “the entire range of communications across boundaries of

groups or discourse systems from the most inclusive of those groups, cultural groups, to the communications which take place between men and women or between colleagues who have been born into different generations.”

Based on the definitions by Hua (2011) and Scollon and Scollon (2001), it can be interpreted that intercultural communication takes place daily in every place ranging from small units such as a family with members from different generations, to large units such as workplaces, schools, restaurants, and tourist attractions.

In order to effectively communicate across cultures, Carté and Fox (2008) suggest that in addition to knowing the interlocutor’s place, your place also needs to be known. For example, in business, you should thoroughly know about the working system, individuals, and hierarchy in your company before getting people to get involved with communication with people from another company. Based on Carté and Fox’s (2008) point of view, it can be applied to regular intercultural communication that to be successful in communicating with others from different cultures, people need to have expert knowledge of their own culture.

In recent years, intercultural communication has played a role in anthropology, linguistics, cultural studies and international business, as well as other cultural-related areas, as the sufficient understanding of intercultural issues can help to reduce miscommunication problems between/ among people from different cultural backgrounds (Knapp et al., 1987, Carté and Fox, 2008). The awareness of people’s various cultures can lead to better communication, success in international business meetings and negotiations, and fewer conflicts among different groups of people both domestically and internationally (McLaren, 1998).

To understand differences among various cultures, Holliday (2011: 197) suggests “the notion of ‘small’ culture as an alternative to what has become the default notion of ‘large’ culture in applied linguistics and much social science and popular usage’. Holliday (2011) mentions that small cultures are not literally smaller in terms of ethnic, national or international cultures but they symbolically represent another different paradigm to look at cohesive social groupings. A small culture is different from a large culture in that it is dynamic, can be operated in changing circumstances and also allows group members to make sense of and understand what happens within those circumstances (Holliday, 2011: 205).

Holliday (2011: 205) further explains that “when a researcher looks at an unfamiliar social grouping, it can be said to have a small culture when there is a discernible set of behaviours and understandings connected with group cohesion.” Based on the explanation about the nature of small cultures, the study of English used on signs in tourist attractions in Thailand can also be regarded as a small culture, as the language is particularly used by specific groups of people involved with tourist attractions aimed towards an international audience.

In relation to intercultural communication, this work pays attention to 1) the way Thai people communicate with people from different countries, with different cultures, through the use of English on signs as a medium and 2) how international visitors perceive the messages from Thai people via signs.

The focus on how overseas tourists perceive the Thai English messages on signs can be expanded to link with discourse analysis, especially in terms of discourse across cultures (Smith, 1987). Hua (2011: 4) agrees that various aspects of the language used can be different from one culture to another as well as from one language to another.

Hua’s (2011) suggestion can be adopted towards this research, as one of the research aims is to find out about the main characteristics of English used in Thai contexts. Apart from looking at messages, other factors such as colour usage, and the presentation and location of signs should also be taken into account. Hence, this can be linked with multimodality and discourse analysis.

2.4.2 Multimodality and Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis and multimodality are also mentioned in some studies into signs (Scollon and Scollon, 2003, Curtin, 2009, Malinowski, 2009). Regarding the relationship between signs and multimodality, Scollon and Scollon (2003: vii) claim that “...all signs must be located in the material world to exist. Information and knowledge must be represented by a system of signs- icon, symbols, and indexes; information and knowledge cannot have any independent existence”. It can be interpreted that in a study of signs, the surrounding contexts must be included so that a correct interpretation of what is displayed on the signs can be made.

Jewitt (2009: 1) explains that “multimodality approaches representation, communication and interaction as something more than language”. This definition is associated with the idea of indexicality of language by Scollon and Scollon (2003: ix), who further explain that “we speak and listen, write and read not only *about the world* but *in the world*, and much of what we understand depends on exactly where we and the language are located in the world.” To Scollon and Scollon (2003), where the language is placed is important, as different locations of the same message can be interpreted differently. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001: 4) agree that when working with signs, the multimodal resources available in a culture should be taken into account, as they can “make meanings in any and every sign, at every level and in any mode”.

Paltridge (2006: 2) adds that discourse analysis “looks at patterns of language across texts and considers the relationship between language and the social and cultural contexts in which it is used”. It can be seen that discourse analysis and multimodality share a common ground in terms of taking the social and cultural contexts surrounding a text or a language studied into account. Discourse studies can be done from many aspects, with various approaches and in different styles. For example, there are many studies into spoken discourse as well as written discourse, and some studies look at the connection between speech and writing (Harris, 1952).

Scollon and Scollon (2003) point out that *geosemiotics*, or “the study of the social meaning of the material placement of signs and discourses and of our actions in the material world,” have to be included for a comprehensive analysis (Scollon and Scollon, 2003: 2).

Intercultural communication, discourse analysis and multimodality can help participants of this research to understand the meanings of Thai English signs better because they have to bring contexts into account.

This chapter has presented the definitions of English/ Englishes followed by the literature on global English and linguistic landscape, as well as related literature. The next chapter discusses the research methods and points out the features of English as a lingua franca on signs in tourist domains in Thailand along with the features of the Thai linguistic landscape

Chapter 3 Research Methodology and the Main Characteristics of English Used on Signs in Tourist Domains in Thailand

This chapter is divided into five parts. The first part gives some background on research paradigms. The second part discusses the research methods used in this thesis and provides some information about the research participants. The third part focuses on the patterns of English as a lingua franca (ELF) from preceding literature. Next, the fourth part presents the findings about the patterns of English as a lingua franca found on signs in Thai tourist domains. Finally, the last section presents the features of linguistic landscape in Thai tourist domains.

3.1 Research Paradigms

When conducting a piece of research, a researcher should take the issues of research methodology and analytical approaches into account because different methods can lead to different results although the same set of data is used for the analysis (Dörnyei, 2007: 19) . This section discusses the literature into quantitative and qualitative paradigms as well as mixed methods or a combination of the two original paradigms.

3.1.1 Quantitative Paradigm

The quantitative paradigm involves the applications of certain statistics and some kinds of significance testing and primarily presents the result in numerical forms (Dörnyei, 2007). However, it is not necessary for a piece of quantitative research to use complicated statistics, but it relates to a concern of quantity and the process of enumerative induction (Blaxter et al., 2006, Brannen, 1992, Welman et al., 2005). Inferential statistics are used as means for identifying particular characteristics of the sample population (Brannen, 1992: 5).

The quantitative paradigm has been used in many pieces of scientific research. Standard tools for quantitative data collection are mainly questionnaires, and statistical software, such as SPSS, is used for data analysis and results (Dörnyei,

2007: 25). For quantitative researchers, after the data have been collected, they must be transformed into numerical forms (Dörnyei, 2007). An analysis should be mathematically-based, and results should be expressed in numbers and manipulated mathematically in order to explain a phenomenon (Creswell, 2013).

Quantitative research can be done in four main forms, namely survey research, correlational research, experimental research and causal-comparative research (Creswell, 2013). However, in Applied Linguistics, survey research seems to be more popular than any other form (Dörnyei, 2007). Consequently, a survey is used as a means for data collection in this research.

3.1.2 Qualitative Paradigm

Qualitative research, on the other hand, does not give priority to numerical results. It aims to gain in-depth understanding of human behaviour and find out the reason why it has been done, and it may focus on just only a small number of participant units rather than numerous ones (Barbour, 2008).

With the intention of understanding the world in its actual existence, qualitative methods include a range of techniques including participant observation, focus groups, case studies, narratives, intensive interviewing and ethnography (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Therefore, researchers who employ qualitative methods should be able to explore a wide array of dimensions of the social world and have more understanding, experiences and imagining towards research participants than those relying on quantitative ones (Flick, 2006, Mason, 2002).

In recent years, qualitative techniques have been applied to research in different disciplines such as, sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, and also applied linguistics (Flick, 2006). Although ethnography is widely used as part of qualitative methods for data collection; it is still hard to define (Taylor, 2002).

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007: 1) acknowledge that the term ethnography appears to overlap with the term qualitative research. Hammersley (1994: 1-2) defines the characteristics of ethnography as follows:

- (a) It is concerned with analysis of empirical data that are systematically selected for the purpose.

- (b) Those data come from ‘real world’ contexts, rather than being produced under experimental conditions created by the researcher.
- (c) Data are gathered from a range of sources, but observation and/ or relatively informal conversations are usually the main ones.
- (d) The approach to data collection is ‘unstructured’, in the sense that it does not involve following through a detailed plan set up at the beginning; nor are the categories used for interpreting what people say and do pre-given or fixed.
- (e) The focus is a single setting or group, of relatively small scale; or a small number of these. In life history research the focus may even be a single individual.
- (f) The analysis of the data involves interpretation of the meanings and functions of human actions and mainly takes the form of verbal descriptions and explanations, with quantification and statistical analysis playing a subordinate role at most.

Regarding the definition by Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), this research is ethnographic-based because the main data (signs) are located in the real world contexts (tourist attractions). The analysis also comes from a range of sources including observations and in-depth interviews with research participants.

3.1.3 Mixed Research Paradigm

Apart from the two research paradigms, the third research paradigm, so-called mixed research paradigm, which uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches has also increased in popularity in recent years (Johnson et al., 2007). Dörnyei (2007: 24) explains that “mixed methods research involves different combinations of qualitative and quantitative research either at the data collection or at the analysis levels.” The combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods together should allow researchers to develop analysis that can provide richer data (Denscombe, 2010). This research applies the mixed research paradigm. More details about the research methods used in the research can be found in Section 3.2 below.

3.2 Research Methods

This piece of research deploys the mixed research paradigms because there is still no most efficient methodology for English as a lingua franca and linguistic landscape research yet (Gorter, 2006). Hence, at this stage, the mixed research approach is the most suitable one as it allows the process of triangulation or “the

combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon" to take place (Denzin, 1978: 291). In this research, statistical results, in-depth interviews with participants and researcher's observations of the contexts are put together. Hence, the findings should be more reliable than using just quantitative or qualitative methods.

Regarding quantitative methods, the numerical results of this thesis are obtained from an online questionnaire about the use of English on signs in tourist domains in Thailand. Participants' responses are analysed for significant values by means of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software package. SPSS is chosen because it is considered one of the most widely used programmes for statistical analysis (Dörnyei, 2007, Field, 2013). For this research project, descriptive statistics (frequencies) and bivariate statistics (means, t-test and ANOVA) are used to obtain the statistical results.

To seek rational explanations for the statistical results, in-depth interviews with 51 participants are conducted and used as background information for reporting the findings. During the interviews, *Think Aloud Protocol* involving participants speaking out what is in their mind while performing a task is employed (Bowles, 2010). In this case, the interviewee are asked to do the questionnaire again and speak what is in their mind as the main part of their interviews. They are asked to explain the reason why they have chosen a particular number on the 6-point Likert scale about the intelligibility of Thai English and attitudes towards Thai English mistakes on signs and to give some comments and share their opinions about the Thai English mistakes on signs in tourist domains.

3.2.1 Participants

As this research involves human participants, ethical approval was earned from the research ethics committee of the School of English, The University of Nottingham for both the online questionnaire and participant interviews in the year 2013 (see Appendix 6).

The questionnaire is available in English for international participants and in Thai for Thai participants. Regarding consent forms, for the online questionnaire, participants are asked to tick boxes on the online consent form (see Appendix 7) to

show that they are willing to participate in the research. Regarding the in-depth interviews, interviewees are asked to read and sign the consent form (see Appendix 8) before the interview is conducted.

Regarding the relationship with the participants, I first started posting the link to my questionnaire on my Facebook page to ask my friends to participate in the survey. So, at first, I initially got around 80 participants. Then I sent a personal message to nearly 100 friends and asked them to pass the link on to their colleagues and international friends. In addition, I also posted the link on many social media sites, such as web boards, random Facebook pages and some websites that had potential participants. Finally, the number of both international and Thai participants rose up to over 1,000 people in total. It means that I actually know less than 10% of the participants. For the rest of them, they could be friends or colleagues of my friends, or they could be random people who were willing to participate in the research. In total, the survey was completed by 456 international respondents from 56 countries (see Appendix 4).

In terms of the requirements for being my research participant, apart from being over 18 years old as stated in Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics (The University of Nottingham, 2013), there is no other criteria because in reality anybody can be a tourist to Thailand. In addition, it is assumed that the more respondents participated in the questionnaire, the more reliable the results would be (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, too many criteria for selecting participants can result in a low number of respondents. More detailed information about participant recruitment can be found in Chapter 4 (Section 4.4.1 Data Collection and Section 4.4.2 Research Participants).

To recruit participants for the in-depth interviews, in the final part of the online questionnaire, I asked participants to leave their name and email or phone number if they could help to be an interviewee. After having the list of those willing to be interviewed, I contacted them to arrange an interview. Finally, I interviewed 29 international participants and 21 Thai participants face-to-face or via Skype. More information about the interviewed participants can be found in Chapter 4 (Section 4.4.2 Research participants). Because I had questionnaire respondents and interviewees from all over the world, in general, this should more or less help to

voice international tourists' opinions toward Thai English messages on signs in Thailand.

3.3 Features of English as a Lingua Franca

In the previous studies, there are two broad categories of English as a lingua franca, namely 1) grammatical features and 2) semantic features, which is interchangeably called lexico-semantic features (Bamiro, 1991, Cogo and Dewey, 2012, Seidlhofer, 2004). This section discusses the patterns of English as a lingua franca and World Englishes in comparison with the patterns of Thai English found on signs in Thai tourist domains.

3.3.1 Grammatical Features

The grammatical features of Thai English appear to be more easily noticed than the semantic/ lexico-semantic features of Thai English because grammatical forms and rules are fixed and documented (Ngampramuan, 2009). This section presents the features of English as a lingua franca from two corpuses in comparison with grammatical features of Thai English.

3.3.1.1 Patterns of ELF from VOICE

Seidlhofer (2004: 220) points out eight features of English as a lingua franca based on data from the Vienna Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE), which collects data about the spoken English language of non-native speakers as follows:

- 1) *Dropping the third person present tense –S*
- 2) *Confusing the relative pronouns who and which*
- 3) *Omitting definite and indefinite articles* where they are obligatory in ENL: (English as a Native Language) and inserting them where they do not occur in ENL
- 4) *Failing to use correct forms* in tag questions (e.g. isn't it? or not? instead of shouldn't they?)

- 5) *Inserting redundant prepositions*, as in ‘We have to study about...’
- 6) *Overusing certain verbs* of high semantic generality, such as *do, have, make, put* and *take*
- 7) *Replacing infinitive-constructions* with that-clauses, as in ‘I want that...’
- 8) *Overdoing explicitness*, such as ‘black color’ rather than just ‘black’

Common Patterns between ELF from VOICE and Thai English on Signs

In comparison with Seidlhofer’s (2004) categories, this research found that Thai English on signs shared three similar characteristics with the ELF patterns from VOICE as follows:

- 1) The first one is *omitting definite and indefinite articles*. However, in Thai English, the ‘omitting’ case also happens to prepositions and nouns.
- 2) The second one is *inserting redundant prepositions*. But, in Thai English, both inserting and omitting prepositions can be found.
- 3) The last one is *overdoing explicitness*. In Thai English, this case mainly occurs because of a direct translation or an attempt to keep every Thai word when Thai users of English translate a message from Thai into English.

Because the language used on signs is rather short, direct and uncomplicated (Ko, 2013), cases of relative pronoun confusion, question tags and *that* clauses are not regularly found.

3.3.1.2 Patterns of Innovation in ELF lexicogrammar

Cogo and Dewey (2012) identify patterns of innovation in English as a lingua franca, so-called lexicogrammar by comparing the data from two spoken corpora from their PhD research projects in 2007.

Cogo and Dewey (2012) agree that their findings about the patterns of ELF are rather similar to Seidlhofer’s (2004). However, Cogo and Dewey (2012) add new labels for the ELF categories and call them “*patterns of innovation in ELF lexicogrammar*”. The ELF lexicogrammar patterns are defined as follows:

- 1) *3rd person singular zero* or the occurrence of a present simple verb in 3rd person singular with zero marked in place of the –S morpheme

In addition to being found in this work, the pattern of 3rd person singular zero can also be found in other Englishes such as Malaysian English, Singaporean English and Hong Kong English under the term ‘zero copula’ (Gisborne, 2011, Gupta, 2010, Tam and Weiss, 2004).

- 2) *Prepositions*, such as *different to* instead of *different from*
- 3) *Collocations*, especially the cases of the verbs *do*, *make* and *take*

It is suggested that “the way words combine with each other in ELF to form collocations and fixed expression can also be regarded as innovative (Cogo and Dewey, 2012:70).”

- 4) *Relative pronouns*, especially the case of *who*, *which*

The use of *who* and *which* in both ELF corpuses appear to be more problematic than other relative pronouns as they differ markedly from established norms (Cogo and Dewey, 2012).

Common patterns between Innovation in ELF Lexicogrammar and Thai English

Thai English shares two patterns, namely prepositions and collocations with the patterns of innovation in ELF lexicogrammar identified by Cogo and Dewey (2012). In both cases, this could be resulted from direct translations because in Thai, many verbs collocate with different prepositions in Thai than in English. For example, in Thai language, Thai people *spend* money *for* food not *on* food, so Thai learners of English at the beginner level tend to use *for* with spend rather than *on*.

Another one that is often misused by Thai people is ‘take care’. In Thai, ‘take care’ is a loanword. Although having a Thai phrase ‘ดูแลตัวเอง’, Thai people still prefer using the loanword ‘เทคแคร์’ which is also pronounced as ‘take-care’ in Thai. Therefore, when Thai people use the phrasal verb ‘take care of’ in English, in both written and spoken language, it is commonly found that ‘of’ is often omitted due to

their familiarity to the loanword ‘เทแคร์’. An example of the omission of a preposition can be found in Figure 3.1.

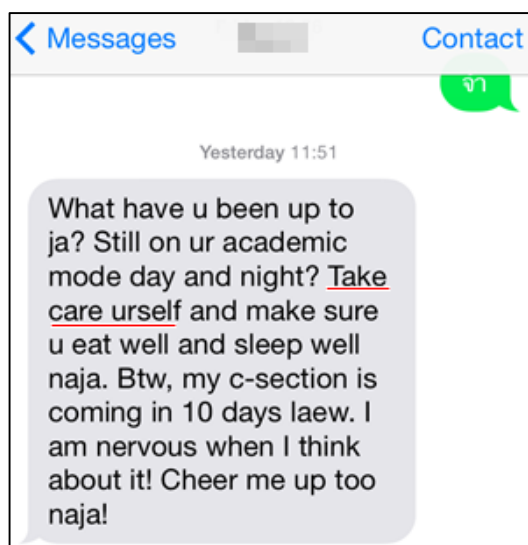


Figure 3.1 An example use of the omission of ‘of’ from ‘take care of’

In addition to the issues of collocations and prepositions, Figure 3.1 also represents the case of the participles. Some Thai users of English add particles at the end of some English phrases and sentences. As mentioned in Chapter 2, particles do not contain any meaning but give interlocutors the sound of politeness (Becker, 1995). These particles are sometimes used to show unity/ uniqueness of Thai people through the use of English (Seargeant et al., 2012).

The English proficiency of the writer of the message in Figure 3.1 is considered high based on her TOEFL score. However, it can be seen that the particles ‘ja’ and ‘naja’ and a Thai transliterated word ‘laew’, which means ‘already’ in English were used throughout the message. This implies that when using English in a casual conversation, despite a high English proficiency, a Thai user of English might not be aware of grammatical rules, especially when the other interlocutor is also a Thai person (Seargeant et al., 2012, Watkhaolarm, 2005).

Based on the features of ELF (Seidlhofer, 2004) and the patterns of innovative in ELF (Cogo and Dewey, 2012), although Thai English shares some common characteristics with the patterns from the two studies, there are still some

other distinctive features only found in Thai English, which will be later on presented in Section 3.4 of this chapter.

3.3.2 Lexico-Semantic Features

Lexico-semantics refers to “the relationship between the lexicon of a language and the various possible semantic categories created by the human mind (Quijada, 2011).” Lexico-semantic features involve understanding the meanings of larger chunks of meanings of words rather than understanding the meanings based on individual lexical items (Robert, 2014). Therefore, ELF with lexico-semantic features on signs involves interpretation for intended meanings beyond the words/lexical items displayed on signs.

As there are not many studies mentioning the categories of lexico-semantic features of English as a lingua franca/ World Englishes, this research takes the categories of lexico-semantics from the study of Bamiro (1991) about Nigerian English as one of the frameworks to analyse lexico-semantic features of Thai English on signs.

Bamiro (1991: 49-57) identifies the patterns of lexico-semantic features of Nigerian English as follows:

- 1) *Loanshift* or “the meaning of a word or group of words in the base language is extended to cover a new concept”
- 2) *Semantic underdifferentiation* or the ignorance of emotive distinctions between certain lexical items.
- 3) *Lexico-semantic duplication and redundancy* or “the duplication of lexical items either having identity of reference or belonging to the same semantic field, or the use of a superfluous modifier for emphasis”
- 4) *Ellipsis* or the omission of a lexical item
- 5) *Conversion* or “the deliberate transfer of a word from one part of speech to another without any change in its form”
- 6) *Clipping* or the subtraction of one or more syllables from a word
- 7) *Acronyms* or “words formed from the initial letters”
- 8) *Translation equivalents* including a) the interference of features of a foreign language to English, b) the inadequate exposure of non-native speakers to

English, c) the constant reflexification of the non-native speakers' mother tongues

- 9) *Analogical creation* or "the formation of new words on the basis of partial likeness or agreement in form or in sense with already existing words"
- 10) *Coinage* or a process that helps to fashion words that convey new cognitive and sociolinguistic reality peculiar to the environment in the non-native speaking country

Common Patterns between Lexico-Semantic Features of Nigerian English and Thai English on Signs

Although Nigeria is in the Outer Circle where English is used as one of the official languages, and Thailand is the Expanding Circle where English is a foreign language (Kachru, 1989), Thai English on signs appears to share eight patterns (out of ten) with Nigerian English. The similar lexico-semantic patterns shared between Thai English and Nigerian English are as follows:

- 1) *Loanshift* – In Thai, there are many loanwords from English, which are extended to cover a new concept. (see Figure 3.28).
- 2) *Lexico-semantic duplication and redundancy* – When Thai people use English, there can be some redundancy when using some particular words because of the influence of Thai language on English (Ngampramuan, 2009). For example, some Thai people might say 'The shirt is in red colour' instead of 'The shirt is in red.'
- 3) *Ellipsis* – The case of ellipsis can regularly be found in the case of preposition. In Thai, prepositions are less used than in English (Becker, 1995). Therefore, when Thai speakers use English, they may forget to include a preposition that comes with particular words (see Figure 3.22).
- 4) *Conversion* –As there are no verb conjugation and noun inflection in Thai language (Becker, 1995), the use of words with incorrect parts of speech can be found in both written and spoken English of Thai speakers (see Figure 3.5). However, in this research, the term 'parts of speech' will be used as it will be clearer and easier for non-linguistic readers to understand the term.
- 5) *Acronyms* – Some acronyms specifically used in Thai society can be found on signs across the country, too (see Figure 3.38).

- 6) *Translation equivalents* – Because of cultural differences and the influence of the first language, many Thai users of English find it difficult to translate Thai messages into English because there are some problems with translation equivalents (Seargeant et al., 2012) (see Figure 3.23 and Figure 3.24).
- 7) *Analogical creation* – Thai users of English may sometimes combine one word with another word to make a new word with a new part of speech (see Figure 3.45)
- 8) *Coinage* – Even in their own language, Thai people love to combine two words to make a new word. Therefore, this preference also influences the way Thai people use English (see Figure 3.46).

Although the eight common patterns are regarded as lexico-semantic features (Bamiro, 1991), the two of the patterns, namely *ellipsis* and *conversion* or parts of speech are more suitable to be under grammatical features because audience can obviously see that a word is missing or a wrong part of speech has been used. Hence, in this research, these two categories belong to grammatical features instead of lexico-semantic features.

Apart from these eight patterns, Thai English appears to have another unique pattern called *Thainess*, which is formed by different factors related to Thai people and Thai society (Huebner, 2006, Seargeant et al., 2012, Watkhaolarm, 2005). More details about Thainess on signs can be found in Section 3.4.2.

In the next section, based on the previous studies about patterns of English as a lingua franca and World Englishes (Bamiro, 1991, Cogo and Dewey, 2012, Seidlhofer, 2004), the categories of Thai English and their subcategories that are most frequently found on signs in Thailand are presented.

3.4 Features of Thai English on Signs in Tourist Domains (Findings)

This sections focuses on the features of the languages found on signs in tourist domains in Thailand. The first part gives information about the languages on signs. The second part mentions the number of Thai English signs. The third part

presents the categories of Thai English grammatical features and is followed by the fourth part, which is about the categories of Thai English lexico-semantic features.

3.4.1 Languages Used on Signs in Tourist Domains

Signs in tourist domains in this research cover all signs that were salient and addressed at tourists in tourist attractions and public transport hubs. Across 40 tourist places in five provinces, namely 1) Ayutthaya, 2) Bangkok, 3) Chon Buri, 4) Sukhothai, and 5) Tak, 5,197 photos of signs were taken and categorised into three main groups, namely 1) monolingual, 2) bilingual, and 3) multilingual signs.

A monolingual sign refers to a sign that contains one language, which can be either Thai (see Figure 3.2) or English (see Figure 3.3). A bilingual sign refers to a sign that displays two languages, which can be Thai and English (see Figure 3.4) or English and another language (see Figure 3.5 and Figure 3.6). A multilingual sign refers to a sign that contains more than two languages (see Figure 3.7). In the cases of signs containing English and another language, the foreign languages found are Chinese, Arabic, Japanese, French, German, and Russian.

Table 3.1 The number of signs and displayed languages in five Thai provinces

	<i>Monolingual</i>		<i>Bilingual</i>		<i>Multilingual</i>	Total
	Thai	English	Thai & English	English & another		
Ayutthaya	87	73	570	28	12	770
Bangkok	42	442	1827	64	57	2432
Chon Buri	34	119	467	59	56	735
Sukhothai	65	75	382	18	28	568
Tak	113	34	355	146	44	692
	341	743	3601	315	197	5197

According to Table 3.1, it can be seen that the number of bilingual signs ($n = 3,916$) is more than the number of other kinds of signs. As the data was collected from tourist attractions, it can be seen that there are more monolingual English signs ($n = 743$) than Thai signs ($n = 341$). However, most of the monolingual English signs come in a very short form, such as entrance, exit, pull and toilets.

In terms of bilingual signs, most of the signs in this group contain Thai and English (n = 3601). However, some bilingual signs contain English and another language (n = 315), namely Arabic, Japanese, Chinese, Turkish, Russian, Burmese and Vietnamese. Not many multilingual signs (n = 197) were found, but if there is one, it is usually found near customs informing tourists about the VAT refund or near a public telephone booth informing tourists how to make an international call back to their home country.



Figure 3.2 A monolingual Thai sign



Figure 3.3 A monolingual English sign



Figure 3.4 A bilingual Thai & English sign



Figure 3.5 A bilingual English & another language sign (English & Chinese)



Figure 3. 6 A bilingual English & Burmese sign



Figure 3.7 A multilingual sign (English, Japanese, and Chinese)

3.4.2 The Number of Thai English on Signs in Tourist Domains

Out of 5,197 signs from 40 tourist attractions, there are 4,856 signs or 93% of all signs containing English language/ messages, and 1,828 signs containing Thai English features, accounting for 35.2% of all signs and 37.6% of the signs with English messages.

Table 3.2 The number of Thai English signs in tourist domains

Languages	No. of signs	Thai English
English	743 (100%)	204 (27.5%)
Thai & English	3601 (100%)	1576 (43.8%)
English & another	315 (100%)	42 (13.3%)
Multilingual	197 (100%)	6 (3%)
Total	4856	1828

Table 3.2 shows that bilingual Thai and English signs have the highest percentage of Thai English features ($n = 1576$ or 43.6%). This group of signs contains more Thai English features than other groups because it covers the issues of Thainess and translations from Thai into English and vice versa. As for the group of signs containing English and another language, only 3% ($n = 6$) of all multilingual signs contain Thai English, and these signs mainly belong to international companies. It is possible that there could be chances that these signs may also be used in other countries in addition to Thailand. Hence, the writers of the signs could be native speakers or those who are not Thais.

The same assumption about the writers of the signs may also explain the case of bilingual English and another language signs and monolingual English signs because the signs in these groups mainly belong to non-Thai companies/ airlines. Therefore, many signs are standard signs of those companies that are used worldwide. Based on the data available, it could be possible that those English and another language signs or monolingual English signs containing Thai English features ($n = 42$ or 13.3%) are written by a Thai local staff (see Figure 3.8).



Figure 3.8 A bilingual English and Japanese sign containing Thai English features

This section has mentioned the amount of Thai English on signs in percentage and shown that bilingual Thai English signs contain the highest number of Thai English features. In the next section, the categories of Thai English are discussed based on grammatical features (five sub-categories) and lexico-semantic features (four sub-categories).

3.4.3 Grammatical Features

Based on the signs in tourist domains in Thailand, Thai English under grammatical features can be commonly found in five patterns/ categories, namely 1) misspelling, 2) parts of speech (conversion), 3) inflection, 4) punctuation marks, spacing and capitalisation and 5) ellipsis.

3.4.3.1 Misspelling

There five minor subcategories of misspelling as follows:

- 1) *homophone* referring to words that sound similar but have different spelling and meanings (see Figure 3.9)
- 2) *typing error* (see Figure 3.10 and Figure 3.15)
- 3) *minimal pair* or pairs of words or phrases which are different from each other in one sound, especially ‘l’ vs. ‘r’ sound (see Figure 3.11)



Figure 3.9 Homophone: ‘mine’ instead of ‘mind’



Figure 3.10 Typing error: ‘Cdean’ instead of ‘Clean’



Figure 3.11 Minimal pair: ‘Lacks’ instead of ‘Racks’

3.4.3.2 Parts of Speech

Parts of speech or conversion refers to “the deliberate transfer of a word from one part of speech to another without any change in its form” (Bamiro, 1991). There is no verb conjugation in Thai language and there are many cases in which a noun, an adjective and an adverb share the same form (Becker, 1995). There are five minor subcategories under parts of speech as follows:

- 1) *using a noun instead of an adjective* (see Figure 3.12)
- 2) *using a noun instead of a verb* (see Figure 3.13)
- 3) *using a verb instead of a noun* (see Figure 3.14)
- 4) *overusing apostrophe 's' possessive* (see Figure 3.15)



Figure 3.12 Using a noun instead of an adjective: ‘drink’ instead of ‘drinking’



Figure 3.13 Using a noun instead of a verb: ‘apologies’ instead of ‘apologize’



Figure 3.14 Using a verb instead of a noun ‘apologise’ instead of ‘apology’ and wrong verb conjugation: ‘are’ instead of ‘is’



Figure 3.15 Overusing of apostrophe 's' possessive: 'women's changerooms' instead of 'female changing room' and a typing error of 'changing room'

3.4.3.3 Inflection

Inflection refers to the invariability of both nouns and verbs (Becker and Leemans, 2000). Under this category, the issues of verbs are mainly about *wrong verb conjugation* and *the use of wrong tenses* (Becker and Leemans, 2000). In Thai language, a verb shares the same form for present, past and future tenses because an adverb of time, e.g., today, yesterday, and tomorrow, is used in the sentence to indicate when the action happens (Becker, 1995).

Regarding the issues of nouns, there is no plural form in Thai language, but a number, e.g., two, five, and some, is used to state that there is more than one items. In addition, there is no differentiation between countable and mass nouns (Becker, 1995). Therefore, it is rather common that uncountable nouns are conjugated or the plural forms are omitted for plural nouns. There are five minor subcategories under inflection as follows:

- 1) *wrong verb conjugation* or the disagreement of subjects and verbs (also see Figure 3.14)
- 2) *wrong tense* (see Figure 3.16)
- 3) *using an active voice instead of a passive voice* (see Figure 3.17)
- 4) *redundancy of 'to'* (see Figure 3.18)
- 5) *using plural forms instead of singular forms* (see Figure 3.19)
- 6) *affixing plural markers to mass nouns* (see Figure 3.20)



Figure 3.16 Wrong tense: 'was controlled' instead of 'is controlled'



Figure 3.17 Using an active voice instead of a passive voice: 'Cannot be change' instead of 'Cannot be changed'



Figure 3.18 Redundancy of 'to': Do not 'to' photo instead of 'Do not take photo'



Figure 3.19 Using plural forms instead of singular forms: ‘Every pcs.’ instead of ‘Every pc./ piece’



Figure 3.20 Affixing plural markers to mass noun: ‘Foods’ instead of ‘food’

3.4.3.4 Punctuation Marks, Spacing, and Capitalisation

In Thai, instead of using a full stop to mark an ending of a sentence, spacing is alternatively used as an indication (Becker, 1995). Hence, it is not a surprise why Thai English has many run-on sentences. Besides, it can be regularly found that a few sentences are joined together without using any full stop between/ among sentences and with only one full stop appearing at the end of the last sentence.

In addition, capitalisation (upper case) does not exist in Thai language (Becker, 1995). Therefore, sometimes Thai users of English may randomly mix upper and lower cases together. On some occasions, the use of different cases is also for advertising or marketing purposes (Baker et al., 1986). There are six minor subcategories as follows:

- 1) *using one full stop at the end of a few clauses/ sentences* (see Figure 3.21)
- 2) *no punctuation mark although needed* (see Figure 3.22)

- 3) *Using a question mark (?) after a noun/ a phrase/ an affirmative sentence to form an interrogative sentence (see Figure 3.23)*
- 4) *making one word into two words (see Figure 3.24)*
- 5) *making two words into one word (see Figure 3.25)*
- 6) *mixing upper and lower cases (see Figure 3.26)*

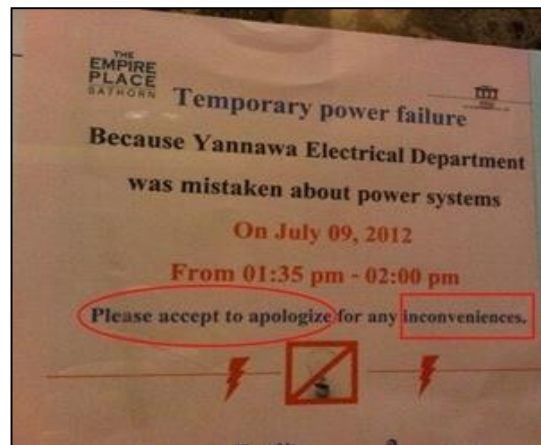


Figure 3.21 Using one full stop at the end of a few clauses/ sentences

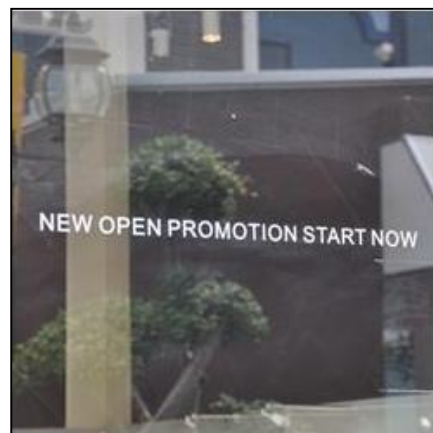


Figure 3.22 No punctuation mark although needed



Figure 3.23 Making one word into two words: 'water melon' instead of 'watermelon'



Figure 3.24 Making two words into one word: 'The penis' instead of 'The pen is'



Figure 3.25 Using a question mark (?) to form an interrogative sentence



Figure 3.26 Mixing upper and lower cases

3.4.3.5 Ellipsis

Ellipsis is the omission of lexical items, namely verbs, nouns, prepositions, and articles (Bamiro, 1991).

In the case of Thai English, the omission of articles is not remarkably found on signs in tourist domains in Thailand. This may be because the language used on signs is of specific domains, and the space is very limited. As long as the messages on the signs can be understood, it is unnecessary that the words conveying no meaning have to be included. It is rather common that in the case of limited space, articles are omitted (International Sign Association, 2007). There are three minor subcategories of Thai English ellipsis as follows:

- 1) *missing a verb* (see Figure 3.27)
- 2) *missing a noun* (see Figure 3.28)
- 3) *missing a preposition* (see Figure 3.29)



Figure 3.27 Missing a verb: Please 'use' next counter



Figure 3.28 Missing a noun: Thank you for disposing 'of waste' into the bin.



Figure 3.29 Missing a preposition: Don't sit down 'in' this area.

In addition to the five categories under grammatical features, there are four categories of Thai English under lexico-semantic features.

3.4.4 Lexico-Semantic Features

Under lexico-semantic features, there are four categories of Thai English on signs, namely translation, Thainess, word choice and creativity, and transliterations. Further information about each category can be found below.

3.4.4.1. Translation

The issues of translations appears to be one of the most frequently found in Thai English. Based on the different cultures and backgrounds of Thai translators, it might be difficult to find words that can convey exact meanings. This statement can be supported by Ko's (2013) statement that "public sign translation is a special domain of translation, as it involves dealing with linguistic, cultural and social features in both languages."

Wardhaugh (2006) reports that when talking about the same story in their own language and in a foreign language, one might be able to tell the same story and give the same information, but the flavours of the story through the use of language can be different.

Ko (2013) mentioned the three translation strategies in his study about Chinese signs, namely "1) literal translation, which attempts to translate every word even at the risk of producing an unclear message in English, 2) semi-literal and

semi-adaptive translation, which attempts to translate every word where possible and modifies those words or phrases that cannot be translated literally, and 3) free adaptation, which extensively modifies or omits the descriptive and/or figurative or figurative words or phrases.’

In this research, it appears that a number of signs prominently display translation problems in nine subcategories as follows:

- 1) *literal translation* or an attempt to translate every word even at the risk of producing an unclear message (Ko, 2013) . It can also be called a direct translation or word-by-word translation. (see Figure 3.30)
- 2) *poor translation* or an inability to convey the meaning from the original message to the translated one (see Figure 3.31)
- 3) *software translation* or a message that is translated by using the ‘Google Translate’ web page or translation software (see Figure 3.32)

In Thai language, there are many homonyms, homographs and polysemous words. Thai English signs are usually affected by the selection of wrong word choices by translation software, which can result in miscommunication between people who do not share the same first language but have to use English as a means for communication.

- 4) *different messages* between Thai and English translations – referring to signs having completely different messages between the Thai message and the English message (see Figure 3.33)
- 5) *word order* (an adjective comes after a noun it modifies) (see Figure 3.34)

As regards the translation of short phrases, this subcategory seems to be similar to the literal translation one because in Thai, an adjective always comes after a noun it modifies (Becker, 1995). Therefore, in the real situations, if a translator uses the literal translation technique, Thai English in the ‘word order’ category might sometimes overlap with those in the ‘literal translation’ category.

- 6) *loanshift* or ‘the meaning of a word or group of words in the base language is extended to cover a new concept’ (Bamiro, 1991: 49) (see Figure 3.35)
- 7) *ambiguity* or the production of an unclear meaning or a word that can confuse audience (see Figure 3.36)
- 8) *using a wrong fix phrase* (see Figure 3.37)

- 9) *codemixing* or a mixture of English and Thai in the same phrase/ sentence
- The mixture between Thai and English can come in the form of a personal Thai name and an English word/ some English words as well (Huebner, 2006). (see Figure 3.38)



Figure 3.30 Literal translation: 'Ice desserts ancient' instead of 'shaved ice'



Figure 3.31 Poor translation: No vehicles allowed



Figure 3.32 Google translation: Use exit 2 for motorcycle taxi service



Figure 3.33 Different messages between Thai and English: ‘Grilled pork’ in Thai but ‘BBQ pork’ in English



Figure 3.34 Word order: ‘test eyes’ instead of ‘eye test’



Figure 3.35 Loanshift: ‘easy money’ meaning ‘quick cash’



Figure 3.36 Ambiguity: 2 free 1 meaning 3 for 2 or 2 for 1?

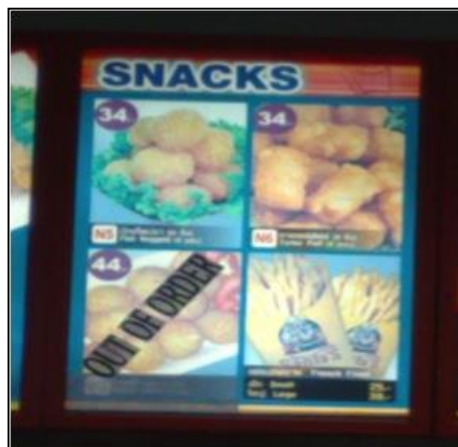


Figure 3.37 Using a wrong fix phrase: ‘out of order’ instead of ‘out of stock’



Figure 3.38 Codemixing between Thai and English

3.4.4.2 Thainess

Thainess in this case refers to the requirement of socio-cultural knowledge for international audiences to interpret the messages displayed on the signs in order to fully understand the message (Watkhaolarm, 2005). Signs with Thainess can be grammatically correct but may be difficult for audience to understand if they do not have enough socio-cultural background knowledge of Thailand and Thai society.

Thainess can be divided into seven subcategories as follows:

- 1) *monarchy/ royal family* as Thailand is reigned by a royal family (see Figure 3.39)
- 2) *main religion/ Buddhism* as the main religion of Thailand is Buddhism, e.g., reserved seats for monks (see Figure 3.40)
- 3) *belief and tradition* – There are some beliefs and traditions that are established in Thailand, which could be different from other countries (see Figure 3.41).
- 4) *specific career* – There are some specific careers that people do in Thailand and some countries in Asia but not in Europe, e.g., no hawking (see Figure 3.42)
- 5) *Thai food & tropical fruit* – There are some food and fruits available only in tropical countries including Thailand, such as durian (see Figure 3.43)

- 6) *stereotype of Thailand* or the Land of Smiles, e.g., fly and smile (see Figure 3.44)
- 7) *personification* or the assignment of qualities of a person to something that is not alive (Abrams, 1996) (see Figure 3.45)
- 8) *acronym* or ‘words formed from the initial letters’ (Bamiro, 1991), e.g., OTOP (see Figure 3.46)
- 9) *hierarchical social system*, e.g., reserved seats for elderly people, toilets for elderly people (see Figure 3.47)
- 10) *abbreviation for Thai currency* e.g. B or B. = Baht (Thai currency) (see Figure 3.48)



Figure 3.39 Monarchy/ royal family: ‘Due to Royal visit...’



Figure 3.40 Main religion/ Buddhism: ‘Waiting room for monks’

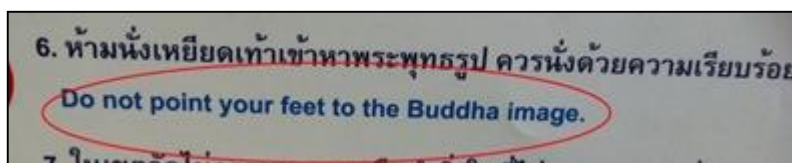


Figure 3.41 Beliefs and traditions: ‘Do not point your feet to the Buddha image’



Figure 3.42 Specific career: 'No street vending'



Figure 3.43 Thai food & tropical fruits: Durian



Figure 3.44 Stereotype: The land of smiles



Figure 3.45 Personification: Happy toilet



Figure 3.46 Acronym: OTOPT or One Tumbon One Product



Figure 3.47 Hierarchical social system: Seats for the elderly



Figure 3.48 (Currency) Abbreviation

3.4.4.3 Word choice and creativity

There are six minor subcategories under word choice and creativity.

The first three subcategories belong to the word choice group.

- 1) *one word in Thai but polywords in English/ polywords in Thai and polywords in English* (see Figure 3.49)
- 2) *the use of collocations* that are different from native speakers (see Figure 3.50)
- 3) *selection of a word/ words* – Sometimes one word in Thai has different meanings in English and vice versa (see Figure 3.51)

There are also three subcategories for the creativity group.

- 4) *changing an original spelling* – to make some particular words more interesting (see Figure 3.52)
- 5) *analogical creation* or the formation of new words based on partial likeness or agreement in form or in sense with already existing words (Bamiro, 1991: 57) (see Figure 3.53)
- 6) *coinage* or a process that helps to fashion words that convey new cognitive and sociolinguistic reality peculiar to the environment in the non-native speaking country (Bamiro, 1991: 57) (see Figure 3.54)



Figure 3.49 Polywords in Thai: ‘Pumpkin connection’ instead of ‘candied pumpkin’



Figure 3.50 Collocation: using ‘familiar’ to instead of ‘similar’ to



Figure 3.51 Selection of words: ‘fake goods’ instead of ‘counterfeit items’



Figure 3.52 Changing an original spelling: ‘pik mee’ instead of ‘pick me’



Figure 3.53 Analogical creation: the formation of a noun by combining the word ‘eat’ and the suffix ‘tion’



Figure 3.54 Coinage: The coinage of the words ‘love’ and ‘restaurant’

3.4.4.4 Transliteration

Transliteration is the conversion of Thai into the English or Roman script (Ngampramuan, 2009). Many signs around Thailand display transliterated words/ messages in Roman script. The original languages are usually Thai, especially for personal names and place names, Japanese, Korean and Pali. Due to the influence of Buddhism, signs transliterated from Pali can be particularly found in/ near the

temple areas. Transliterations in this research can be divided into three subcategories as follows:

- 1) *different spellings* between the same word (see Figure 3.55)
- 2) *mixing transliterated words* with English (see Figure 3.56)
- 3) *using all transliterated words* from Thai into Roman script (see Figure 3.57)



Figure 3.55 Different spellings between the same word: ‘Kao’ vs. ‘Kaew’



Figure 3.56 Mixing transliteration with English: ‘Pakeped fried’ instead of ‘fried duck beaks’



Figure 3.57 Using all transliterated words: ‘Moo Ban’ instead of ‘Village’

3.4.5 Frequency of Thai English Patterns Found on Signs

Regarding the nine patterns of Thai English on signs in Thai tourist domains in Section 3.4.4, to have a clearer idea regarding how frequently each Thai English pattern can be found on signs, Table 3.3 shows the frequency of the nine Thai English patterns found on signs in Thai tourist domains.

Table 3.3 Frequency of Thai English patterns found on signs

Features	Thai English Patterns	Signs	Percentage
Lexico-semantic	Thainess	410	22.43%
	Translation	355	19.42%
	Transliteration	281	15.37%
	Word choice and creativity	194	10.61%
Grammatical	Punctuation marks, spacing and capitalization	158	8.64%
	Inflection	140	7.66%
	Ellipsis	130	7.11%
	Parts of speech	82	4.49%
	Misspelling	78	4.27%
Total		1828	100%

According to Table 3.3, it can be seen that Thainess can be the most frequently found on signs ($n = 410$ or 22.43% of all Thai English signs). Thainess on signs mainly comes from temples and some historical places as these places involve some local beliefs and traditions. For instance, in Thai culture, feet are the lowest part of the body and considered dirty. Hence, to point the feet to a Buddha statue and any other respected images is considered improper and offensive (Klinchan, 2007). Therefore, in many temples, there is a sign telling overseas visitors not to point their feet to a Buddha statue or a respected image (see Figure 3.77) because Thai people and other Buddhists pay respect to them and believe in their holy power. Sometimes, the messages are grammatically correct but they could be difficult for non-Thai people to fully understand because of the influence of the main religion, Buddhism, and some Thai norms and traditions.



Figure 3.58 A sign with Thainess

In addition, Thai users of English also face difficulties in translating Thai messages into English. There are 355 signs (19.42%) out of 1,828 signs displaying translation issues. There are 122 signs containing poor translations and direct translations, 68 signs containing different messages between Thai and English, and 42 signs translated by computer software. The rest of the signs ($n = 120$) under Thainess show the issues of acronym, word order and loan shift.

Table 3.3 also shows that the first four patterns of Thai English frequently found on signs are under lexico-semantic features. On the other hand, signs with the issues of misspelling ($n = 78$ accounting for 4.27% of all Thai English signs) and parts of speech ($n = 82$ or 4.49%) are the least frequently found.

According to Table 3.3, it can be concluded that signs with lexico-semantic features can be more frequently found in Thai tourist domains than signs with grammatical features. Signs with Thainess can be found at the highest proportion ($n = 410$) while signs with misspelling can be found at the lowest proportion ($n = 48$). The next section discusses possible reasons why some patterns of Thai English can be found more or less than other patterns.

3.4.6 Discussion

This section underlines some reasons why Thai English contains some certain patterns that can be found more or less often than other patterns of Thai English.

According to Table 3.3, first of all, *Thainess* and *translation* appear to be the most frequently found patterns on signs in Thai tourist domains. The roots of the problems may be originated from first language interference, low English

proficiency of sign makers/ sign writers, and the attempts to save costs for translations. According to the interviews with sign makers and shop assistants, it is revealed that the easy access of online translation software, especially the google translate website, and no payment required are reasons to motivate sign makers and shop assistants to use translation software.

Based on the interviews with overseas tourists, Thainess appears to be the most difficult characteristic of Thai English for them to understand the intended messages on the signs. Due to the fact that some social and cultural background knowledge had to be taken into account in order to interpret the hidden messages underneath the English messages, the interviewees revealed that they usually asked their tour guides or local people for further explanation because although they could get the messages, they were sceptical about the reasons for what the signs told them to do. For example, they did not understand the necessity of taking off their shoes if they wanted to use the toilets in some Thai temples.

Next, the issue of transliteration is commonly found when Thai users of English want to provide Thai words or phrases using the Roman alphabets so that the international audience can read/ pronounce those words or phrases (Seargeant et al., 2012). Due to the fact that there is no universal standard for transliterating Thai into the Roman script, this could result in the different spellings of the same word or phrase (Ngampramuan, 2009). The interviews with shop assistants and sign makers revealed that sometimes, the use of transliteration may originate from Thai users of English trying not to translate the Thai messages into English, or they may try to avoid all the translation difficulties by using transliterated words or phrases instead.

Regarding the issues of word choice and creativity, there are some occasions that one word in Thai can be poly words in English and vice versa. Hence, the use of different word choices from English Standard norms could be regularly found on English signs written by Thai speakers. Besides, based on interviews with sign makers and shop owners, Thai users of English also sometimes coin two words together to make a new word or change some spellings of the original words to make them more interesting or unique, or to add more flavour to the original lexical items.

For the group of punctuation marks, spacing and capitalisation, in Thai language, spacing is used after each sentence instead of a full stop to show the ending of a sentence (Becker, 1995). A comma (,) is not commonly used to divide a subordinate clause from a main clause (Becker, 1995). Hence, when writing an English message, Thai people may not be familiar with the rules and roles of punctuation marks. This usually results in the incorrect position of punctuation marks, especially a full stop in the sentence. In many cases, punctuation marks, especially a full stop, were omitted. Therefore, fragmentation could often be found. In addition, in general, Thai words contain no space no matter how long or short the word is. Hence, the interference of the mother tongue could result in Thai users of English over-spacing and making one word into two or under-spacing the words by making two words into one word. Moreover, as there is no capitalisation in Thai language, the Thai users of English may mix up the lower and upper cases in the same word/ phrase/ sentence.

For the issues of parts of speech and inflection, Thai language has no inflection or conjugation of verbs, nouns, and adjectives (Becker, 1995), so Thai users of English tend to mix up parts of speech when composing a noun phrase or a sentence in written form due to the interference of the first language (Bennui, 2008).

As regards ellipsis or the omission of some English lexical items, this can result from the differences in the grammatical structures between Thai and English (Becker, 1995). There are possibilities that some lexical items are overlooked when making an English sign from a Thai perspective. In addition, there could be cases in which the omission of a word/ some lexical items on signs may be originated from the limitation of space as Ko (2013) states that the language on signs belongs to a specific domain and the space is limited.

Finally, *misspelling* appears to be the least frequently found pattern of Thai English on signs. It could be possible to say that many signs are printed out and sign writers/ makers of signs use Microsoft Word, which helps to correct spelling mistakes, as a programme to make signs. Or, it can be possible to say that some misspelt signs have already been corrected because spelling mistakes are more

easily seen than other patterns of Thai English. So, there could be possibilities that some people might inform the sign owners to correct the spellings.

In addition to the patterns of English used on signs, this research also finds other distinctive features of linguistic landscape on signs in tourist domains, which will be presented in the next section.

3.5 Features of Linguistic Landscape on Signs in Thai Tourist Domains

Signs in tourist domains in this research belonged to both government authorities and the private sector as in the study about linguistic landscape in Bangkok by Huebner (2006) who categorised the signs based on the sense of ownership into government and nongovernment signs. In terms of units of analysis, ‘signs’ in this research refer to shop signs, road signs, information boards, notice boards, slat signage systems, banners, posters, and billboards. However, the main ones were shop signs, road signs, and information boards.

Based on 5,197 signs across 40 tourist domains in five provinces (see Table 3.1), the key features of linguistic landscape on signs in Thailand can be characterised into four main groups, namely 1) orthography, 2) the use of colours, pictures and symbols, 3) the influence of American English, and 4) the influence of the main religion and beliefs.

3.5.1 Orthography

The first feature is ‘orthography’ or “the system of spelling that a language uses (Macmillan Education, 2002).” In this study, orthography includes the issues of spelling & creativity, misspelling, mixing upper and lower cases, spacing and punctuation marks. The orthographic features of LL on signs appear to overlap with the characteristics of Thai English for the groups of ‘misspelling’, ‘punctuation marks, spacing and capitalisation’ and ‘word choices and creativity’. However, when being analysed from LL theoretical frameworks, the similar features can also reflect different perspectives of the same signs/ characteristics.

3.5.1.1 Metonym

The use of the name of one thing to associate in meaning with another thing or another concept is linguistically known as *metonym* (Abrams, 1999: 66). For example, all capitalised letters in one word, the word ‘THAI’ on signs is used as a symbol to represent Thai Airways (see Figure 3.59).



Figure 3.59 An example of metonym: THAI for Thai Airways

3.5.1.2 Homophony

Another significant feature of LL on signs in Thai tourist domains is homophony. Based on the interviews with sign makers and shop owners, sometimes, different spellings from the original words are intentionally used as part of marketing strategies to attract customers' attention. For example, the frozen yoghurt served with fresh fruits branded *früzberry* intends to use 'ü' and 'z' to make the word 'fruit' look different, modern and unique (see Figure 3.60). According to the interview with a shop assistant, the brand associates the new way of spelling with a new kind of healthy dessert. That is why they chose an alternative way of spelling to represent an alternative way of having dessert which is healthier because they use real fresh fruits and frozen yoghurt instead of flavoured ice-cream like other shops.

Another example is a shop sign of a boutique called B-live (see Figure 3.61). On the sign, there is Thai script below the English, and the Thai script is read/pronounced as 'believe' in English. Based on the interview with the shop assistant, the owner of the shop is called B. She would like to have her name as part of the

shop name. She named the shop B-live as it is homophonic with ‘believe’ which is a meaningful word implying a sense of success.



Figure 3.60 A sign with a homophonic feature: früzberry



Figure 3.61 A sign with a homophonic feature: B-Live

3.5.1.3 Sharing the Same Word

Another distinctive feature of orthography of LL in tourist domains in Thailand is sharing the same word between/ among different phrases to save space (see Figure 3.62).



Figure 3.62 An example of sharing the same word between different phrases

3.5.1.4 Codemixing

The next feature is codemixing, a mixture of Thai and English script on the same sign which is similar to the finding in Backhaus' (2006) study. In this study, it seems fairly common that loanwords from English are written in the English script although other parts of the message are written in Thai (see Figure 3.63). Besides, there is also a mixture of a transliterated Thai word/ some transliterated Thai words, especially personal names and English (see Figure 3.64).



Figure 3.63 A codemixing sign



Figure 3.64 Codemixing between a transliterated Thai word and an English word

3.5.1.5 Decorative Purpose

Apart from communicative purposes, the English script displayed on signs may also be used for decorative purposes and for the sense of modernity. There was a shop that had only English signs, and most of the signs displayed non-Standard English (see Figure 3.65). Based on the interview with the shop owner,

the main group of customers was Thai people not international tourists. However, English was used on all signs in the shop because the shop owner viewed that English or Roman letters were more beautiful than those of Thai and other languages because they could be written in different ways. Therefore, the use of the English script in this shop was for decoration rather than communication.



Figure 3.65 The use of the English script for decoration

3.5.2 The Use of Colour, Picture and Symbol

Under this group, there are three subcategories, namely the use of colour, the use of picture, and the use of symbol.

3.5.2.1 The Use of Colour

In order to enhance communication or sometimes make the signs more outstanding, some sign makers or shop owners intend to use different colours on the signs to separate or underscore the messages (see Figure 3.66). Moreover, the word 'sale' on signs is usually presented in red (see Figure 3.67). According to the interviews, shop assistants and shop owners tend to associate red with a hot deal. Red is widely recognised as the colour of fire, which is also a metaphor for excitement and alertness in Thai language.



Figure 3.66 The use of different colours to separate the messages



Figure 3.67 The word 'sale' written in red

3.5.2.2 The Use of Symbol

Some symbols are also used on signs to represent other words. The “@” symbol is often used to mean ‘in’ ‘on’ or ‘at’ (see Figure 3.68). Hence, to get the real meaning of the use of symbols on Thai signs, international visitors may need to have a close look and take contexts into account in order to get the right interpretation.



Figure 3.68 Park @ Siam

The symbols can be international ones e.g. a symbol of a restaurant (see Figure 3.69), symbols of particular companies/ organisations (see Figure 3.70), or they can be local ones, which might be specifically designed and locally used in only Thailand (Figure 3.71).



Figure 3.69 An international symbol: Restaurant



Figure 3.70 A symbol of an organisation



Figure 3.71 A local symbol

In addition to the three kinds of symbols found on Thai signs, some religious symbols can be regularly found on shop signs (see Figure 3.72 and Figure 3.73) as well. This kind of symbol must be drawn by a Buddhist monk. Based on the interviews with the shop owners, some of them believed that to have this religious symbol on their shop signs would help accelerate the sale volumes.



Figure 3.72 A sign with a religious symbol



Figure 3.73 A sign with a religious symbol

3.5.2.3 The Use of Picture

On many occasions, pictures are included to further explain the message or for clearer understanding of the audience (see Figure 3.74).



Figure 3.74 The use of photo for further explanation

3.5.3 The Influence of American English

The English messages on signs in tourist domains in Thailand mainly show the influence of American English over British English. Most of the English signs (over 90%) display American ways of spelling, such as 'center' (AmE) instead of

‘centre’ (BrE) (see Figure 3.75), ‘elevator’ (AmE) instead of ‘lift’ (BrE) (see Figure 3.76), and ‘parking lot’ (AmE) instead of ‘car park’ (BrE) (see Figure 3.77).



Figure 3.75 An American way of spelling: center

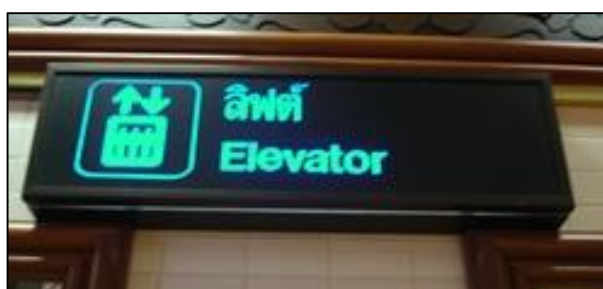


Figure 3.76 An American way of spelling: Elevator



Figure 3.77 An American way of spelling: Parking lot

3.5.4 The Influence of the Main Religion, Buddhism

Due to the fact that the principal religion of Thailand is Buddhism, a number of signs relate to some religious beliefs (Gannon and Pillai, 2010). For example, there are some signs showing menstrual-related traditions in Buddhist temples because some particular areas allow only men who have been considered sacred and powerful in the society to enter. Figure 3.78 shows the photo of a sign telling female visitors (both in Thai and in English) not to enter the stupa where the Buddha relics are kept (Klinchan, 2007).



Figure 3.78 A sign telling female visitors not to enter the stupa where the Buddha's relics are kept

This chapter has presented the information about research methods and patterns of English as a lingua franca in comparison with patterns of English used on signs in Thailand. It has also given some examples of Thai English signs across the nine categories. In addition, this chapter has presented the distinctive features of linguistic landscape on signs in Thai tourist domains. The next chapter, Chapter 4 *Questionnaire*, presents in-depth information about the development of the online questionnaire, the results from the pilot study and reliability analysis.

Chapter 4 Questionnaire

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first part explains the development of the questionnaire about the intelligibility of Thai English. It includes the background of the study, detailed information about the research questions, hypotheses, and the reasons why an online questionnaire was chosen as a tool for data collection. The second section reports the preliminary results and findings from the pilot study. The third section gives in-depth information about the development of the second-version questionnaire, which expands to cover the issues of the correct recognition of English Standard norms and the unacceptability of Thai English messages on signs. The last part covers all the details about data collection, the quality measurement of the questionnaire and how the data from the questionnaire is analysed for the studies in Chapters 5-7.

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 Background of the Study

In the first place, this PhD research project aims to find out the degree of intelligibility of Thai English among international tourists to Thailand. In terms of representatives, at first, I was thinking about comparing specific groups of participants based on their English usage as a mother tongue, a second language and a foreign language. I intended to collect data from people from four countries across the three concentric-circle model by Kachru (1989) as aforementioned in Chapter 2.

According to the statistics on international visitors to Thailand from 2009 to 2012 by the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand (2013), the top ten countries from which tourists who visited Thailand came were Malaysia, China, Russia, Japan, South Korea, Laos, the United Kingdom, Germany and Singapore. Based on the statistics, the top two Asian countries were Malaysia followed by China. The top two European countries were Russia followed by the United Kingdom. However, later on, I came to realise that the ranking of the countries could be changed over a period of time. In addition, for a better comparison, the number of participants in each group should be big rather than small in order to

generate reliable results (Field, 2013). Therefore, in the actual questionnaire used in the real study, respondents are grouped by continents instead of focusing on individual countries.

Regarding the age of participants, both versions of the questionnaire follow the statistics of tourists to Thailand by the Ministry of Tourist and Sports of Thailand (2013) and the regulations in the code of research conduct and research ethics of the University of Nottingham (2013) that participants need to be at least 18 years old. The ages of tourists in the study are divided into six groups, namely under 25 years old, 25-34 years old, 35-44 years old, 45-54 years old, 55-64 years old, and 65 years old and over.

4.1.2 Research Questions for the Online Questionnaire

In the first version, the main focus is on the degree of intelligibility of Thai English. There are two research questions as follows:

- 1) To what extent is Thai English intelligible to international visitors to Thailand?
- 2) Because contexts around the language are important, do people who have been to Thailand understand Thai English better than those who have never been in the contexts before?

However, in the second version, as the study also aims to compare the attitudes of Thai and non-Thai people towards Thai English messages on signs, there are additional research questions:

- 3) Do Asian people understand Thai English better than European people?
- 4) Do native speakers and non-native speakers of English have similar beliefs about the intelligibility of Thai English messages on signs?
- 5) Does English proficiency affect the intelligibility of Thai English messages on signs?

4.1.3 Hypotheses

For the first version, there are two hypotheses:

- 1) Those who have been to Thailand should have better intelligibility of Thai English than those who have never visited Thailand before because from the preceding literature, English used in Thailand appears to be related with social and cultural information of the country (Huebner, 2006, Seargeant et al., 2012, Baker, 2008).
- 2) People from Asia should better understand Thai English messages than people from totally different cultures like Europe because people from the same region may share a similar socio-cultural background.

For the second version, there are additional hypotheses as follows:

- 3) Opinions of native speakers on Thai English can be various depending on the mistakes on the signs and their personal background.
- 4) Thai people might not be aware that English used on some signs in Thailand is different from the Standard norms and could lead to some misunderstanding and create communication problems.
- 5) English proficiency of Thai people may affect their awareness of Thai English on signs. Those who know English should be able to know whether the English translations on signs were done properly and communicatively or not.

4.1.4 Why Online Questionnaire?

The reason why the data collection is based on an online questionnaire is because the study aims to collect data from international tourists who live in different countries. Therefore, the questionnaire should be easily accessible, and the online questionnaire appears to be the best option for this purpose. Dörnyei (2007: 121) comments that an online survey is also good for cross-cultural research due to its high level of anonymity and accessibility to specialised populations by sending them a link to the questionnaire.

Additionally, according to Lumsden and Morgan (2005), online questionnaires can help researchers to save costs and take less time to get responses in comparison with traditional paper-based ones. In addition, it is suggested that an online-based survey or an email survey is more suitable for international participants who have different cultural backgrounds because it encourages less

direct communication and helps to save a participant's face more than personal interviews (Hughes, 2004).

I chose the SurveyMonkey website, www.surveymonkey.com, to create an online questionnaire and signed up for a *select* membership. This option allowed me to have both photos and a Likert scale in the same questionnaire, while basic membership as well as other free online survey websites do not enable researchers to do so.

Creating an online survey can also be troublesome due to some technical issues, such as a template and format of the questionnaire, a computer language to be used to create the survey. In the case of this online study, images are the main element of the questionnaire. However, the size of the photos to be uploaded and the format need to be very specific (.jpeg for a photo file). The file cannot be over 50 kilobytes (KB), which means the photo needs to be resized and cropped before being uploaded. In general, an original/ default size of a photo taken by a digital camera is around 1.9-2.2 MB (megabytes) or 1900-2200 KB. In addition, when photos have been modified, this can result in a low image quality when getting published. Therefore, the process of photo modification has to be done in a professional way.

4.2 The Development of the Questionnaire about the Intelligibility of Thai English (First Version)

There were three stages in the development of the first-version questionnaire.

4.2.1 First Stage

Before getting the final version of the questionnaire, I followed the process of developing and piloting the questionnaire according to Dörnyei (2007).

I started *drawing up an item pool*, which means “to let our imagination go free and create as many potential items for each scale as we can think of” (Dörnyei, 2007: 112). Next, I asked three international friends, one of whom is English, and two of whom are Chinese to help out by going through the items with me. Then I

interviewed them for their opinions and suggestions. As the item pool contained 176 signs, it took participants more than 90 minutes to go through from the first item to the last one. The participants suggested that there should be fewer items, because the length of the survey could make other prospective participants bored and want to finish the questionnaire as soon as they could. After getting the feedback, I reduced the number of the items to 65 due to the fact that if a questionnaire is concise, there are more chances that all the questions will be answered (Dörnyei and Taguchi, 2010).

4.2.2 Second Stage

After the initial piloting of the item pool, I created a *near-final version* that contained 65 signs and used a 10-point Likert scale for people to rate. A near final version refers to a “questionnaire that ‘feels’ satisfactory and that does not have any obvious glitches” (Dörnyei, 2007: 112). I then sent the link to ten friends, two of whom are Thais and eight of whom are from other countries in order to find out whether the items would work in actual practice or not.

I asked my participants to have a close look at the items while filling in the questionnaire so that they could give me some comments/ feedback. In general, the participants enjoyed doing the questionnaire and gave positive feedback. However, there were some issues about the quality of the photos which were either too dark or blurred, and in some photos there were many written texts, so they did not know what they should focus on. In addition, some participants commented that the questionnaire might be too long. It took the fastest participant 22 minutes and the slowest participant 54 minutes. On average, the participants spent 30 minutes on completing the questionnaire.

4.2.3 Third Stage

Based on the feedback from the near-final version, I modified the problematic photos and ensured that they could be clearly seen. For some photos, I highlighted part of the message that I wanted participants to have a close look at. For example, if a sign had many features and I wanted the participant to focus on just only one particular aspect, e.g., a misspelling, a grammatical mistake, or a

particular word, I highlighted that part. In addition, I also reduced 65 items to 60. However, as different signs represented different categories, there were three types of questions in this version. To ensure that respondents knew what to do, I added detailed information on the information sheet to clarify all the types of questions and instructed the participants what they were supposed to do under each item.

After the questionnaire had been modified, I sent the link out again to participants from different countries asking them to complete the survey so that they could give me some feedback and tell me how they liked the questionnaire. After all of the piloting process, I then considered this questionnaire as the first version.

The main parts in the first version are as follows:

4.2.3.1 Scale of Intelligibility: 10-Point Likert scale

According to Wimmer and Dominick (2013: 53), a scale with more points is considered to be more effective, and it allows greater differentiation on items that are rated. Therefore, a 10-point Likert scale (1 *not understand at all* to 10 *fully understand*) was used in the first version (see Figure 4.1). In this case, the verb ‘understand’ actually means ‘be intelligible’. However, the word *understand* is chosen because it is simple and easily understood by non-native speakers of English.

* 3. How well do you understand the English message from the photo above?

☐ 1 not understand at all ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 fully understand

Figure 4.1 Ten-point scale of intelligibility

4.2.3.2 Sixty Items in the Questionnaire

The photos of signs in the questionnaire were chosen based on the nine patterns of Thai English.

The criteria for the selection of the items were based on the frequencies that the signs in each subcategory were found. For example, Thainess, translation and transliteration were found more often than other patterns. In this case, two to three signs were chosen from these patterns. For the less popular patterns, only one sign

that could best represent other signs in the group was selected. Based on the nine patterns, there were 60 items altogether (see Table 4.1).

On Table 4.1, the row ‘Message on the sign’ refers to the messages with Thai English features that were found on signs. The messages in the brackets refer to the intended messages to be conveyed to the audience. For example, horizontally, in the first row, you can see ‘Testy (Tasty)’. It means that on the actual sign, the message is displayed as ‘Testy’, but the intended meaning is supposed to be ‘Tasty’, which is inside the brackets.

Table 4.1 Sixty items in the first-version questionnaire

Pattern	Subcategory	Message on the sign	Item No.
1. Misspelling	1.1 Homophone	Testy (Tasty)	38
	1.2 Typing error	Touriest (Tourist)	18
		Exhibition Hell (Hall)	22
		Robster (Lobster)	7
	1.3 Minimal pair	Shoe lack (shoe rack)	60
		Bath (Baht)	15
2. Parts of speech	2.1 Using a noun instead of an adjective	Open Time (Opening Time)	32
		Herbs Juice (Herbal Juice)	41
	2.2 Overusing apostrophe 's' possessive	Woman's restroom (Ladies)	56
	2.3 Using a verb instead of a noun	We accept to apologize (Please accept our apology)	2
	2.4 Using a noun instead of a verb	We apologies (apologise)	28
	2.5 Using a verb instead of an adjective	Close (closed)	3
3. Inflection	3.1 Wrong verb conjugation	This are (is)	17
	3.2 Wrong tense	This building was (is) controlled by CCTV	30
		All items cannot be changes (changed)	23
	3.4 Redundancy of 'to'	Do not to Photo (Do not take photo)	13
	3.5 Using plural forms instead of singular forms	1 hours (1 hour)	55
	3.6 Adding 's' to uncountable nouns	Cherry's foods (food)	10
4. Punctuation marks, spacing, capitalisation	4.1 Using one full stop at the end	Do not enter the track if things fall on call staff	48
	4.2 Making one word into two words	Wel come (Welcome)	11
	4.3 Mixing upper and lower cases	japanese crepe (Japanese crepe)	59
5. Ellipsis	5.1 Missing verbs	Please (use) next counter	4
	5.2 Missing nouns	Thank you for disposing (of waste) into the bin	27
		Don't sit down (in) this area	37
6. Translation	6.1 Poor translations	Food order (Food to order from the menu)	12
	6.2 Direct translations	The water had deep 3 m. (The water is 3 metres deep.)	57
		No all types of cars passing by me (No vehicles allowed)	50
		3 PCS. up (Buy 3 pieces or more)	5
		2 free 1 (Buy 2 get 1 free)	35

	6.3 Using translation software	Forbidden island glass (Do not touch the glass)	49
		A motorcycle works for invite 2 ladders (For a motorcycle taxi service, please use Exit 2)	26
	6.4 Different messages between Thai and English	BBQ Pork (Grilled Pork)	1
		Temporary Work (No sandals)	45
	6.5 Word order (an adjective comes after a noun it modifies)	Paper clean (clean paper)	51
	6.6 Loanshift	Easy money (pawn shop)	40
		Keep min 2 dots (Keep apart 2 chevrons)	58
	6.7 Ambiguity	Purchased this food set buy 1 get 1 Free (Buy 1 item in this food set and get the cheapest item for free)	25
	6.8 wrong fix phrase	Please it neatly (Please tidy up)	34
		Out of order (Out of stock)	43
7. Thainess	7.1 Monarchy	Due to Royal Visit...	44
	7.2 Main religion (Buddhism)	Woman no entry	6
		Wear appropriate clothes	19
		For monks only	29
	7.3 Specific career	No Hawking (No street vending)	9
	7.4 Stereotype	Happy Toilet (clean toilet)	14
		Bangkok smile bike (free bikes for tourists)	24
	7.5 Acronym	OTOP (One Tambon One Product = local handmade products)	16
	7.6 Hierarchical society	Reserve for the elder (Reserve for elderly people)	20
	7.7 (Currency) Abbreviation	B (Baht)	53
8. Word choice & creativity	8.1 One word in Thai but polywords in English	No change (No exchange)	54
	8.2 Selection of words	a new facelift (a new look)	21
		Blessing box (donation box)	46
		Greeting area (Meeting point)	52
		Take home (Take-away food)	33
	8.3 Changing original spelling	Coming soooon (Coming soon)	8
		Pik mee (Pick me)	36
	8.4 Coinages	Ovalcano (Ovaline + Volcano)	31
9. Transliteration	9.1 Different spellings	Wat Phra Kao/ Wat Phra Kaew (The Grand Palace)	42
	9.2 Mixing transliterated words with some English words	Pakeped fried (Fried duck beaks)	39
	9.3 Using all transliteration	Moo Ban Monthian Thong (Moo Ban = Village)	47

4.2.3.3 Three Types of Questions

As aforementioned, there are three types of questions in this survey:

Question type 1: How well do you understand the English message from the photo above?

The screenshot shows a survey interface. At the top, it says "I. You see this sign at an airline counter at the airport." with a blue arrow pointing to a photo of a yellow sign. The sign has Thai text "ปิด" (Pit), the word "CLOSE", and "BREAK 12:00 - 13:00". To the right of the photo, it says "The context where the sign was found". Below the photo, the question is: "*3. How well do you understand the English message from the photo above?". Below the question is a rating scale from 1 to 10, with radio buttons for each number. The scale is: 1 not understand at all, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 fully understand. A blue arrow points to the question text, labeled "The question (type 1)".

Figure 4.2 Question type 1

This was the most common type of the question in the questionnaire. It was aimed at measuring the degree of intelligibility of Thai English in general. Participants were asked to rate how well they understood the message from the photo they had just seen. Question type 1 was generally used with the signs from the following patterns:

- 1) misspelling
- 2) parts of speech
- 3) inflection
- 4) punctuation marks, spacing and capitalisation
- 5) ellipsis
- 6) word choice & creativity
- 7) transliteration

Question type 2: How well do you understand the underlined message?

You see this sign inside a lift.  The context where the sign was found



II How well do you understand the underlined message?  The question (type II)

☐ 1 not understand at all ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☒ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 fully understand

Figure 4.3 Question type 2

This type of question was used when there was too much information on the sign, so participants could be confused about where to focus. Therefore, the targeted message or targeted word was underlined and research participants were asked to focus only on the underlined message. Question type 2 was generally used with the signs under the patterns of misspelling, inflection, and translation.

Question type 3: How well do you understand ...? What does it mean to you? Please give your answer in the box below.

You see this in a accessory shop in a wholesale department store.  The context where the sign was found



III How well do you understand '3 pcs Up'?  The question (type III)

What does it mean to you? Please give your answer in the box below.

☐ 1 not understand at all ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☒ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 fully understand

Please give your answer here

Type your answer in this box.

Figure 4.4 Question type 3

This type of question aimed to measure the true understanding of the participants apart from their perception of the intelligibility of the sign. Participants were asked to fill their answer in the box so that I could check

whether they really understood what they thought they understood/ did not understand. A box was provided under the scale so that the participants could type their opinions in. Question type 3 was frequently used with signs with Thainess pattern.

4.2.3.5 Information Sheet (Page 1)

The first part of the questionnaire is the *Information Sheet* containing general information about the research including the purpose of the study, the PhD working title, the estimated time that the participant may spend on the questionnaire, as well as my contact details. Figure 4.5 shows the screen capture of the page.

Comprehensibility of English used on signs in tourist domains in Thailand

Information sheet/ About the study

6%

The purposes of this study are to find out 1) to what extent English used on signs in Thailand is comprehensible to international visitors and 2) which characteristics of Thai English can lead to misunderstanding the most.

This survey is part of a PhD research project titled 'English as a Lingua Franca & Linguistic Landscape: A Case Study of English Used on Signs in Tourist Domains in Thailand' under School of English, The University of Nottingham (UK).

This questionnaire should take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. As a thank you for your time, you can enter the prize draw where you could win one of two £20 Amazon gift vouchers. Please ensure that you complete your email address if you wish to enter this draw.

Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are under no obligation to take part. You are free to withdraw at any point of the survey. Your answers will be anonymous and will only be used for this study, for the purposes as specified above.

If you have any difficulties or queries regarding the study, please do not hesitate to email Wipapan (Jib) Ngampramuan at aexwn@nottingham.ac.uk or wipapan@hotmail.com.

Next

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Check out our [sample surveys](#) and create your own now!

Figure 4.5 Information sheet (page 1)

4.2.3.6 Information Sheet/ Instruction (Page 2)

The second page of the questionnaire is the *Information sheet/ Instruction* page containing the information about the questionnaire in terms of the number of items, the explanation about the 10-point Likert scale, and the three types of questions. The information shown in page 2 of the questionnaire can be found in Figure 4.6.

Comprehensibility of English used on signs in tourist domains in Thailand

Information sheet/ Instruction

12%

There are 60 items in this survey. This survey wants to find out how English used in Thailand is comprehensible to you. It should approximately take about 20-30 minutes for you to complete the survey. The survey cannot be saved, so you have to finish it in one go.

Under each item, you will be shown a photo of sign. The context where the sign was found is shown above the photo. After looking at the photo, you will be asked a question about your understanding toward the sign. Please note that the the questions MAY VARY.

In general, there are three types of questions as follows:

I. How well do you understand the English message from the photo above?

Figure 4.6 Information sheet/ Instruction (page 2)

4.2.3.7 Consent Form (Page 3)

Although an Internet survey offers a high level of anonymity, which also helps to enhance the level of honesty (Dörnyei, 2007: 121), this survey still included a consent form to ensure that the study was done based on the code of research conduct and research ethics of The University of Nottingham (2013).

Comprehensibility of English used on signs in tourist domains in Thailand

Consent form

18%

I confirm that the purpose of the study has been explained and that I have understood it.

I have had the opportunity to ask questions and they have been successfully answered.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a reason and without consequence.

I understand that all data are anonymous and that there will not be any connection between the personal information provided and the data.

I understand that there are no known risks or hazards associated with participating in this study.

I confirm that I have read and understood the above information and that I agree to participate in this study.

Please continue to the next page if you have agreed.

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 Check out our [sample surveys](#) and create your own now!

Figure 4.7 Consent form (page 3)

The consent form was taken and adapted from the School of English, the University of Nottingham (UK) website.

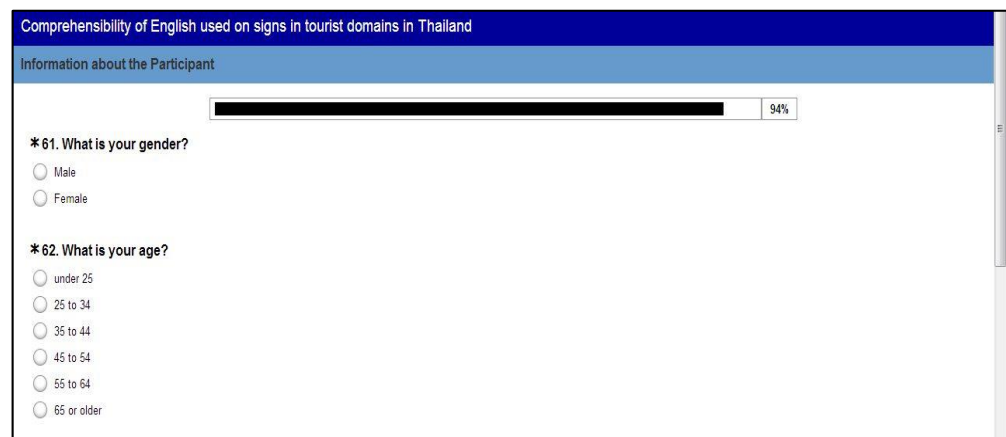
Instead of asking participants to tick the box as shown in the original version, they were asked to click 'next' to show an agreement (see Figure 4.7).

4.2.3.8 Participant's Information

After completing the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to fill in their background information as follows:

Gender and Age

It is very common to ask about the gender and age of participants as this basic information might be useful later on. For example, in some countries, the roles of males and females are different. Furthermore, genders may also affect cultural values and beliefs in some societies. Hence, this information can be used for further analysis and comparison between groups of participants (Fernstermaer and West, 2002).



Comprehensibility of English used on signs in tourist domains in Thailand

Information about the Participant

Progress: 94%

*61. What is your gender?

☐ Male

☐ Female

*62. What is your age?

☐ under 25

☐ 25 to 34

☐ 35 to 44

☐ 45 to 54

☐ 55 to 64

☐ 65 or older

Figure 4.8 Gender & age

Trip to Thailand

This question was asked in order to test the first hypothesis that people who have been to Thailand should have a better understanding about Thai English than those who have never been to Thailand by using the question 'Have you ever visited Thailand?' followed by the choices of 'Yes' and 'No' (see Figure 4.9).



63. Have you ever visited Thailand before?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Figure 4.9 Have you ever visited Thailand before?

Country of Residence and Nationality

In this version, the main groups of the research participants were from four countries, namely Malaysia, China, Russia and the United Kingdom because Thailand was highly visited by people from these countries in 2012 (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2014). These questions requested information from the participants about their country of residence and their nationality. There were some chances that the participants may have come from one country but resided in another country for studying or working. Here, the questions about their homeland and country of residence were separately asked. An option of ‘other’ please specify’ was provided for participants from other countries. They were asked to specify their countries of residence/ nationalities so that this information could be later on grouped and analysed.

The participants were asked, ‘What is your current country of residence? or the country that you are currently living in now’and given the choices of Malaysia, China, Russia, United Kingdom and Other (please specify) (see Figure 4.10).

Another question was ‘What is your nationality?’ followed by the choices of Malaysian, Chinese, Russian, British, and Other (please specify) (see Figure 4.10).

*** 64. What is your current country of residence? (or the country that you are currently living in now)**

☐ Malaysia
☐ China
☐ Russia
☐ United Kingdom
☐ Other
 Other (please specify)

*** 65. What is your nationality?**

☐ Malaysian
☐ Chinese
☐ Russian
☐ British
☐ Other
 Other (please specify)

Figure 4.10 Country of residence and nationality

Education, English Test and English Proficiency

The participants were asked about their educational background and their English proficiency to see whether their educational background and English proficiency would have any effect on their understanding of Thai English or not. The question was ‘What is the highest level of education you have completed or you are currently doing?’

*** 66. What is the highest level of education you have completed/ you are currently doing?**

☐ College and below
☐ Bachelor's Degree (e.g. BSc, BA)
☐ Master's Degree (e.g. MSc, MA)
☐ Doctoral Degree (PhD, EdD)
☐ Other
 Other (please specify)

Figure 4.11 Education

In the case of those who had already taken an English proficiency test, especially TOEFL and IELTS, they were also asked to state their English proficiency score so that they could be classified into their right proficiency level based on the TOEFL vs. IELTS score comparison chart (see Appendix 2) (Educational Testing Service, 2013)

*** 67. Have you ever taken any English proficiency test, e.g. IELTS, TOEFL before? Or, if you have not taken these two tests but another test, e.g. TOEIC, WELT, please choose 'other' and specify the test name and score.**

☐ No
☐ Yes, IELTS 0-4.0/ TOEFL iBT 0-31
☐ Yes, IELTS 4.5-5.0 / TOEFL iBT 32-45
☐ Yes, IELTS 5.5-6.5/ TOEFL iBT 46-93
☐ Yes, IELTS 7.0-8.0/ TOEFL iBT 94-114
☐ Yes, IELTS 8.5-9.0/ TOEFL iBT 115-120
☐ Other
 Other (please specify)

Figure 4.12 English test scores

Nevertheless, there were also many people who had not taken any English proficiency test before. In order to know about their English proficiency, they were given a self-rating scale. However, this item was later on found ineffective because some participants were too confident about their English proficiency while some were too humble. Therefore, in the next version, participants were asked to rate a can-do statement to reflect their English proficiency instead

*** 68. How would you rate your English proficiency?**

☐ Elementary
☐ Pre intermediate
☐ Intermediate
☐ Upper intermediate
☐ Advanced
☐ I am a native speaker.

Figure 4.13 English proficiency

The questions about education, English scores and proficiency were asked to see whether English proficiency levels would have any marked effect on the way people understand Thai English or not.

Occupation

The question about participants' occupations was asked to see whether people working in particular industries could understand Thai English better than those working in other industries or not.

*** 69. Which of the following best describes your current occupation?**

- ☐ Students/ Education, Training, and Library Occupations
- ☐ Management, Business and Financial Operations Occupations
- ☐ Computer, Mathematical, Architecture, Engineering Occupations
- ☐ Life, Physical, Social Science, Community, Social Service Occupations
- ☐ Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, Media Occupations
- ☐ Sales and Related Occupations
- ☐ Office and Administrative Support Occupations
- ☐ Construction and Extraction Occupations
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Other

Other (please specify)

Figure 4.14 Occupation

Thank-You Page

Last but not least, to show appreciation for the participant's time and attention, the last page of the survey was titled 'Thank you!' (see Figure 4.15).

Comprehensibility of English used on signs in tourist domains in Thailand

Thank you!

100%

Thank you very much for your time. I really appreciate your participation. Have a nice day!

Figure 4.15 Thank you page

4.2.3.9 Editing/ Improving the Questionnaire

After finishing inputting all items in the questionnaire, some options that were thought to possibly help increase survey response rates were added as follows:

Requiring an answer

In this version, all questions must be answered. When designing the survey, I selected a 'require an answer to this question' option (see Figure 4.16). In the case of participants forgetting to answer any question, they would not be allowed to continue to the next page until all the questions had been answered. The survey would directly take the participant back to the unanswered question(s)

and tell the participant to complete it/ them. The screen would appear as ‘This question requires an answer.’ (see Figure 4.17).

Figure 4.16 How to mark a required answer

Figure 4.17 When a question has not been answered yet

Adding a Percentage Bar


When doing a paper-based questionnaire, participants can flip through the questionnaire and know how many questions/ how many pages are left. Nevertheless, for an online survey, a percentage bar can be added to help participants to estimate how much time they have spent and will have to spend in order to complete the survey (see Figure 4.18).

Comprehensibility of English used on signs in tourist domains in Thailand

Photos of Signs: Questions 31-35

59%

31. You see this sign in a coffee shop.



* 31. How well do you understand 'Ovalcano'?
What does it mean to you? Please give your answer in the box below.

Figure 4.18 Percentage bar

Previewing the Survey

Before sending the survey link out, there is a 'Preview Survey' option that allows researchers to see how the questionnaire would look when being viewed by participants (see Figure 4.19).

+ Add Question ▼

Add Page After

Back to My Surveys Preview Survey Send Survey »

Figure 4.19 Preview survey

Customising the Link to the Survey

After finishing designing the survey, by selecting the 'send survey' button, the link to the survey is created. The link can be customised so that it is easier for participants to remember, or it can have a name relating to the topic or research (see Figure 4.20).

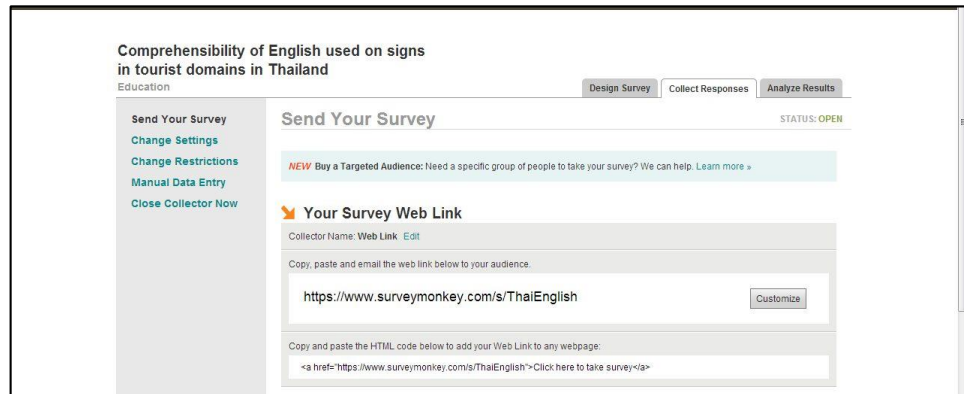


Figure 4.20 Customising the link to the survey

Feedback

After the questionnaire had been modified, I sent the link out again to approximately 60 friends from different countries asking them to complete the survey so that they could give me some feedback and tell me how they liked the survey. Thirty-six people participated in the questionnaire.

Regarding the feedback, most of the participants found the questionnaire interesting, and they enjoyed doing it. However, some of the respondents commented that there were too many items, so it took the participants over 20 minutes to finish everything. Based on the record from the SurveyMonkey website, it took the fastest participant 13 minutes and the slowest one 50 minutes. On average, the respondents spent approximately 20-25 minutes on completing the survey.

4.3 Preliminary Results

The primary results from the first-questionnaire are as follows:

4.3.1 Nationality of the Participants

In total, the participants were from nineteen countries. On Table 4.2, it can be seen that major number of participants were from Taiwan (5 respondents) and Malaysia (4 respondents) followed by America, China, and Italy (3 respondents from each country).

Table 4.2 Nationalities of participants

Nationalities	Number	Percent
	(n = 36)	100%
Taiwanese	5	13.9
Malaysian	4	11.1
American	3	8.3
Chinese	3	8.3
Italian	3	8.3
British	2	5.6
Filipino	2	5.6
Swiss	2	5.6
Canadian	1	2.8
Dutch	1	2.8
El Salvador	1	2.8
Indian	1	2.8
Japanese	1	2.8
Korean	1	2.8
Lebanese	1	2.8
Serbian	1	2.8
Singaporean	1	2.8
South African	1	2.8

4.3.2 Reliability Analysis

To see whether all 60 items on the questionnaire were reliable or not, a reliability analysis was conducted by grouping the items into 10-15 per analysis. A reliability analysis is generally used as an estimate of the reliability of the test to see whether the questions are good enough or not (Dörnyei, 2007, Pallant, 2013). In this research, Cronbach's (α) is used as it is regarded as one of the most reliable tools for measuring the reliability of a test.

Based on Dörnyei (2007) and Pallant (2013), the Cronbach's alpha value and the internal consistency could be interpreted as follows:

$\alpha \geq 0.9$ could be interpreted as 'Excellent (High-Stakes testing)'

$0.7 \leq \alpha < 0.9$ could be interpreted as 'Good (Low-Stakes testing)'

$0.6 \leq \alpha < 0.7$ could be interpreted as 'Acceptable'

$0.5 \leq \alpha < 0.6$ could be interpreted as ‘Poor’

$\alpha < 0.5$ could be interpreted as ‘Unacceptable’

Overall, the reliability analysis scores of the 60 items were good as they were $\alpha < .70$. It implies that the items in the questionnaire were consistent and related to each other at a good level.

The first reliability analysis was for the categories of *Misspelling* (6 items) and *Parts of speech* (6 items). The Cronbach’s alpha α score of the 12 items is .89.

The second analysis was for the categories of *Inflection* (6 items), *Punctuation marks, spacing, and capitalisation* (3 items), and *Ellipsis* (3 items). The Cronbach’s alpha α score of the 12 items is .87.

The third analysis was for the category of *Translation* (15 items). The Cronbach’s alpha α score of the 15 items is .86.

The fourth analysis was for the category of *Thainess* (10 items). The Cronbach’s alpha α score of the 10 items is .78.

The last analysis was for the categories of *Word choice and creativity* (8 items) and *Transliteration* (3 items). The Cronbach’s alpha α score of the 11 items was .82.

4.3.3 Testing Hypotheses

In this section, the hypotheses mentioned in Section 4.1.3 were tested by using t-tests.

Hypothesis 1: Those who have been to Thailand should be able to understand Thai English better than those who have never been to Thailand.

Table 4.3 shows participants’ intelligibility scores across the nine categories. Those who went to Thailand were indicated as ‘Yes’ (N = 23) and participants who had never been to Thailand were indicated as ‘No’ (N = 13).

It was hypothesised that those who went to Thailand should get a higher intelligibility score than those who had never been to Thailand. However, Table 4.3 shows that participants who went to Thailand had a higher intelligibility score than the other group for only two patterns, namely Misspelling ($M = 7.54$ vs. $M = 7.28$) and Thainess ($M = 6.77$ vs. $M = 6.25$).

However, in general, respondents who have never been to Thailand appeared to have higher intelligibility scores than those who have been to Thailand under seven patterns, namely Parts of speech; Inflection; Punctuation mark, spacing and capitalisation; Translation; Ellipsis; Word choice and creativity; and Transliteration.

Table 4.3 Participants' intelligibility and their journeys to Thailand (N = 33)

	<i>M (SD)</i>		<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>
	Yes (n = 23)	No (n = 10)		
Misspelling	7.54 (2.24)	7.28 (1.78)	34	.36
Parts of speech	7.92 (1.79)	8.46 (1.80)	34	-.87
Inflection	7.79 (1.83)	8.12 (1.69)	34	-.53
Punctuation	7.16 (1.86)	7.64 (2.49)	34	-.66
Ellipsis	8.43 (1.80)	9.18 (1.32)	34	-1.30
Translation	5.46 (1.43)	6.08 (2.12)	34	-1.06
Thainess	6.77 (1.58)	6.25 (2.11)	34	.83
Word choice	6.96 (1.57)	7.07 (1.93)	34	-.18
Transliteration	4.01 (2.40)	4.13 (2.93)	34	-.13

However, according to Table 4.3, the differences in the intelligibility score between participants who have been/ never been to Thailand did not reach a significant level ($p > .05$) across all the nine patterns.

Hence, it could be concluded that whether having been to Thailand or not was not a major factor contributing to the participants' perceptions of the intelligibility of Thai English. However, due to the fact that the questionnaire was filled in by only 36 people, the results have to be further investigated in the real study in Chapter 5 because the results could be different.

Hypothesis 2: People from Asia should understand Thai English better than those from Europe

Table 4.4 Participants' intelligibility and geographic origin (N = 29)

	<i>M (SD)</i>		<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>
	Asia (n = 19)	Europe (n = 10)		
Misspelling	7.31 (-1.86)	7.92 (2.00)	27	-.82
Parts of speech	7.96 (-1.89)	8.68 (.91)	27	-1.13
Inflection	7.87 (1.77)	8.25 (1.04)	27	-.63
Punctuation	7.04 (2.21)	8.07 (1.59)	27	-1.30
Ellipsis	8.61 (1.50)	9.13 (1.51)	27	-.88
Translation	5.74 (1.80)	5.89 (1.28)	27	-.23
Thainess	6.56 (1.78)	6.94 (1.27)	27	-.60
Word choice	6.99 (1.77)	7.16 (1.09)	27	-.29
Transliteration	4.40 (2.50)	4.07 (2.38)	27	.35

The overall mean score of the intelligibility of Thai English for those who were from Asia ($M = 7.73$) was higher than the score for those from Europe ($M = 6.91$). However, the results show that the differences in mean scores between participants from Asia and from Europe across the nine patterns did not reach a significant level ($p > .05$). Therefore, the hypothesis that Asian participants should be able to understand Thai English better than European participants was rejected.

Nevertheless, as the questionnaire was done by only 36 people, the hypothesis will be tested again in the real study in Chapter 5 to see whether the results will remain the same or not.

4.3.4 Preliminary Findings

Based on the results, the findings from the first version of the questionnaire are as follows:

First, the results showed no significance that people who had been to Thailand could understand English used by Thai people better than those who had never been to Thailand.

Second, the study rejected the hypothesis that participants from Asia should be able to understand Thai English better than those from Europe. This could be because, even though located on the same continent, each country may have its own characteristics that are different from those of neighbouring countries. For example, even though Malaysia is Thailand's neighbouring country, its main religion is Islam while Buddhism is the main religion in Thailand. In this case, it should be interesting to compare the results from the real study with the ones from the pilot study and see whether they will be similar or not.

As the results of the pilot study were based on the answers of 36 participants, it is possible that in the real study, the results could be different due to the higher number of participants.

4.4 The Development of the Questionnaire about the Intelligibility of Thai English (Second Version)

Based on the feedback and comments from the respondents of the first-version questionnaire, the preliminary results from the study, some more literature review into quantitative research and questionnaire design, and some advice from professors at School of English, The University of Nottingham, I developed the second version of the questionnaire based on three stages as follows:

4.4.1 First Stage

In the first stage, I focused on the questionnaire format and tried to make the questionnaire shorter. The changes made were as follows:

- 1) Reduce the ten-point scale to a six-point scale
- 2) Reduce the information on the information sheet
- 3) Consent form: Provide boxes for participant to tick if they have agreed
- 4) Questions made consistent by using the same question for every item
- 5) Try another way for participants to rate their English proficiency by using can-do statements

- 6) Reduce the number of questions so that participants will take less time to finish.

First of all, the ten-point Likert scale was reduced to six points because the latter is more popularly and frequently used in several surveys in Applied Linguistics (Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei, 1998, Dörnyei, 2007, Dörnyei and Taguchi, 2010). Therefore, in the new version of the questionnaire, participants were asked to rate how they understand the English message on the sign from 1 *incomprehensible* to 6 *comprehensible*. In addition, an even number scale should be able to help researchers to solve the problem of participants choosing the midpoint value when trying to quickly finish the questionnaire (Courser and Lavrakas, 2012). The six-point intelligibility scale can be seen in Figure 4.21.

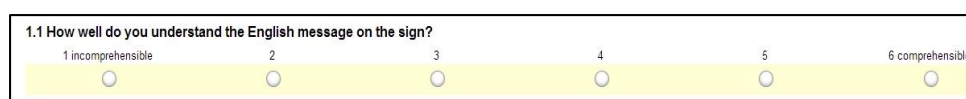


Figure 4.21 The six-point Likert scale of intelligibility

Second, the information sheet was shortened to be more concise (Figure 4.22).

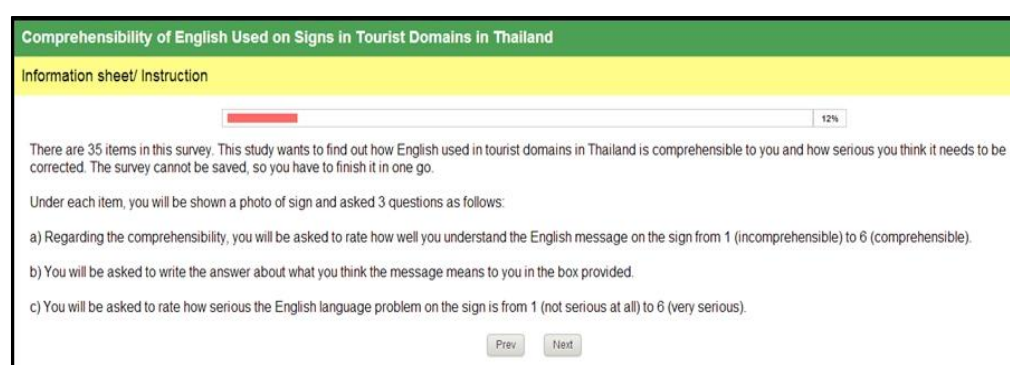


Figure 4.22 The shorter information sheet

Third, regarding the consent form, boxes were added so that participants could read each statement and tick it one by one (see Figure 4.23).

Comprehensibility of English Used on Signs in Tourist Domains in Thailand

Consent form

18%

Please read and tick 'all' the boxes if you have agreed to do the survey.

☒ I confirm that the purpose of the study has been explained and that I have understood it.

☐ I have had the opportunity to ask questions and they have been successfully answered.

☐ I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a reason and without consequence.

☒ I understand that all data are anonymous and that there will not be any connection between the personal information provided and the data.

☐ I understand that there are no known risks or hazards associated with participating in this study.

☐ I confirm that I have read and understood the above information and that I agree to participate in this study.

Prev Next

Figure 4.23 The consent form with tick boxes

Fourth, instead of asking participants to rate their English proficiency themselves, the questionnaire used can-do statements adapted from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (Global Scale), which is now being used across Europe and in other parts of the world to reflect participants' English proficiency.(Council of Europe, 2013) (see Figure 4.24). The full CEFR global scale can be found in Appendix 3.

8. How would you rate your English proficiency? Please select all that apply to you.

☐ I can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type.

☐ I can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning.

☐ I can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance.

☐ I can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. I can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation.

☐ I can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc.

☐ I am a native speaker.

☐ I can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation.

Figure 4.24 New English proficiency rating based on CEFR frameworks

Each statement represents a different level of the participant's English proficiency. However, in the actual questionnaire, participants were not told which level each statement represents.

Fifth, in terms of the consistency of the questions, under each item (one photo of a sign), participants were asked the same three questions throughout the whole questionnaire related to the intelligibility of Thai English for them and their attitude towards Thai English mistakes on signs. The three questions were as follows:

1) Regarding the intelligibility, they were asked to rate how well they could understand the English message on the sign from 1 *incomprehensible* to 6 *comprehensible*.

The question used was ‘**How well do you understand the English message on the sign?**’ (see Figure 4.25)’

2) They were asked to write what they thought the message meant to them in the box provided.

The question used was ‘**What does the message mean to you?**’ (see Figure 4.25)’

3) They were asked to express their attitudes towards the English language problem on the sign from 1 *not serious at all* to 6 *very serious*.

The question was ‘**If there is a problem with the English message, how serious do you think it is?**’ (see Figure 4.25)’ This question was taken from the work by Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998) about pragmatic versus grammatical awareness in instructed second language learning as it fits this survey well.

1.1 How well do you understand the English message on the sign?

incomprehensible comprehensible

1.2 What does the message mean to you?

1.3 If there is a problem with the English message, how serious do you think it is?

not serious at all very serious

Figure 4.25 Three questions under each photo

The aim of the first question was to find out how well participants thought they could understand the Thai English messages on the signs (their perception). Then the second question was asked to reflect the real intelligibility of Thai English for participants (their actual understanding).

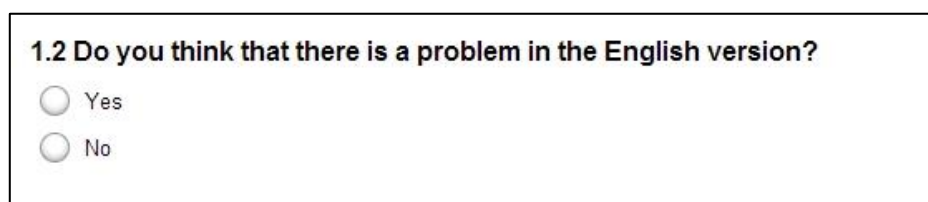
The third question was aimed to elicit participants’ opinions towards Thai English by asking them to rate how serious they thought the English mistake on each sign was.

Finally, to make the questionnaire shorter, I reduced the number of signs from 60 to 35 based on the results from the reliability analysis and the frequency of the nine patterns of Thai English. After that, I asked ten international participants to do the survey to find out the time they spent on the questionnaire and asked for their feedback for further development of the questionnaire.

4.4.2 Second Stage

Based on the feedback from the ten participants and the results from the preliminary study, I made some changes to the questionnaire as follows:

- 1) Items with no grammatical error were added because there should be both correct and incorrect signs so that the survey can measure participants' actual understanding of Thai English better.
- 2) The required-answer option was no longer used for the reason that some participants might want to browse through the questionnaire first before deciding whether they would be willing to participate in the study or not. Hence, participants could browse through all the questions, skip, and go back and forth if they wished.
- 3) To make the questionnaire more concise and less time-consuming for participants, the question '*What does the message mean to you?*' and the box provided were removed and replaced by the simple question '*Do you think there is a problem in the English version?*' (see Figure 4.26).



1.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the English version?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Figure 4.26 The question about the correct recognition

There might be a case that there is no problem on the English message but the audience cannot understand the meaning and vice versa. Therefore, this question could help to identify the problematic items/ categories in the audience's opinion.

- 4) Based on the preliminary study, the questions about education and occupation of the respondents did not lead to any significant finding, so they were omitted.
- 5) Instead of offering participants some money for the interview, at the end of the questionnaire, I asked participants to leave their email address if they would like to be interviewed. However, if the number of respondents willing to help was low, I could still consider providing them some compensation for their time.

Based on the preliminary study and discussions with the ten participants, the intelligibility of Thai English could greatly depend on how common or extreme the samples were. All categories could be barely or clearly understood depending on how serious the mistakes were. Hence, instead of finding out the levels of participants' understanding, it would be interesting to find out about the attitude of people towards the erroneous English messages as well.

Taking these suggestions into consideration, I re-designed the questionnaire to find out about 1) how well international visitors thought they could understand Thai English, 2) what their actual understanding about Thai English would be, 3) how acceptable Thai English mistakes on signs would be. In addition, to make the study more interesting, the attitude of Thai people toward Thai English mistakes and the attitude of people from other countries toward the same mistakes would be compared. For this reason, the questionnaire was developed into two versions, namely the English version for international participants and a Thai version for Thai participants.

4.4.2.1 Criteria for Selecting the Items for the Questionnaire

First of all, regarding the items in the questionnaire, the signs to be used in the new version were selected on the levels of Thai English mistakes on signs ranging from no grammatical errors but socio-culturally unintelligible or at *Level 1*, minor errors, to major errors at *Level 3*.

The selection of eight signs that are grammatically correct was based on the discussion with a panel of six native speakers of English. I showed the photos of signs to them and had a discussion with them to ensure that the signs contained

no grammatical error. Then for Level 2 and Level 3, the signs were selected based on the results from the first-version questionnaire, the frequency of Thai English patterns found on signs and the feedback from the preliminary study.

4.4.2.2 Three Levels of Thai English Signs

The three levels of Thai English signs in the study can be defined as follows:

Level 1 refers to signs that are grammatically correct with nothing wrong with the grammar and spelling. However, they could be socio-culturally unintelligible because the information on the signs closely relates to Thai culture, tradition and the main religion, Buddhism. Therefore, people from different social contexts and backgrounds may find it difficult to understand the intended messages that the signs convey.

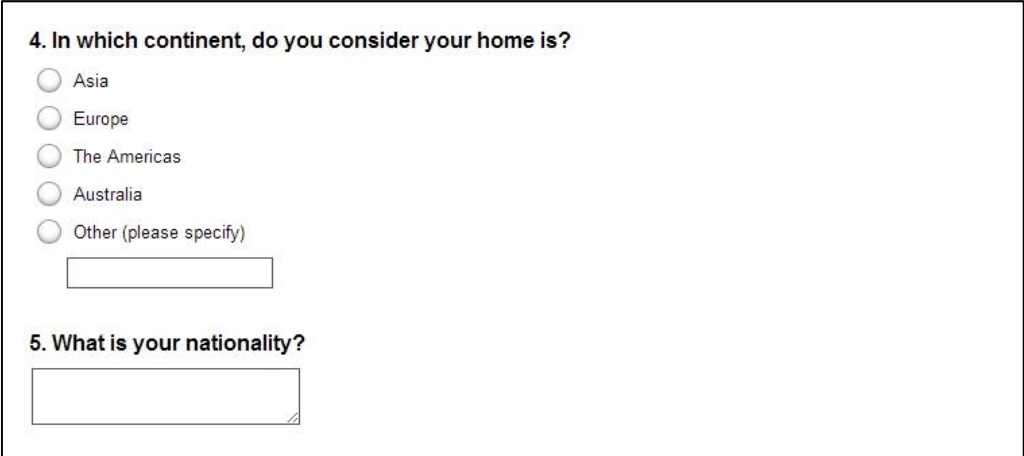
Level 2 refers to signs that contain some mistakes, especially grammatical mistakes, but could still be intelligible, but participants may have to negotiate meanings to understand the intended messages.

Level 3 refers to signs that are difficult to understand because the English messages on the signs are unclear or poorly translated. In addition, the English messages on Level 3 signs might not make any sense at all to participants or could mislead them to think about something else instead.

However, many studies into English as a lingua franca report that to understand a given message apart from the language itself, contexts and other social and cultural factors such as the location of signs, the use of symbols, and the use of colours and different font sizes, also play an important role apart from the language itself (Scollon and Scollon, 2003, Kirkpatrick, 2010). Therefore, there could be a chance that if the audience does not have enough background knowledge about Thailand, they may find it difficult to understand some English signs despite correct grammar. In other words, Thai English messages could still be possibly understood if the audience brings the contexts around the signs into account.

4.4.2.3 Modified Questions and Omission

The question about the participants' countries of residence was modified by asking participants for a continent they are from (see Figure 4.27). Regarding the question about participants' nationality, because one of the aims of the study is to compare the data between native speakers and non-native speakers, participants were asked to fill in their nationalities in the box provided so that I could categorise them into the groups of native vs. non-native speakers based on Kachru's (1989) model.



4. In which continent, do you consider your home is?

☐ Asia

☐ Europe

☐ The Americas

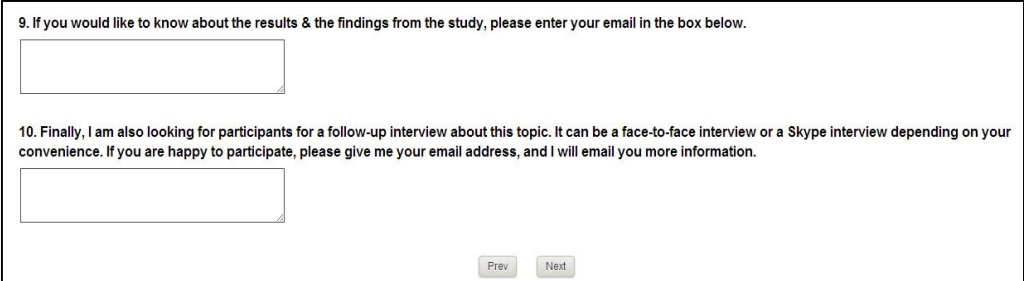
☐ Australia

☐ Other (please specify)

5. What is your nationality?

Figure 4.27 The questions about participants' geographic origin and nationality

At the end of the questionnaire, participants were asked to help with interviews by leaving their email address. Or, if they wanted to know about the result, they could also leave their email address in the space provided (see Figure 4.28).



9. If you would like to know about the results & the findings from the study, please enter your email in the box below.

10. Finally, I am also looking for participants for a follow-up interview about this topic. It can be a face-to-face interview or a Skype interview depending on your convenience. If you are happy to participate, please give me your email address, and I will email you more information.

Figure 4.28 Asking participants to leave their email address for further contact

After all the modifications, the last version of the questionnaire was ready and used for the real data collection.

4.4.3 Third Stage

In the final stage, the questionnaire is divided into five parts. The actual questionnaire can be found in Appendix 5.

4.4.3.1 Information Sheet

The information sheet of the survey gave participants information about the purposes of the study, the title of my project, items in the questionnaire, and time they were expected to spend on the questionnaire. In addition, according to the code of research conduct and research ethics (The University of Nottingham, 2013), participants must be at least 18 years of age, so the information sheet stated clearly that ‘In order to participate in this study, you need to be at least 18 years old.’

Moreover, I also encouraged respondents to contact me if they had any question before starting the survey. The first page of the questionnaire is as displayed in Figure 4.29.

The Use of English in Tourist Domains in Thailand

I. Information sheet

7%

First of all, I would like to thank you for your time to participate in this survey. The purposes of this study are to find out about 1) your understanding and 2) your attitude toward English used in Thailand.

This survey is part of a PhD research project titled 'English as a Lingua Franca: A Case Study of English Used on Signs in Tourist Domains in Thailand' under School of English, The University of Nottingham (UK).

There are 30 items in the questionnaire. It should take about 10 minutes of your time to complete the survey. Please answer 'all' the questions if possible. All data collected in this survey will be held anonymously and securely. No personal data is asked for or retained. Cookies, personal data stored by this Web browser, are not used in this survey.

In order to participate in this study, you need to be at least 18 years old. If you are under 18, please do not continue to the next page.

If you have any queries regarding the study, please do not hesitate to email Wipapan (Jib) Ngampramuan at aexwn@nottingham.ac.uk before starting doing the survey.

Next

Powered by **SurveyMonkey**
Check out our [sample surveys](#) and create your own now!

Figure 4.29 Information sheet (English version)

For the Thai version, the information given to the participants was the same, but the message was translated into Thai. Based on conversations with 20 Thai people, it was revealed that they would feel more comfortable doing the questionnaire in Thai. To encourage Thai people to participate in the questionnaire, I translated the whole questionnaire from the original English version into Thai. Figure 4.31 displays the information sheet of the Thai version.

1. Welcome

7%

ขอขอบคุณที่ให้ความสนใจร่วมตอบแบบสอบถามเพื่อการวิจัยชิ้นนี้ งานวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อเปรียบเทียบทัศนคติของชาวไทย และ ชาวต่างชาติ ที่มีต่อการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษบนป้ายตามสถานที่ท่องเที่ยวต่าง ๆ ในประเทศไทย ซึ่งเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของวิทยานิพนธ์ระดับปริญญาเอก (ปรัชญาดุษฎีบัณฑิต) สาขาภาษาศาสตร์ประยุกต์ (PhD in Applied Linguistics) ภาควิชาภาษาอังกฤษ มหาวิทยาลัยโนตติงแฮม ประเทศสหราชอาณาจักร (School of English, The University of Nottingham-UK)

หัวข้อวิจัยคือ การใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นสื่อกลาง: กรณีศึกษา ข่ายในสถานที่ท่องเที่ยวในประเทศไทย (English as a Lingua Franca: A Case Study of English Used in Tourist Domains in Thailand) ซึ่งเป็นผลงานการวิจัยของ วิชาพรรณ งานประมวญ

คำถามมีทั้งหมด 30 ข้อ ซึ่งจะใช้เวลาประมาณ 10 นาทีในการตอบแบบสอบถาม กรุณาค้นคำถามทุกข้อหากเป็นไปได้ คำตอบและข้อมูลของท่านจะถูกเก็บไว้เป็นความลับ และใช้เพื่อการศึกษาวิจัยเท่านั้น

หากท่านมีคำถามใดๆ เกี่ยวกับงานวิจัยชิ้นนี้ กรุณาส่งอีเมลมาที่ aexwn@nottingham.ac.uk

Next

Figure 4.30 Information sheet (Thai version)

4.4.3.2 Consent Form

The consent form (English version) is the same as the one in the previous version of the questionnaire. The Thai version (translated from English into Thai) can be found in Figure 4.31.

Interview_English used in tourist domains (Thai)

Consent form

14%

กรุณาใส่เครื่องหมายถูก "ทุกข้อ" หากท่านสมัครใจเข้าร่วมทำแบบสอบถาม

☐ ข้าพเจ้ายืนยันว่า "ได้ฟังคำอธิบายเกี่ยวกับวัตถุประสงค์ของการวิจัย และมีความเข้าใจในวัตถุประสงค์เป็นอย่างดี

☐ ข้าพเจ้าได้มีโอกาสถามคำถามที่สงสัย และได้รับคำตอบแล้ว

☐ ข้าพเจ้าทราบว่า การเข้าร่วมงานวิจัยนี้เป็นไปด้วยความสมัครใจ และข้าพเจ้าสามารถถอนตัวได้ทุกเมื่อ โดยไม่จำเป็นต้องให้เหตุผล และคำนึงถึงผลกระทบที่จะตามมา

☐ ข้าพเจ้าทราบว่า ข้อมูลทุกอย่างจะถูกเก็บไว้เป็นความลับ และข้อมูลส่วนตัวของข้าพเจ้าจะไม่ถูกนำไปเปิดเผยในงานวิจัย

☐ ข้าพเจ้าทราบว่า ในการเข้าร่วมการวิจัยนี้ "ไม่ก่อให้เกิดความเสี่ยงหรือมีอันตรายใดๆ

☐ ข้าพเจ้ายืนยันว่า "ได้อ่านข้อมูลข้างต้นทั้งหมด และยินดีเข้าร่วมการศึกษาวิจัยครั้งนี้

Prev Next

Figure 4.31 Consent form (Thai version)

4.4.3.3 Thirty Items in the Questionnaire

As aforementioned in Section 4.4.3.3, the selection of the thirty items for the online questionnaire was based on grammatical and lexico-semantic features, a panel discussion with native speakers, the results from the first-version questionnaire, the frequency of Thai English patterns, and feedback from participants from the pilot study. As aforementioned, signs were categorised into three levels based on errors. For Level 1, there are eight items- four grammatical items and four lexico-semantic items. For Level 2, there are twelve items- eight

grammatical items and four lexico-semantic items. For Level 3, there are ten items- four grammatical items and six lexico-semantic items.

In the questionnaire, the signs from the three levels were shuffled for the reason that this would not make it too easy for participants to guess answers (Dörnyei, 2007). In both the Thai and English versions, the 30 items in the questionnaire were in similar order. The details of the 30 items used in the questionnaire can be found in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Thirty items of the signs in the survey

	Level 1 (8 items)	Level 2 (12 items)	Level 3 (10 items)
Grammatical features	Q7 Museum/ Admission fee	Q1 Close	Q22 Thai house style
	Q10 No littering in public places	Q2 Open time	Q23 If you are hire a pet in the room.
	Q18 Foot massage	Q3 Sales items cannot be changes	Q24 Please it neatly
	Q26 Tourists Discount 15% off	Q4 Wel come	Q30 Exhibition hell
		Q5 Please next counter Q16 No parking across the entrance-exit Q25 No trolley inside Q28 Coming sooooon	
Lexico-semantic features	Q6 beautiful girl passport	Q19 2 free 1	Q11 Food order
	Q8 Feed a pigeon lose a finger	Q20 3 pcs up -> 50 B/ each	Q12 A motorcycle works for invite 2 ladders
	Q9 toilet/ Please take off your shoes	Q21 Happy toilet	Q13 Forbidden island glass
	Q17 Carrying fake goods to some European countries is a crime.	Q27 Wat Phra Kaeo/ Kaew	Q14 OTOP
			Q15 Please ring to bring back clean Q29 Ovalcano

Under each questionnaire item, participants were asked a set of three questions, each of which represents different research studies. The first study examines the degrees of intelligibility of Thai English (see Chapter 5 for more


details). The second study evaluates participants' correct recognition of the meanings of the signs (see Chapter 6 for more details). Next, the third study focuses on the attitudes of participants towards Thai English mistakes on signs (see Chapter 7 for more details).

4.4.3.4 Five-Part Format of Each Item

All 30 items contained the same five-part format, which can be seen in Figure 4.32.

- 1) The first part introduces the scenario/ gives the context where the sign was found or shows the location of the sign. There were six main settings that the signs were taken from, namely markets, shopping areas, temples, parks, restaurants and public transport hubs.
- 2) The second part is a photo of the sign.
- 3) The third part is the intelligibility question asking '*How well do you understand the English message on the sign?*' followed by a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1 '*incomprehensible*' to 6 '*comprehensible*'.
However, in the Thai version, the participants were asked '*How well do you think international visitors can understand the English message on the sign?*' Then the results from the English version (the actual intelligibility of non-Thai people) would be compared with the results from the Thai version (Thai people's assumption of non-Thai people's Thai English intelligibility).
- 4) The fourth part is the question about their correct recognition asking '*Do you think that there is any problem in the English version?*' followed by the two choices '*Yes*' and '*No*'.
- 5) The last part is the question about their awareness of the English used on signs asking '*If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?*' followed by a six-point self-rating scale ranging from 1 '*not serious at all*' to 6 '*very serious*'.

1. You see this sign at an airline counter at the airport.



1.1 How well do you understand the English message on the sign?

1 incomprehensible 2 3 4 5 6 comprehensible

1.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the English version?

☐ Yes
☐ No

1.3 If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?

1 not serious at all 2 3 4 5 6 very serious

Figure 4.32 Five-part format (English version)

Figure 4.33 shows the five-part format in Thai language.

1. ท่านเห็นป้ายนี้ที่สนามบิน



1.1 ท่านคิดว่าชาวต่างชาติจะสามารถเข้าใจภาษาอังกฤษบนป้ายนี้ได้ในระดับใด

1 ไม่เข้าใจเลย 2 3 4 5 6 เข้าใจได้

1.2 ท่านคิดว่าข้อความภาษาอังกฤษบนป้าย มีปัญหาหรือไม่

☐ มี
☐ ไม่มี

1.3 หากมีปัญหาก่อน ท่านคิดว่าควรต้องแก้ไขหรือไม่

1 ไม่จำเป็นต้อง 2 3 4 5 6 จำเป็นมาก

Figure 4.33 Five-part format (Thai version)

4.4.3.5 Participants' Information

For further analysis, the participants were asked for their biographical data. The international participants and Thai participants were mainly asked different questions except the questions about their gender, age, and English proficiency.

1) *English version*

In the English version, the international visitors were asked for their information as follows:

Age and Gender

The first two questions of the biographical data page asked about participants' age and gender (see Figure 4.34).

The screenshot shows a survey form with a green header bar containing the title "The Use of English in Tourist Domains in Thailand". Below the header is a yellow bar with the section title "IV. Participant's information". A progress bar indicates 93% completion. The first question is "1. What is your gender?" with radio button options for "Female" and "Male". The second question is "2. What is your age?" with radio button options for "18-24", "25-34", "35-44", "45-54", "55-64", and "65 and over".

Figure 4.34 Biographical data: age and gender (English version)

Trip to Thailand

The third question asked whether participants had visited Thailand before or not (see Figure 4.35).

The screenshot shows a survey form with a question "3. Have you ever visited Thailand before?" and two radio button options: "Yes" and "No".

Figure 4.35 Biographical data: Trip to Thailand (English version)

Geographic Origin

As aforementioned, the participants were asked about their geographic origin and nationality for further factor analysis.

English Proficiency

Contexts and participants' background knowledge are considered one of the major factors to help people understand a given variety of English. Hence,

English proficiency should be taken into consideration. In the questionnaire, six can-do statements adapted from The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) were used to identify participant's English proficiency (see Appendix 3 for The Common European Framework).

In this research, English proficiency of participants is divided into six levels based on The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2013). The CEFR provides a set of six common reference levels, namely 1) A1 or breakthrough or beginner, 2) A2 or way stage or elementary, 3) B1 or threshold or intermediate, 4) B2 or vantage or upper intermediate, 5) C1 or effective operation proficiency or advanced, and 6) C2 or mastery or proficiency. In this research, the six levels of CEFR are adapted, so English proficiency of the participants is divided into 1) elementary, 2) beginner, 3) intermediate, 4) upper intermediate, 5) advanced, and 6) proficient.

The term *proficient* in this research refers to the proficiency that is beyond the *advanced* level. According to the CEFR, those at C2, or proficient level as used in this research, have to be able to understand with ease the language of virtually everything heard or read, be able to summarise information from different spoken and written sources, be able to reconstruct arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation and be able to express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations (Council of Europe, 2013).

Apart from the six common CEFR levels, in this research, native speakers are also included as it is hypothesised that English proficiency and non/native English background may affect the intelligibility of the signs for participants.

8. Please select 'one' statement that can best describe your English proficiency.

- ☐ I am a native speaker of English.
- ☐ I can express myself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in the most complex situations.
- ☐ I can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes and can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects.
- ☐ I can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options but not in a very complex way.
- ☐ I can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
- ☐ I can describe in simple terms aspects of my background, something about myself and some general issues arising in everyday life.
- ☐ I can interact in a simple way if the other person talks slowly and clearly.

Figure 4.36 Biographical data: English proficiency (English version)

Knowing Results and Follow-Up Interview

Participants were asked to leave their email address if they wanted to know the results of the study and/ or if they were willing to help with a follow-up interview.

Thank-You Page

Apart from expressing my gratitude to the respondents, I also gave them a link to the survey answers in case they wanted to know more about Thai English.

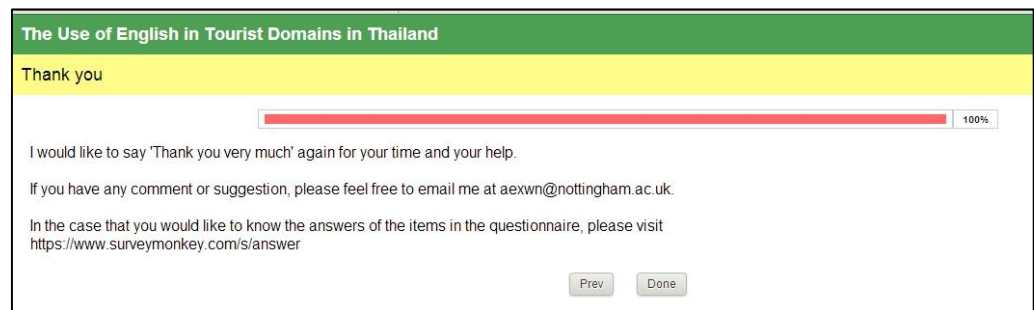


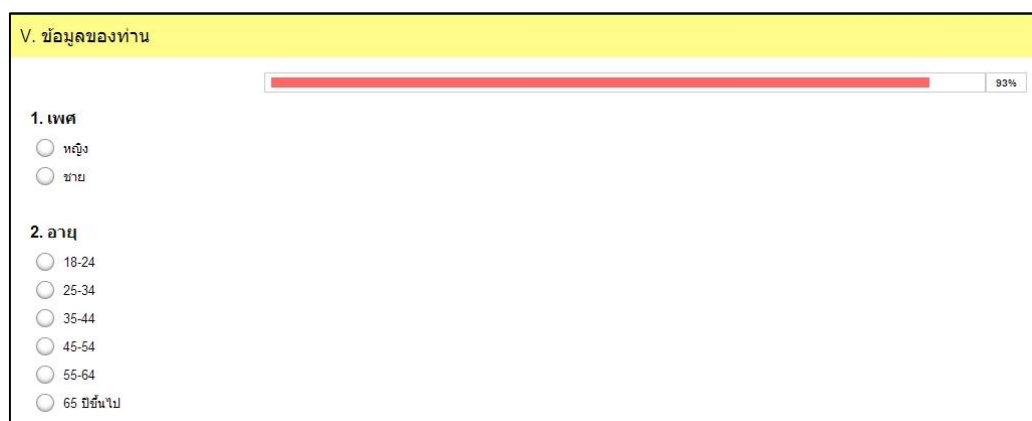
Figure 4.37 Thank-you page (English version)

2) Thai version

In the Thai version, participants were asked to provide their information as follows:

Age and Gender

The first two questions were similar to those asked in the English version. The information about age and gender in both versions would be used for comparing the data and attitudes of Thai and non-Thai people towards the same issues.



V. ข้อมูลของท่าน

93%

1. เพศ

☐ หญิง

☐ ชาย

2. อายุ

☐ 18-24

☐ 25-34

☐ 35-44

☐ 45-54

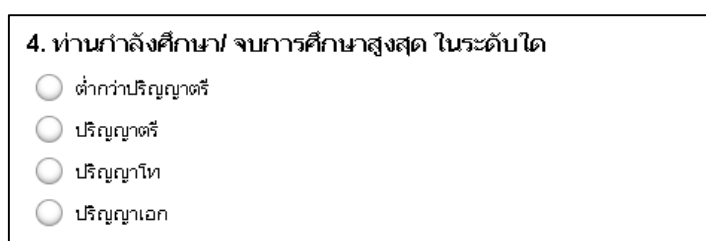
☐ 55-64

☐ 65 ปีขึ้นไป

Figure 4.38 Biographical data: age and gender (Thai version)

Education

Levels of education may affect Thai people's attitude towards Thai English. Therefore, participants were also asked about their highest level of education.



4. ท่านกำลังศึกษา/ จบการศึกษาสูงสุดในระดับใด

☐ ต่ำกว่าปริญญาตรี

☐ ปริญญาตรี

☐ ปริญญาโท

☐ ปริญญาเอก

Figure 4.39 Biographical data: participant's education (Thai version)

The translation of the message in Figure 4.39 about participant's education is 'What is your current/ highest level of education?'

- ☐ College and below
- ☐ Bachelor's Degree
- ☐ Master's Degree
- ☐ Doctoral Degree'

English Proficiency

To find out about the English proficiency of Thai participants, the same can-do statements adapted from The Common European Framework as used in the English version were translated into Thai (see Figure 4.40).

4. ความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษของท่านอยู่ในระดับใด

☐ สามารถสื่อสารสิ่งที่ต้องการพูด/เขียนได้อย่างคล่องแคล่วและแม่นยำ สามารถเข้าใจความหมายลึกๆของภาษาอังกฤษ/สำนวนส่วนใหญ่ได้ดี และสามารถใช้อังกฤษได้ในสถานการณ์ที่ซับซ้อนได้เป็นส่วนใหญ่

☐ สามารถใช้อังกฤษในการสื่อสารได้อย่างค่อนข้างมีประสิทธิภาพ ในชีวิตประจำวัน รวมถึงในเชิงวิชาการ และในการทำงาน สามารถสร้างประโยคเพื่อสื่อความได้อย่างชัดเจน ถูกหลักไวยากรณ์ ในหัวข้อที่ซับซ้อนได้เป็นส่วนใหญ่

☐ สามารถเข้าใจความต่าง ๆ ในหัวข้อที่ต่างกัน และสามารถแสดงความเห็นในบางหัวข้อได้ สามารถให้ความเห็นในบางหัวข้อเกี่ยวกับข้อดี ข้อเสีย และทางเลือก ในกรณีที่หัวข้อไม่ซับซ้อนมากนัก

☐ สามารถใช้อังกฤษในการกล่าวถึงประสบการณ์และเหตุการณ์ต่าง ๆ ในชีวิตของตนเอง เช่น ความฝัน ความหวัง การวางแผนในอนาคต และสามารถให้เหตุผลสนับสนุนความคิดเห็นของตนเองได้

☐ สามารถใช้อังกฤษง่ายๆ ในการเล่าเรื่องเกี่ยวกับตัวเอง และเหตุการณ์ที่เกิดขึ้นในชีวิตประจำวันได้

☐ สามารถใช้อังกฤษสื่อสารได้บ้าง หากผู้รับสารพูดซ้ำ ๆ และชัด ๆ

Figure 4.40 Biographical data: English proficiency (Thai version)

Follow-Up Interview and Comment

Participants were asked to leave their email address if they would be happy to help with a follow-up interview.

5. ผู้วิจัยอาจมีการขอความคิดเห็นเพิ่มเติมเกี่ยวกับภาษาอังกฤษบนป้ายที่นำมาใช้ในงานวิจัยนี้ หากท่านยินดีที่จะให้ความคิดเห็น กรุณาให้อีเมล แอดเดรส ของท่านไว้ด้วย อีเมลของท่านจะไม่มีมีการนำไปให้บุคคลที่สามต่อ หรือใช้ในเชิงพาณิชย์โดยเด็ดขาด

Figure 4.41 Biographical data: Follow-up interview (Thai version)

In the end, I also asked Thai participants to leave their comments or suggestions (see Figure 4.42).

6. หากท่านมีข้อเสนอแนะ/ความคิดเห็นเพิ่มเติม สามารถฝากไว้ด้านล่าง หรือส่งอีเมลมาได้ที่ aexwn@nottingham.ac.uk ค่ะ

Figure 4.42 Bio data: comment/ feedback (Thai version)

The translation from Figure 4.42 is

‘If you have any further comment or suggestion, please leave it in the box below or email me at aexwn@nottingham.ac.uk.’

Thank-You Page

Similar to the English version, I expressed my gratitude to the participants for their help and gave them the link to the answers of the questionnaire items.

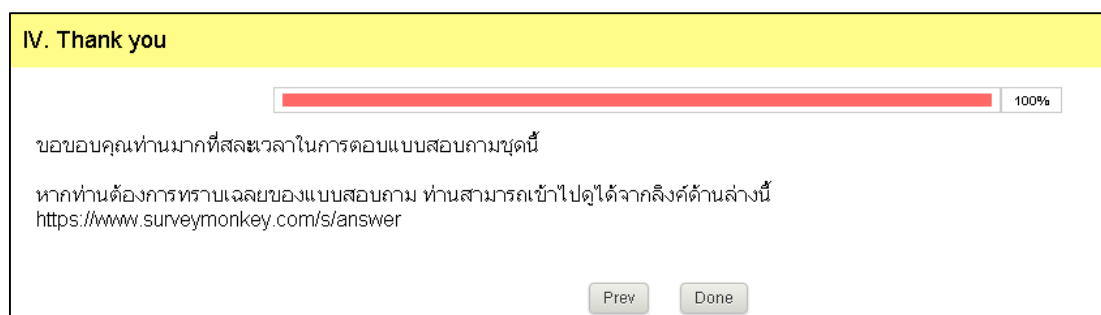


Figure 4.43 Thank you page (Thai version)

4.4 Data Collection, Measurement Quality and Data Analysis

This section presents information about the data collection process for the online questionnaire and some detailed information about the research participants regarding their gender, age and English proficiency. It also provides the information about the qualitative data collection done by interviewing 51 participants, followed by the measurement quality used for evaluating the online questionnaire. The Cronbach's alpha α was first done in the early stage of the data collection to ensure that the questionnaire could “consistently reflect the construct that it is measuring” (Field, 2013: 706) and later on done after the data had been completely collected. Finally, the chapter discusses the tools for data analysis used for getting the results in Chapters 5-7.

4.4.1 Data Collection: Online Questionnaire

Before starting collecting the data, the ethical approval form was submitted to the research ethics committee of the School of English, The University of Nottingham (UK), and the approval was granted for both the online questionnaire and interviews (see Appendix 6). The code of research ethics and research conduct was strictly followed throughout the project.

Because the questionnaire was available in two versions, there were some minor differences in the recruiting process. Hence, the data collection of each questionnaire version is reported separately.

4.4.1.1 English Version

The English version questionnaire was first launched on 6th November 2013. To recruit participants, I used social media sites, personal connections, emails and web boards as channels to distribute the questionnaire.

Regarding the social media sites, I first posted the link to the questionnaire on my own Facebook page asking my friends to participate in the questionnaire and asking them to pass the link on to their friends or share the link on their Facebook pages.

In addition, to increase the number of participants, I sent personal Facebook messages and emails to over 80 international friends individually. Besides, I also forwarded the same message to over 50 Thai friends living abroad to ask them to pass the link on to two or three reliable friends. The reason why I sent emails to all the friends individually was that it seemed more appropriate and would be more effective to address an email/ a message to a particular person instead of using 'Dear all'.

After 7 weeks, 621 participants had filled in the questionnaire but 163 copies were incomplete. After launching the questionnaire for a week, I noticed that out of 300 copies, 57 were incomplete. Later on, during the same week, I got emails from participants living in the United Kingdom, Canada, Japan and Iran informing me that after doing the questionnaire for a while, they were sent back to the starting page again. They had to start over from the beginning due to the fact that the items they had completed earlier were not saved. These emails helped to clarify that the incompleteness mainly happened because of technical issues of the website rather than participants giving up the questionnaire.

To find out the cause of the problem, I thoroughly checked all the incomplete copies again and found out that this could have happened because the server might have been down during a certain period of time. For example,

on 14th November 2013, from 16.00 to 16.45 hours, eight participants who filled in the questionnaire could not go through to the end. Moreover, on 15th November 2013, between 6.00 and 7.00 hours, none of the eleven participants who filled in the questionnaire could complete the questionnaire.

In summary, the English-version questionnaire was closed on 26th December 2013. In total, it took 7 weeks to get 456 completed copies, and 163 copies were deleted due to the fact that they were incomplete.

4.4.1.2 Thai Version

The Thai-version questionnaire was launched on 7th November 2013, which was one day after the launch of the English version. I used the same channels, namely social media sites, personal connections and emails, to recruit participants.

During the first three weeks, there were around 250 respondents. The number was rather low in comparison with the number of international participants at the same period of time. One of my friends who is in a fan club of a famous Thai actor suggested that she could probably help by posting the link to the forum of the club as she knew many people there. After she had done it, I got over 400 more participants in two weeks.

In summary, the Thai-version questionnaire was closed on 3rd January 2014. There were over 1,000 people who participated in the questionnaire. However, due to some technical problems of the website, only 810 copies of the questionnaire were completed. I had to delete the other 198 copies due to their incompleteness.

To sum up, when combining the participants from the English version with the Thai version, there are 1,266 participants in total.

4.4.2 Research Participants

This section numerically reports detailed information about the research participants regarding their gender, age and English proficiency.

4.4.2.1 All Participants

When combining the two data sets together, it can be seen that the number of Thai participants (N= 810) is 1.7 times greater than the number of international participants (N = 456).

Each data set also has some missing information regarding the biographical data. For the international one, 11 people did not fill in their personal data but finished the questionnaire. In the same way, 16 Thai participants left their personal information blank. When excluding the missing data, in both sets, there were more female participants. In the international version, the numbers of male and female respondents were almost equal (male = 218 or 17.8% of all participants and female = 227 or 18.5%). In the Thai version, the number of female participants (n = 548 or 44.7% of all) was 2.5 times greater than male ones (n = 246 or 20.1% of all). It can be seen from Figure 4.44 that the numbers of male participants in both data sets were quite similar (international male participants = 218 or 17.8% of all, Thai male participants= 246 or 20.1% of all).

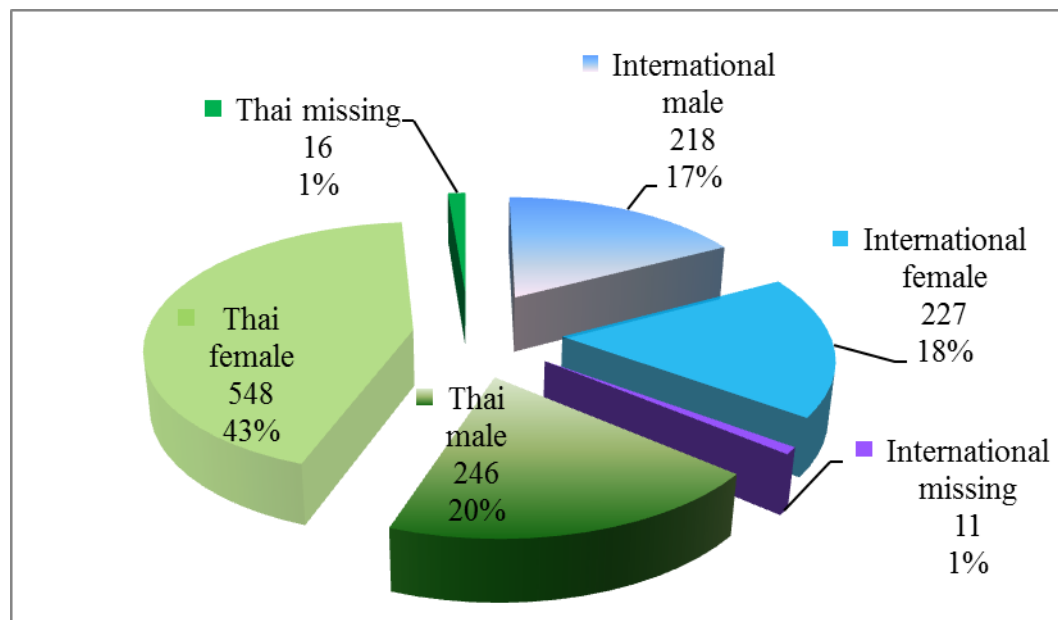


Figure 4.44 All participants by gender

Figure 4.44 illustrates the information about the genders of Thai and international participants. More details about the research participants can be found in Table 4.6.

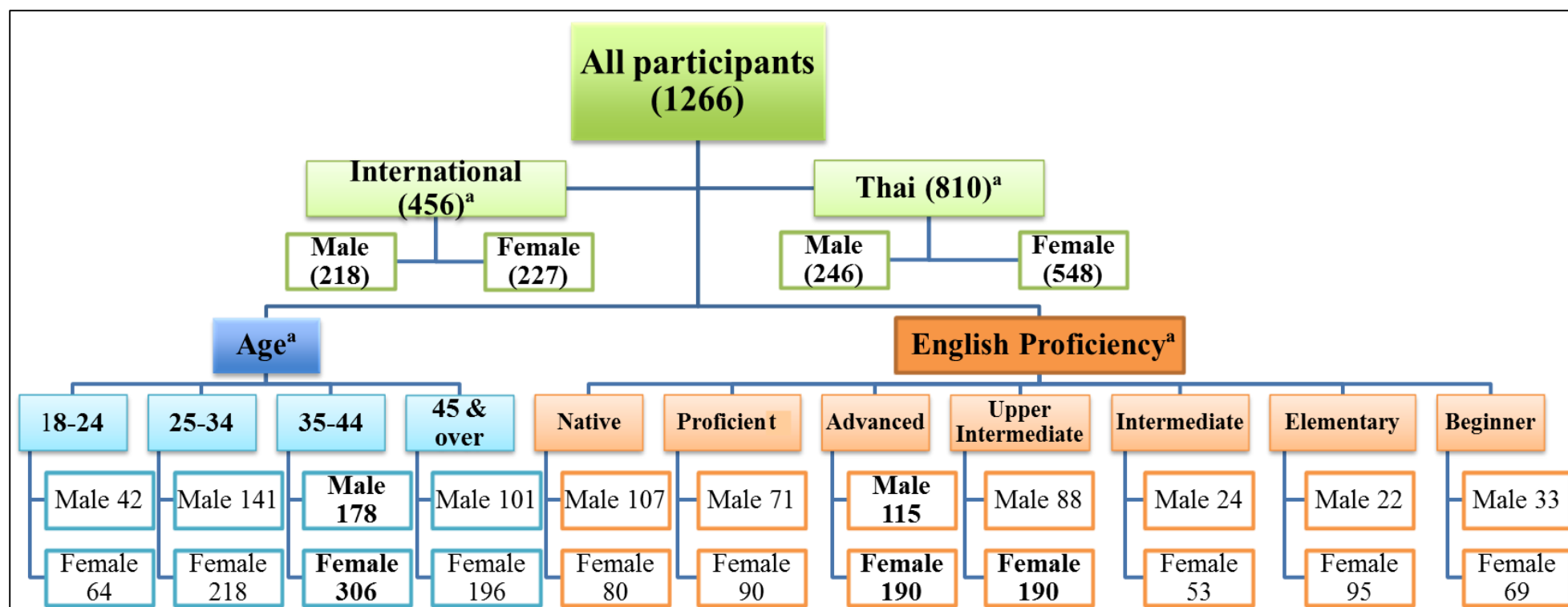
Table 4.6 All 1, 266 participants' information about age and English proficiency by gender

	Gender	International	Thai	Total
	Male	218	246	464
	Female	227	548	775
<i>Missing</i>		11	16	27
18-24	Male	38	4	42
	Female	64	0	64
25-34	Male	94	47	141
	Female	115	103	218
35-44	Male	51	127	178
	Female	33	273	306
45 and over	Male	34	67	101
	Female	25	171	196
<i>Missing</i>	Male	1	1	2
	Female	2	1	3
Native	Male	107	0	107
	Female	80	0	80
Proficient	Male	37	34	71
	Female	43	47	90
Advanced	Male	44	71	115
	Female	64	126	190
Upper intermediate	Male	20	68	88
	Female	26	164	190
Intermediate	Male	7	17	24
	Female	8	45	53
Elementary	Male	1	21	22
	Female	4	91	95
Beginner	Male	2	31	33
	Female	1	68	69
<i>Missing</i>	Male	0	4	4
	Female	1	7	8

Table 4.6 shows information about age and English proficiency of Thai and international participants by gender. In the actual questionnaire, there were six age groups, namely 1) 18-24 years old, 2) 25-34 years old, 3) 35-44 years

old, 4) 45-54 years old, 5) 55 – 64 years old, and 6) 65 years old and over. After the online questionnaire was closed, it appeared that the major groups of participants were aged between 18 and 44 years old, and there were not many participants belonging to the last two age groups. For example, in the case of international participants, there were 30 participants aged 45-54 years old, 10 participants aged 55-64 years old and 7 participants aged 65 years old and over. For Thai participants, there were 189 participants aged 45-54 years old. But, there were only 34 participants aged 55-64 years old and 12 participants aged 65 years old and over. Due to the small number of respondents aged 55 years old and over, the number of participants in the last two groups were collapsed and combined with those who were between 45-54 years old. The new group is called 45 years old and over.

Therefore, in the data in this chapter and the analysis in Chapters 5-7, the age groups of participants were reduced to four groups, namely 1) 18-24 years old, 2) 25-34 years old, 3) 35-44 years old, and 4) 45 years old and over. Figure 4.45 also shows the number of all 1,266 participants by age and English proficiency. The age group and English proficiency level containing the highest number of participants are presented in bold.



^a Some information is missing

Figure 4.45 The number of participants by age, gender, and English proficiency

According to Table 4.6 and Figure 4.45, it can be seen that the main group of participants is aged between 35 and 44 years old (male = 178, which accounts for 14.5% of all participants, female = 306 or 25%) followed by those aged between 25-34 years old (male = 141 or 11.5%, female = 218 or 17.8%).

Regarding participants' English proficiency excluding native speakers (n = 187 or 15.3%), it appears that the majority of participants are at the advanced level (male = 115 or 9.4%, female = 190 or 15.5%) followed by upper intermediate (male = 88 or 7.2%, female = 190 or 15.5%). Therefore, it can be assumed that research participants in this study had relatively high English proficiency.

Based on Table 4.6, when the two data sets are compared, it can be seen that the numbers of male and female international and male and female Thai participants who are proficient in English are quite similar (international male participants = 37 or 3% of all participants, Thai male participants = 34 or 2.8% of all participants, international female participants = 43 or 3.5%, Thai female participants = 47 or 3.8%) although the number of Thai female participants (n = 548 or 44.7%) is far greater than the number of international female participants (n = 227 or 18.5%).

On the other hand, only three international participants (or 0.2%) belong to elementary and beginner levels while 52 Thai participants (or 4.2% of all) belong to these two groups. Nevertheless, the data would not be enough to generalise that Thai people have lower English proficiency than people from other countries. In addition, as this is only participants' self-assessment, it might not be reliable. However, from the available data, it can be reasonably assumed that Thai participants who did the questionnaire may have lower English proficiency levels than non-Thai participants.

4.4.2.2 International participants

Table 4.7 shows the number and percentage of participants from five continents, namely Europe (n = 192 or 42% of all international participants), Asia (n = 139 or 30% of international participants), the Americas (n = 74 or 16% of all international participants), Australia and Oceania (n = 11 or 2% of all

international participants), and Africa (n = 6 or 1% of all international participants). The information about the continents of 41 international participants was missing, which accounts for 9% of the number of all international participants (see Table 4.7).

It can be seen that the main groups of participants are from two continents, which are Europe (n =192) and Asia (n = 139). The data of people from these two continents was later on used for testing the hypothesis about the continents where participants come from and the intelligibility of Thai English for them (see Chapter 5).

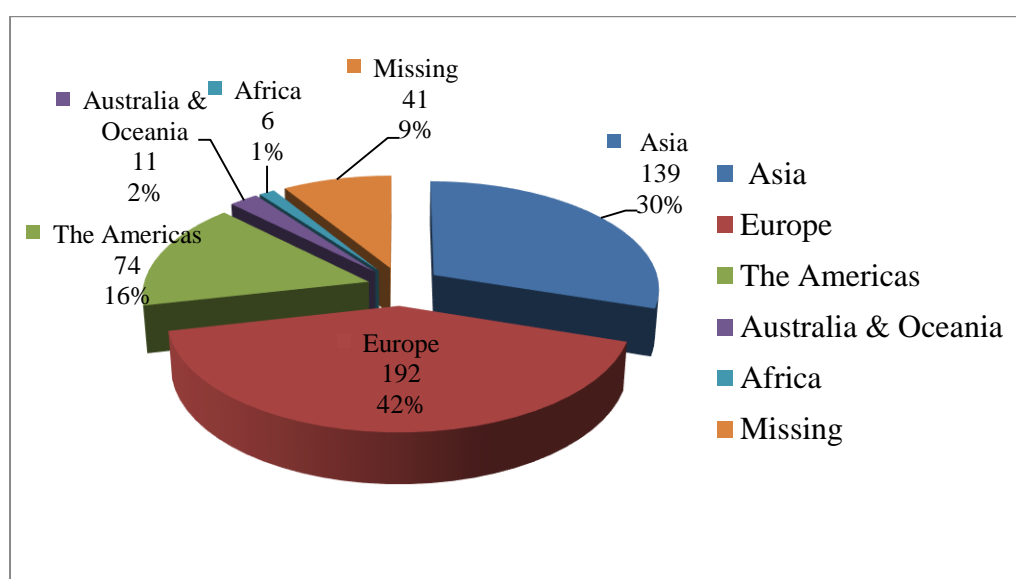
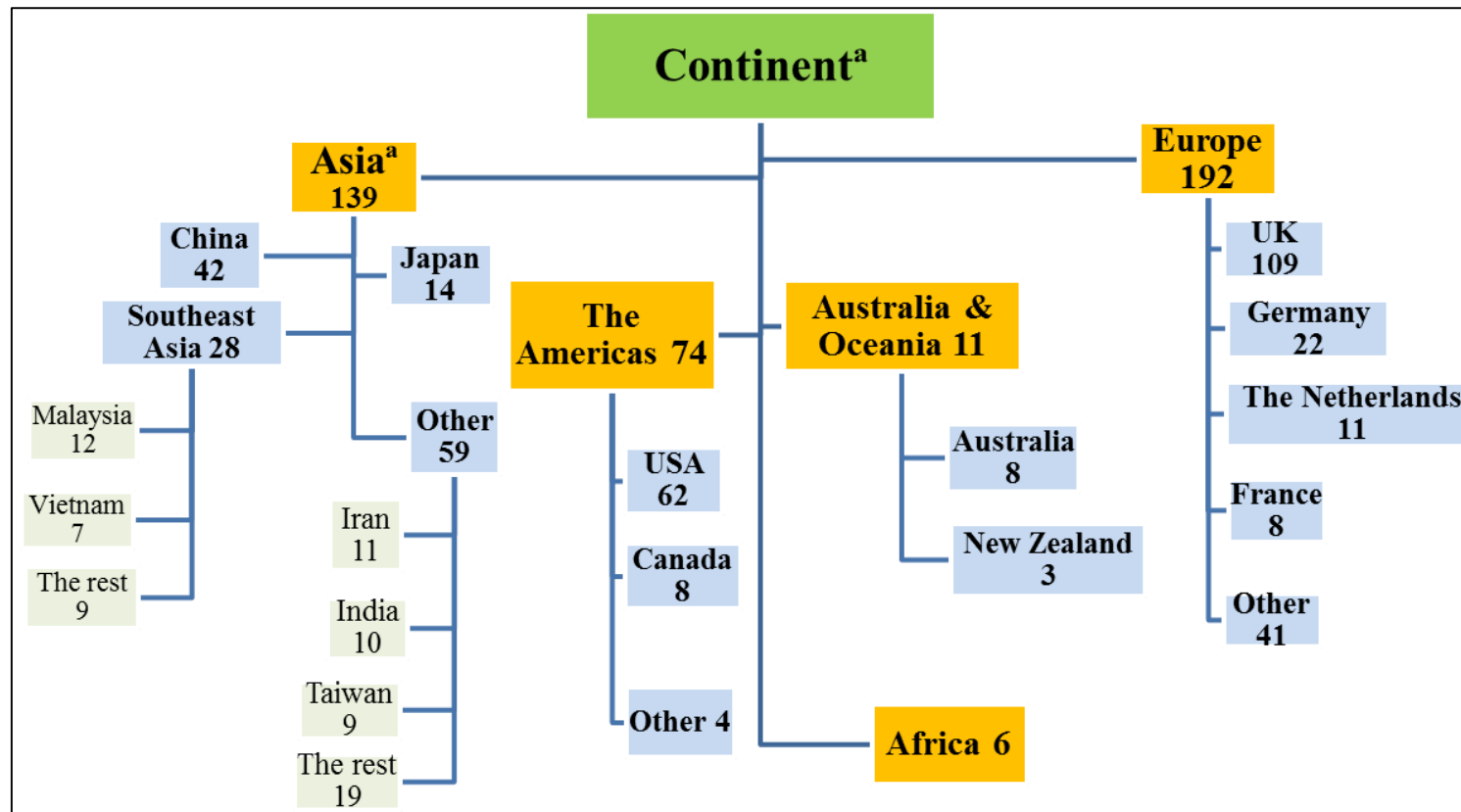


Figure 4.46 The number of participants by continent

International participants of this research come from 59 countries worldwide (see Appendix 4 for the full list of the countries). Figure 4.47 and Table 4.7 further show the number of participants from each continent. British people (n = 109) account for 57% of all European participants followed by the Germans (n = 22 or 11.5% of the European respondents). In Asia, the biggest group of participants is Chinese (n = 42), which accounts for 30% of all Asian participants



^aThe information about the continents of 41 participants is missing.

Figure 4.47 The number of international participants by continent including major countries

Table 4.7 The number of international participants by continent and country

Continent	Country	Participant	Percent %
Asia (n = 139)	China	42	9.2
	Japan	14	3.1
	Southeast Asia	Malaysia	12
		Vietnam	7
		The rest	9
	Other	Iran	11
		India	10
		Taiwan	9
		The rest	19
Europe (n = 192)	UK	109	23.9
	Germany	22	4.8
	The Netherlands	11	2.4
	France	8	1.8
	Other	41	9.0
The Americas (n = 74)	USA	62	13.6
	Canada	8	1.8
	Other	4	0.9
Australia & Oceania (n = 11)	Australia	8	1.8
	New Zealand	3	0.7
Africa (n =6)		6	1.3
Missing		41	8.8
Total		456	100%

Table 4.8 shows that the main age group of participants is between 25-34 years old (n = 209), accounting for 45.8% of all international participants, followed by the group of 18-24-year-old participants (n = 102 or 22.4% of all overseas respondents).

Regarding geographic origin, the two main groups of participants are from Europe (n = 192) and Asia (n = 139).

The numbers of those who have been and never been to Thailand are relatively similar (n = 221 or 48.5% for the former, and n = 224 or 49.1% for the latter).

In terms of English proficiency, the major group of participants is native speakers (n = 187 or 41%) followed by those at the proficient level (n = 101 or 22.1%).

Regarding non/native English background, 46.7% of participants (n = 213) use English as a foreign language. As the number of participants whose English is a second language is small (n = 25 or 5.5%), it is collapsed and combined with the group of

participants whose English is a foreign language. The new group is called ‘*non-native speakers*’.

Table 4.8 The number of male and female international participants by age, continent, trip to Thailand, English proficiency and non/native English background

		Male (n = 218)	Female (n=227)	Total
Age	18-24	38	64	102
	25-34	94	115	209
	35-44	51	33	84
	45 and over	34	13	47
	<i>Missing</i>	1	2	3
Continent	Asia	61	101	162
	Europe	99	92	191
	The Americas	48	26	74
	Australia& Oceania	6	5	11
	Africa	3	3	6
	<i>Missing</i>	1	0	1
Trip to Thailand	Yes	128	93	221
	No	90	134	224
English proficiency	Native	107	80	187
	Proficient	37	64	101
	Advanced	44	43	87
	Upper intermediate	20	26	46
	Intermediate	7	8	15
	Elementary	1	4	5
	Beginner	2	1	3
	<i>Missing</i>	0	1	1
English as a	Native language	112	83	195
	Second language	14	11	25
	Foreign language	85	128	213
	<i>Missing</i>	7	5	12

4.4.2.3 Thai participants

Table 4.9 The number of Thai participants by age, education, and English proficiency

		Male (n = 246)	Female (n = 548)	Total
Age	18-24	4	0	4
	25-34	47	103	150
	35-44	127	273	400
	45 and over	67	171	238
	<i>Missing</i>	1	1	2
Education	College and below	4	12	16
	Bachelor's Degree	96	237	333
	Master's Degree	99	258	357
	Doctoral Degree	47	40	87
	<i>Missing</i>	0	1	1
English proficiency	Proficient	34	47	81
	Advanced	71	126	197
	Upper intermediate	68	164	232
	Intermediate	17	45	62
	Elementary	21	91	112
	Beginner	31	68	99
	<i>Missing</i>	4	7	11

Table 4.9 presents numerical information about the Thai participants, composed of 246 male and 548 female participants. Different from the international ones, the main age group of Thai participants is 35-44 years old (n = 494), which accounts for 49.4% of all Thai participants followed by the group of 45-year-old-and-over participants (n = 238 or 29.4%). There are only four participants (or 0.5%) aged between 18 and 24 years old.

Regarding their education, the number of participants with a Master's Degree (n = 357 or 44.1%) is slightly higher than those with a Bachelor's Degree (n = 333 or 41.1%) while only 11% of participants have a Doctoral degree (n = 87) (see Figure 4.48).

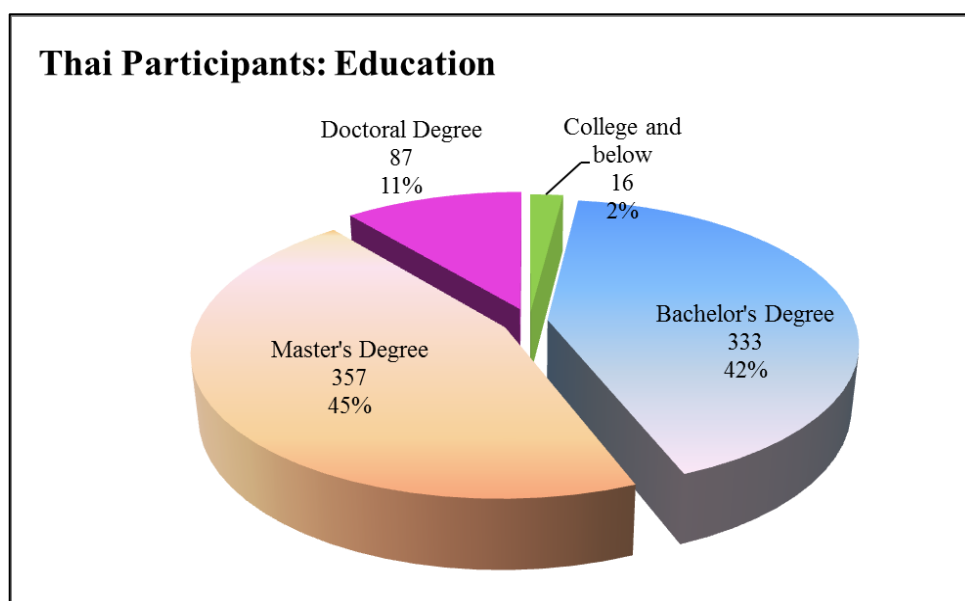


Figure 4.48 The levels of education of Thai participants

Regarding their English proficiency, the biggest group of participants is at the intermediate level ($n = 232$ or 28.6%) followed by the advanced level ($n = 197$ or 24.3%). The numbers of participants at the beginner level and the proficient level are relatively similar, $n = 99$ or 12.2% for the former and $n = 81$ or 10% for the latter (see Figure 4.49).

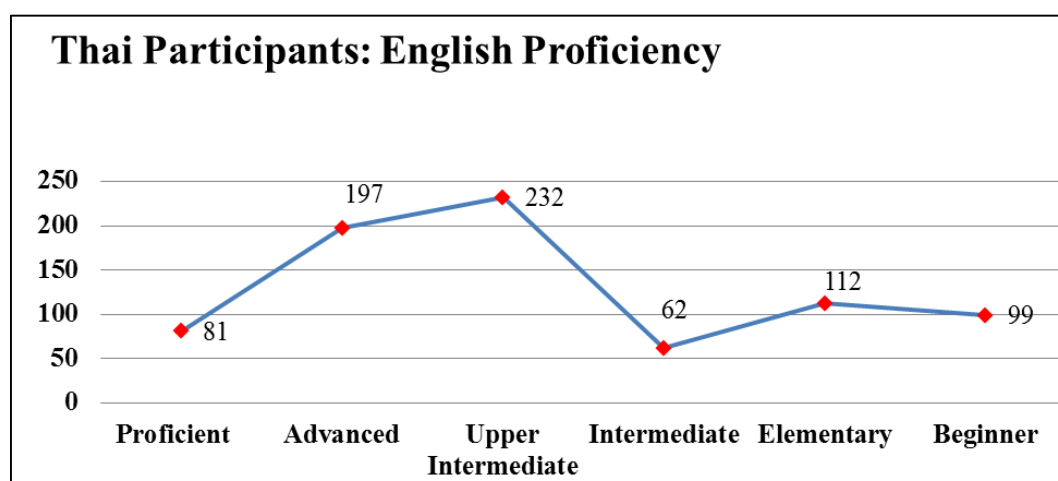


Figure 4.49 English proficiency of Thai participants

4.4.3 Data Collection: Interviews

Interviews are considered a method of triangulation or a way to check the validity of an interpretation with another source of data to see whether the interpretation/ analysis gotten from the first source is reasonable or not (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). In

addition, Kvale (1996: 1) adds that the qualitative research interview helps the researcher “to understand the world from the subject’s points of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples’ experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations.” In this research, the interviews with 51 participants were conducted during January and February 2014. Most of the interviews with international participants were done face-to-face, but 5 interviews with international participants were done via Skype, as I wanted to interview participants who had lived in Thailand, too. On the other hand, the interviews with Thai participants were mainly done online because there were not many Thai participants available in Nottingham during the time of the data collection.

Different groups of people involved with the presence of signs in tourist domains were also interviewed for the purpose of a triangulation check for the data analysis. Thirteen interviews with Thai participants were done via Skype and eight interviews were done face-to-face. All participants had been initially informed before the interview started that their voice would be recorded and what they would say during the interview would be noted down. According to ethical regulations, all interviewees were asked to sign a consent form or send an agreement via email before the interview was conducted (The University of Nottingham, 2013).

During the interview, *think aloud protocol*, which involves participants speaking out what is in their mind while performing the task, was partially employed (Bowles, 2010). Participants were asked to go through the 30 items in the questionnaire again and give a reason why they thought that they could understand each one very well, partially, or badly. In the case that the sign was not intelligible to them, they were also encouraged to guess the meaning so that I could observe what they took into account while trying to negotiate the meaning of the Thai English message. However, for items that the participants did not view as problematic, they were asked to explain what those items meant to them so that I could check whether they could correctly understand the messages.

After the participants had gone through the 30 items, they were also asked to express their opinion about the English used on signs in Thailand in general and to give some suggestions (if applicable) to help Thai people improve the use of English on signs in tourist domains in Thailand.

The interviews were held from 30 minutes to 1 hour depending on how fast or slow the participant was. Usually, participants did not spend much time on the items in Level 1. However, for the Level 2 items, the interviewees spent more time trying to negotiate the best meaning. They sometimes looked at the items a few times, read them aloud and tried to bring in the contexts to help before giving the final answer. Regarding the items in Level 3, many participants attempted to guess the intended meaning at first but then gave up later on. They admitted that despite looking at the contexts and using their background knowledge, it was very difficult to make any sense out of these Thai English messages.

The participants' opinions and suggestions from the interviews would be taken into account to further support/ explain the numerical results.

Table 4.10 The number of interviewed participants (N = 51)

	International Participants (n = 29)				Thai Participants (n =22)	
	Native		Non-native		Thailand	Abroad
	Thailand	No	Thailand	No		
Male	3	3	3	6	4	8
Female	2	3	2	7	4	6
Total	5	6	5	13	8	14

Table 4.10 shows the number of interviewees. There was an attempt to make the number of participants in each group as equal as possible so that the data would not be biased. For international participants (n = 29), 15 male participants were interviewed. Six of them are native speakers of English and nine of them are non-native speakers. Three native speaking interviewees had been to Thailand, and three non-native speakers had previously visited Thailand. Twelve female participants were interviewed. Five female interviewees are native speakers and nine female interviewees are non-native speakers. Two of the native female interviewees had gone to Thailand before, and two of the female non-native speakers had also previously visited Thailand.

Regarding the number of Thai interviewees, I interviewed 12 male participants and 10 female participants. The total number of Thai interviewees is 22. There are two groups of Thai participants. 'Thailand' refers to those who have never worked, studied or lived in another country. Those who used to live or are now living in another country are in the 'Abroad' group. I hypothesised that Thai people who had a chance to spend some

time in another country, especially an English speaking country, should be able to recognise Standard English forms better than Thai people who have been living in Thailand since they were born.

4.4.4 Measurement Quality: International Consistency

Reliability

4.4.4.1 Phase I: 50 Participants

After getting the first 50 questionnaire copies completed by international participants, I conducted a reliability analysis to measure the consistency of the scales and the items in the questionnaire (Field, 2013). The Cronbach's alpha α was employed to analyse the reliability of each study. The results for the internal consistency reliability based on the first 50 participants can be found in Table 4.11.

As aforementioned, there were 30 photos of signs in the questionnaire, and under each photo, participants were asked a set of three questions for three studies regarding the intelligibility of Thai English, recognition of Standard English and attitudes of participants towards Thai English messages on signs. The internal consistency reliability scales were analysed separately across the three levels based on grammatical features and lexico-semantic features.

According to Dörnyei (2007) and Field (2013), the scale of internal consistency should not include too many items or too few items at a time because if the scale includes too many items, it could result in a large value of α , which does not mean that the scale is reliable (Field, 2013: 709). On the other hand, if there are too few items on the scale, it could result in a somewhat lower alpha value.

Dörnyei (2007: 207) suggests that a well-developed scale of internal consistency should contain about 10 items and have an approximate α value of 0.80. Field (2013) argues that for ability tests, a cut-off point of 0.70 is more suitable, and it could also be acceptable if a value is below 0.70 for psychological constructs. In addition, Field (2013: 709) further supports that a value of 0.70 to 0.80 is not necessarily the only acceptable value for Cronbach's α , and a value below 0.70 does not always mean that the scale is an unreliable scale, especially for an attitude survey, because if the participants' answers are not various enough, the α value could be low, as it is shown in Table 4.11 for the items

about participants' attitudes in Level 1 and the items about correct recognition in Level 3.

Table 4.11 Internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's Alpha α) based on 50 participants

Variables	Features	Signs	Cronbach's Alpha α		
			Intelligibility	Correct Recognition	Attitude
Level 1	Grammar Lexico-semantic	8	0.84	0.70	0.56
		4	0.86	0.57	0.58
		4	0.70	0.47	0.56
Level 2	Grammar Lexico-semantic	12	0.84	0.78	0.89
		8	0.84	0.77	0.88
		4	0.73	0.49	0.77
Level 3	Grammar Lexico-semantic	10 ^a	0.72	0.51^a	0.83
		4	0.69	0.56	0.77
		6 ^a	0.62	0.43 ^a	0.83

^aOne item (Q12) is automatically removed from the scale of the correct recognition because each of the component variables has zero variance

According to Table 4.11, when looking at the Cronbach's Alpha α values of participants' perceptions about intelligibility of Thai English at Level 1 (8 items), Level 2 (12 items) and Level 3 (10 items), the Cronbach's Alpha α values for the three levels are between 0.70 and over 0.80, which can be considered good/ appropriate, and the Cronbach's Alpha α values of participants' correct recognition for Level 1 and Level 2 are over 0.70.

However, the Cronbach's Alpha α value for Level 3 items for the correct recognition of participants is at 0.51 because the items under this level contain major errors which were obvious for participants to recognise as incorrect. Therefore, most of the participants agreed that the items were problematic and they chose 'Yes' when asked whether there was a problem on the sign or not. Moreover, one item from this group (Question 12) was even automatically deleted from the scale for the reason that there was no variance because the mistake was very obvious, so every participant chose the same answer 'Yes' meaning there was something wrong or there was a problem with the English message on the sign. Due to the low variance, the Cronbach's α value of items in Level 3 (major errors) is below 0.70.

In the same way, the Cronbach's Alpha α value for Level 1 items regarding participants' attitudes towards Thai English messages is at 0.56 because the items under Level 1 contained no grammatical errors, so the participants chose relatively similar answers (between 1 and 3) on the six-point Likert scale from 1 *not serious* at all to 6 *very serious* because they did not see any serious problem on the signs. Because of the low variance, the Cronbach's α value of the items in Level 1 (no errors) is low.

4.4.4.2 Phase II: Real study

This section presents the internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's Alpha α) based on the data from the real study according to the groups of all participants (N = 1,266), international participants (n = 456) and Thai participants (n = 810) respectively.

All participants (1,266 people)

Table 4.12 Internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha α) (N = 1,266)

Variables	Features	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha α		
			Intelligibility	Correct	Attitude
Level 1		8	0.83	0.70	0.84
	Grammar	4	0.77	0.59	0.78
	Lexico-semantic	4	0.68	0.51	0.69
Level 2		12	0.84	0.72	0.86
	Grammar	8	0.84	0.68	0.85
	Lexico-semantic	4	0.58	0.46	0.62
Level 3		10	0.77	0.68	0.82
	Grammar	4	0.68	0.60	0.76
	Lexico-semantic	6	0.67	0.53	0.70

It can be seen from Table 4.12 that the overall scores for internal consistency reliability of the items under each level are good as they range from 0.68 to 0.84.

International participants (456 people)

Table 4.13 Internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha α) (N = 456)

Variables	Features	No.	Cronbach's Alpha α		
			Intelligibility	Correct	Attitude
Level 1		8	0.79	0.63	0.77
	Grammar	4	0.80	0.51	0.7
	Lexico-semantic	4	0.63	0.49	0.64
Level 2		12	0.83	0.76	0.82
	Grammar	8	0.81	0.75	0.77
	Lexico-semantic	4	0.60	0.49	0.64
Level 3		10	0.77	0.76	0.83
	Grammar	4	0.69	0.64	0.71
	Lexico-semantic	6	0.70	0.65	0.78

According to Table 4.13, the overall scores for internal consistency reliability of the items under each level seem appropriate, as they approximately range from 0.76 to 0.83. However, the Cronbach's Alpha α value of the items in Level 1 for correct recognition is 0.63, which is lower than others, but the scale should still be considered acceptable because of the low variance. Because the items in Level 1 contain no errors, participants could easily get the correct answers, so this makes the variance low, which also makes the Cronbach's Alpha α value lower than it is for other groups.

Thai participants (810 people)

Table 4.14 Internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha α) (N = 810)

Variables	Features	No.	Cronbach's Alpha α		
			Intelligibility	Correct	Attitude
Level 1		8	0.82	0.72	0.84
	Grammar	4	0.72	0.59	0.75
	Lexico-semantic	4	0.67	0.52	0.70
Level 2		12	0.80	0.70	0.82
	Grammar	8	0.76	0.64	0.76
	Lexico-semantic	4	0.59	0.51	0.61
Level 3		10	0.75	0.63	0.77
	Grammar	4	0.63	0.58	0.70
	Lexico-semantic	6	0.64	0.46	0.60

Table 4.14 demonstrates that the overall scores for internal consistency reliability of the items under each level are acceptable because they range from 0.70 and higher. However, similar to Table 4.13, the value for Level 3 correct recognition, which is 0.63, is below 0.70, but it is still acceptable because the items in Level 3 contain major errors, so participants mainly considered the language problems on the signs serious. Hence, they chose between 6 *very serious* and 3 (from the scale of 6 *very serious* to 1 *not serious at all*) from the scale. Because of the low variance, the Cronbach's Alpha α value of the items in this group is lower than others.

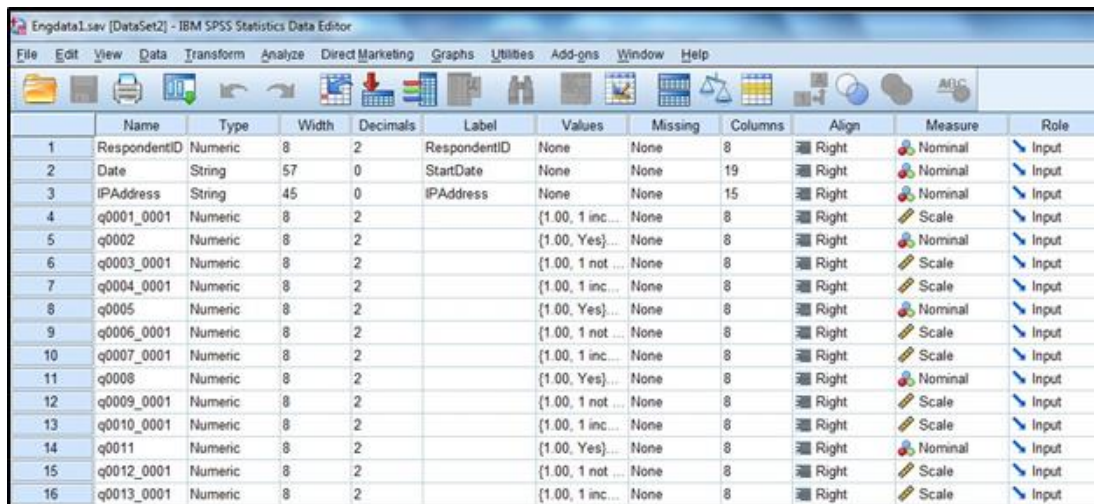
According to Tables 4.12, 4.13 and 4.14, it can be concluded that the values for the internal consistency reliability of the questionnaire items for both international participants and Thai participants across the three studies about the intelligibility of Thai English, the correct recognition of English Standard norms, and participants' attitudes towards Thai English messages on signs are acceptable.

4.4.5 Data Analysis

One of the advantages of being a paid member of the online survey website is that the participants' answers could be exported into a .sav file which was compatible with the SPSS software. This helped to save time as I did not have to key in the data myself,

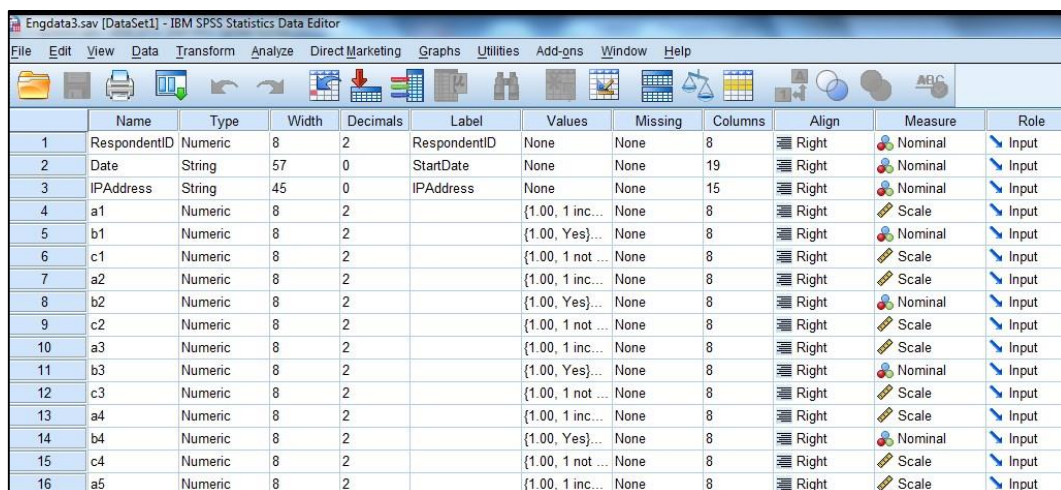
so human errors while inputting data could be reduced. However, the raw file still needed to be re-organised, and variables needed to be renamed and grouped.

Figure 4.50 shows an example of raw data imported from the online questionnaire website. The names of the variables were not systematic, and the variables had to be renamed and grouped to make it more convenient and systematic for further analyses, as in Figure 4.51.



	Name	Type	Width	Decimals	Label	Values	Missing	Columns	Align	Measure	Role
1	RespondentID	Numeric	8	2	RespondentID	None	None	8	Right	Nominal	Input
2	Date	String	57	0	StartDate	None	None	19	Right	Nominal	Input
3	IPAddress	String	45	0	IPAddress	None	None	15	Right	Nominal	Input
4	q0001_0001	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, 1 inc...	None	8	Right	Scale	Input
5	q0002	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, Yes}...	None	8	Right	Nominal	Input
6	q0003_0001	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, 1 not ...	None	8	Right	Scale	Input
7	q0004_0001	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, 1 inc...	None	8	Right	Scale	Input
8	q0005	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, Yes}...	None	8	Right	Nominal	Input
9	q0006_0001	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, 1 not ...	None	8	Right	Scale	Input
10	q0007_0001	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, 1 inc...	None	8	Right	Scale	Input
11	q0008	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, Yes}...	None	8	Right	Nominal	Input
12	q0009_0001	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, 1 not ...	None	8	Right	Scale	Input
13	q0010_0001	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, 1 inc...	None	8	Right	Scale	Input
14	q0011	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, Yes}...	None	8	Right	Nominal	Input
15	q0012_0001	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, 1 not ...	None	8	Right	Scale	Input
16	q0013_0001	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, 1 inc...	None	8	Right	Scale	Input

Figure 4.50 Raw data imported from the online survey website



	Name	Type	Width	Decimals	Label	Values	Missing	Columns	Align	Measure	Role
1	RespondentID	Numeric	8	2	RespondentID	None	None	8	Right	Nominal	Input
2	Date	String	57	0	StartDate	None	None	19	Right	Nominal	Input
3	IPAddress	String	45	0	IPAddress	None	None	15	Right	Nominal	Input
4	a1	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, 1 inc...	None	8	Right	Scale	Input
5	b1	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, Yes}...	None	8	Right	Nominal	Input
6	c1	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, 1 not ...	None	8	Right	Scale	Input
7	a2	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, 1 inc...	None	8	Right	Scale	Input
8	b2	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, Yes}...	None	8	Right	Nominal	Input
9	c2	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, 1 not ...	None	8	Right	Scale	Input
10	a3	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, 1 inc...	None	8	Right	Scale	Input
11	b3	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, Yes}...	None	8	Right	Nominal	Input
12	c3	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, 1 not ...	None	8	Right	Scale	Input
13	a4	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, 1 inc...	None	8	Right	Scale	Input
14	b4	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, Yes}...	None	8	Right	Nominal	Input
15	c4	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, 1 not ...	None	8	Right	Scale	Input
16	a5	Numeric	8	2		{1.00, 1 inc...	None	8	Right	Scale	Input

Figure 4.51 Data after having been renamed and grouped

After the data had been organised, it was ready for the SPSS analysis. In this thesis, bivariate statistics, namely t-tests and ANOVAs are the main tools for analysing the statistical results across the three studies in Chapters 5-7.

4.4.5.1 T-test

In this research, t-tests are used to analyse the data between two groups that are independent from each other, such as men and women, to see whether the different scores between the two groups are statistically significant or not, and mainly independent sample t-tests are considered the most suitable tool for analysing this kind of data (Dörnyei, 2007, Field, 2013, Pallant, 2013).

Pallant (2013: 250) explains that the differences are considered significant if the Levene's test shows $p = .05$ or less. If the differences are found significant, an effect size will then be calculated to see the magnitude of the significance. In this research, the most common effect size for independent-samples t-tests, so-called 'eta-squared', is used (Dörnyei, 2007, Pallant, 2013). According to Pallant (2013: 251), the formula for eta squared calculation is as follows:

$$\text{Eta squared} = \frac{t^2}{t^2 + (N1 + N2 - 2)}$$

Cohen (1988: 284-7) identifies that if the eta squared is .01, it has a small effect. If the value is .06, it generates a moderate effect. If the value is .14, it has a large effect.

4.4.5.2 ANOVA

To analyse the significance of the differences between the means of more than two groups, one-way analysis of variance or *ANOVA* is considered to be one of the most frequently used procedures (Dörnyei, 2007: 218). For ANOVA, the *F* value is significant at $p < .05$ or less (Pallant, 2013: 262). In the case that the *F* value is significant, the effect size will also be calculated to see the magnitude of the significance. However, the formula for the eta squared of ANOVA is different from the one for t-tests. The formula can be found below (Pallant, 2013: 263):

$$\text{Eta squared} = \frac{\text{Sum of squares between groups}}{\text{Total sum of squares}}$$

According to Dörnyei (2007: 221), the eta squared value has a small effect when it is 0.01, a moderate effect when it is 0.06, and a large effect when it is 0.14.

In addition, for significant items in ANOVA, a post hoc test should also be done to reveal the differences that lie between the significant group(s) and other groups (Dörnyei, 2007: 219). In this research, Student-Newman-Keuls (S-N-K), Turkey's Honest Significant Difference (Turkey's HSD), and Fisher's Least Significant Difference (LSD) are generally used for getting specific information on which mean score shows a statistically significant difference from another/ others.

This chapter has presented detailed information about the development of the questionnaire, the preliminary results from the pilot study, the data collection, the measurement quality, and how data was to be analysed. The next chapter reports the results from the study about the intelligibility of Thai English used on signs in tourist domains in Thailand.

Chapter 5 The Intelligibility of Thai English on Signs

This chapter presents the results of a study about the intelligibility of English used on signs in tourist domains in Thailand. The results and findings provided in the chapter are based on the answers of 1,266 respondents from the online questionnaire about the intelligibility of Thai English followed by in-depth interviews with 51 participants.

5.1 Research Questions for the Study about Intelligibility

The study aims to explore the extent of the intelligibility of Thai English messages on signs rated by non-Thai and Thai participants. The research questions are as follows:

- 1) Do international participants and Thai participants have similar beliefs about the intelligibility of Thai English messages on signs?
- 2) Do international participants who have been to Thailand understand Thai English better than those who have never been to Thailand?
- 3) Do Asian participants understand Thai English better than European participants?
- 4) To what extent do different variables affect the intelligibility of Thai English on signs?

5.2 Participants' Intelligibility of Thai English Messages on Signs

This section shows participants' mean scores of Thai English intelligibility on signs. The mean scores in the three tables in this section are presented in descending order so that it could be clearer for the audience to see which item was considered easy or difficult to understand for participants. As mentioned in Chapter 4, there were 30 items in the online questionnaire. Table 5.1 shows the responses from non-Thai participants (N = 456). Table 5.2 presents the data from Thai participants (N = 810). For comparison, Table 5.3 shows the responses from all participants (N= 1,266).

5.2.1 International Participants

Table 5.1 shows the intelligibility mean scores of international participants who were asked to rate the scale of Thai English intelligibility from 1 *incomprehensible* to 6 *comprehensible*.

In Table 5.1, the ‘Question’ row represents the actual question in the questionnaire; for example, ‘Q18’ refers to item no. 18 in the questionnaire. The ‘Message’ row presents English messages displayed on signs. The ‘Level’ row reports which level of error the sign contains, from no errors to major errors. The ‘Features’ row identifies the features of Thai English that the item belongs to; ‘GR’ stands for ‘Grammatical features’, and ‘LS’ stands for ‘Lexico-semantic features’. The ‘M (SD)’ row shows the mean and standard deviation of the intelligibility values awarded to each item by participants.

Table 5.1 International participants' intelligibility mean scores

No.	Question	Message	Level	Features		<i>M^a</i> (<i>SD</i>)
				GR ^b	LS ^b	
1	Q 18	Foot massage	1	✓		5.70 (.85)
2	Q 7	Museum hours	1	✓		5.69 (.86)
3	Q 10	No littering	1	✓		5.56 (1.08)
4	Q 26	Tourist discount	1	✓		5.53 (.97)
5	Q 4	Wel come	2	✓		5.49 (1.06)
6	Q 28	Coming soon	2	✓		5.44 (1.21)
7	Q 25	No trolley	2	✓		5.33 (1.18)
8	Q 17	Fake goods	1		✓	5.32 (1.25)
9	Q 8	Feed a pigeon	1		✓	5.21 (1.36)
10	Q 1	Close	2	✓		5.20 (1.23)
11	Q 9	Toilet/shoes	1		✓	5.19 (1.52)
12	Q 3	Cannot be changes	2	✓		5.18 (1.19)
13	Q 2	Open time	2	✓		5.05 (1.28)
14	Q 5	Please next counter	2	✓		4.96 (1.38)
15	Q 16	No parking across	2	✓		4.91 (1.45)
16	Q 6	Beautiful girl passport	1		✓	4.81 (1.57)
17	Q 20	3 pcs up	2		✓	4.50 (1.70)
18	Q 30	Exhibition hell	3	✓		4.45 (1.75)
19	Q 21	Happy toilet	2		✓	4.17 (1.79)
20	Q 22	Thai house style	3	✓		4.06 (1.71)
21	Q 27	Wat Phra Kaew	2		✓	4.02 (1.85)
22	Q 19	2 free 1	2		✓	3.67 (1.58)
23	Q 23	Hire a pet	3	✓		3.48 (1.74)
24	Q 15	Please ring to bring	3		✓	3.07 (1.69)
25	Q 24	Please it neatly	3	✓		3.04 (1.68)
26	Q 14	OTOP	3		✓	3.02 (2.02)
27	Q 11	Food order	3		✓	2.38 (1.62)
28	Q 29	Ovalcano	3		✓	2.36 (1.72)
29	Q 13	Forbidden island glass	3		✓	1.99 (1.39)
30	Q 12	A motorcycle works	3		✓	1.49 (1.08)

^aScore 6 = comprehensible and 1 = incomprehensible

^bGR = Grammatical features, LS = Lexico-semantic features

Based on the descending mean scores from Table 5.1, it can be clearly seen that the first seven items belonged to the grammatical-feature category. Furthermore, the first four items with the highest mean scores (Q18, Q7, Q10, and Q26) were in Level 1, and all of them contained grammatical features.

It is fairly interesting that the two items (Q17 and Q18) with lexico-semantic features in Level 1 had lower mean scores than the three items (Q4, Q28, Q25) with grammatical features in Level 2. Furthermore, another item (Q9) with lexico-semantic features in Level 1 also had a lower mean score than the item (Q17) of Level 2 with

grammatical features. In the same way, the last item in Level 1 (Q6) that contained lexico-semantic features had a lower mean score than the four items (Q3, Q2, Q5, and Q16) with grammatical features in Level 2.

In addition, it can be seen from Table 5.1 that the last five items (Q12, Q13, Q29, Q11, and Q14) having the lowest mean scores belonged to Level 3 and contained lexico-semantic features.

According to Table 5.1, the first ten items had the intelligibility mean scores between $M = 5.70$ (Q 18) and $M = 5.20$ (Q10). Of these ten items, eight items (Q18, Q7, Q10, Q26, Q4, Q28, Q25, Q17, Q8 and Q1) contained grammatical features. Conversely, of the ten items with the lowest intelligibility mean scores ranging between $M = 4.02$ (Q27) and $M = 1.49$ (Q12), eight items (Q12, Q13, Q29, Q11, Q14, Q24, Q15, Q23, Q19 and Q27) out of ten contained lexico-semantic features.

When specifically looking at the first five items on the rank, namely Q18, Q7, Q10, Q26 and Q4, they all contained grammatical features. In contrast, the last five items, namely Q12, Q13, Q29, Q11 and Q14, all contained lexico-semantic features. Based on the mean scores in Table 5.1, it could be possibly assumed that overseas participants should be able to understand Thai English signs with grammatical features more easily than the ones with lexico-semantic features.

5.2.2 Thai Participants

Because Thai participants could read both Thai and English, they should be able to identify whether the English messages were misspelt, mistranslated or could mislead international audience. Thai participants were asked to rate to what extent they thought that international audience could perceive the intended meaning of Thai English messages on 30 signs.

Table 5. 2 Expected intelligibility mean scores of international participants rated by Thai participants

No.	Question	Message	Level	Features		<i>M^a</i> (<i>SD</i>)
				GR ^b	LS ^b	
1	Q 9	Toilet/shoes	1		✓	5.13 (1.27)
2	Q 18	Foot massage	1	✓		5.07 (1.27)
3	Q 7	Museum hours	1	✓		4.90 (1.35)
4	Q 26	Tourist discount	1	✓		4.84 (1.40)
5	Q 10	No littering	1	✓		4.55 (1.47)
6	Q 4	Wel come	2	✓		4.45 (1.43)
7	Q 28	Coming sooon	2	✓		4.34 (1.64)
8	Q 19	2 free 1	2		✓	4.25 (1.58)
9	Q 20	3 pcs up	2		✓	4.23 (1.51)
10	Q 6	Beautiful girl passport	1		✓	4.20 (1.62)
11	Q 17	Fake goods	1		✓	4.13 (1.64)
12	Q 8	Feed a pigeon	1		✓	4.09 (1.65)
13	Q 5	Please next counter	2	✓		4.07 (1.35)
14	Q 1	Close	2	✓		4.06 (1.34)
15	Q 25	No trolley	2	✓		4.02 (1.73)
16	Q 3	Cannot be changes	2	✓		3.92 (1.40)
17	Q 22	Thai house style	3	✓		3.79 (1.45)
18	Q 16	No parking	2	✓		3.74 (1.51)
19	Q 21	Happy toilet	2		✓	3.59 (1.69)
20	Q 2	Open time	2	✓		3.53 (1.34)
21	Q 27	Wat Phra Kaew	2		✓	3.20 (1.59)
22	Q 30	Exhibition hell	3	✓		3.03 (1.74)
23	Q 14	OTOP	3		✓	2.63 (1.68)
24	Q 15	Please ring to bring	3		✓	2.58 (1.49)
25	Q 24	Please it neatly	3	✓		2.53 (1.42)
26	Q 23	Hire a pet	3	✓		2.45 (1.39)
27	Q 29	Ovalcano	3		✓	2.43 (1.47)
28	Q 11	Food order	3		✓	1.87 (1.20)
29	Q 12	A motorcycle works for	3		✓	1.64 (1.06)
30	Q 13	Forbidden island glass	3		✓	1.38 (0.90)

^aScore 6 = comprehensible and 1 = incomprehensible

^bGR = Grammatical features, LS = Lexico-semantic features

Table 5.2 shows that the orders of the second to the seventh items with high mean scores are quite similar to the first to the sixth items in Table 5.1. In the same way, the last four items with the lowest mean scores (Q29, Q11, Q12, and Q13) are the same as the last four items in Table 5.1 despite the different ranking orders.

However, in general, Thai people did not expect international visitors to understand Thai English messages on signs as much as the overseas audience rated themselves. Therefore, the score for each item in Table 5.2 is lower than the score for the same item in Table 5.1. For example, the mean scores of the first ten items in Table 5.2 were lower than those in Table 5.1; the first ten items in Table 5.2 ranged from $M = 5.13$ to $M = 4.20$ while the first the first ten items in Table 5.1 ranged from $M = 5.70$ to $M = 5.20$. Hence, in this case, it should be worth considering the ranking orders in each table rather than comparing the mean scores between the two tables, as the mean scores rated by Thai participants were mainly lower than the mean scores rated by an international audience with the exception of two items, Q29 and Q12, that Thai participants expected international audiences to comprehend the messages on the signs better than the international audience rated themselves.

5.2.3 All Participants

Table 5.3 All participants' Thai English intelligibility scores (30 items)

International Participants				Thai Participants			
No.	Q.	Message	<i>M</i>	Q.	Message	<i>M</i>	
1	18	Foot massage (L1 GR*)	5.70	9	Toilet/shoes (L1 LS*)	5.13	
2	7	Museum hours (L1 GR)	5.69	18	Foot massage (L1 GR)	5.07	
3	10	No littering (L1 GR)	5.56	7	Museum hours (L1 GR)	4.90	
4	26	Tourist discount (L1 GR)	5.53	26	Tourist discount (L1 GR)	4.84	
5	4	Wel come (L2 GR)	5.49	10	No littering (L1 GR)	4.55	
6	28	Coming soon (L2 GR)	5.44	4	Wel come (L2 GR)	4.45	
7	25	No trolley (L2 GR)	5.33	28	Coming soon (L2 GR)	4.34	
8	17	Fake goods (L1 LS*)	5.32	19	2 free 1 (L2 LS)	4.25	
9	8	Feed a pigeon (L1 LS)	5.21	20	3 pcs up (L2 LS)	4.23	
10	1	Close (L2 GR)	5.20	6	Beautiful girl passport (L1 LS)	4.20	
11	9	Toilet/shoes (L1 LS)	5.19	17	Fake goods (L1 LS)	4.13	
12	3	Cannot be changes (L2 GR)	5.18	8	Feed a pigeon (L1 LS)	4.09	
13	2	Open time (L2 GR)	5.05	5	Please next counter (L2 GR)	4.07	
14	5	Please next counter (L2 GR)	4.96	1	Close (L2 GR)	4.06	
15	16	No parking across (L2 GR)	4.91	25	No trolley (L2 GR)	4.02	
16	6	Beautiful girl passport (L1 LS)	4.81	3	Cannot be changes (L2 GR)	3.92	
17	20	3 pcs up (L2 LS)	4.5	22	Thai house style (L3 GR)	3.79	
18	30	Exhibition hell (L3 GR)	4.45	16	No parking across (L2 GR)	3.74	
19	21	Happy toilet (L2 LS)	4.17	21	Happy toilet (L2 LS)	3.59	
20	22	Thai house style (L3 GR)	4.06	2	Open time (L2 GR)	3.53	
21	27	Wat Phra Kaew (L2 LS)	4.02	27	Wat Phra Kaew (L2 LS)	3.20	
22	19	2 free 1 (L2 LS)	3.67	30	Exhibition hell (L3 GR)	3.03	
23	23	Hire a pet (L3 GR)	3.48	14	OTOP (L3 LS)	2.63	
24	15	Please ring to bring (L3 LS)	3.07	15	Please ring to bring (L3 LS)	2.58	
25	24	Please it neatly (L3 GR)	3.04	24	Please it neatly (L3 GR)	2.53	
26	14	OTOP (L3 LS)	3.02	23	Hire a pet (L3 GR)	2.45	
27	11	Food order (L3 LS)	2.38	29	Ovalcano (L3 LS)	2.43	
28	29	Ovalcano (L3 LS)	2.36	11	Food order (L3 LS)	1.87	
29	13	Forbidden island glass (L3 LS)	1.99	12	A motorcycle works for (L3 LS)	1.64	
30	12	A motorcycle works for (L3 LS)	1.49	13	Forbidden island glass (L3 LS)	1.38	
Average score			4.34	Average score			3.61

*GR = Grammatical features, LS = Lexico-semantic features, L1 = Level 1, L2 = Level 2, L3 = Level 3

Table 5.3 compares the intelligibility mean scores based on the data from international participants (see Table 5.1) and Thai participants (see Table 5.2). The 'Q.' row represents the question number in the actual questionnaire, while in the 'Message' row, the bracketed term after the message refers to the level and the Thai English feature

of the message. Different colours highlight items that have difference of seven or greater positions between the two tables.

Table 5.3 shows that for 28 out of 30 items, international participants rated their Thai English intelligibility scores higher than Thai people. The average mean score of the 30 items rated by international participants was $M = 4.34$ out of 6 while the average mean score rated by Thai people was $M = 3.61$ out of 6.

When comparing the descending mean scores from no. 1 (with the highest score) to no. 30 (with the lowest score), based on the numerical data from the English version and the Thai version, it can be seen that the items had quite a similar order that was no more than 5 orders different between the two tables. For instance, the message ‘Welcome’ (Q4) was ranked in the fifth order in the English version while it was in the sixth order in the Thai version. It can be assumed that Thai participants and international participants had rather similar ideas regarding the items that could be easy or difficult to be understood. In addition, five items (Q 26, Q21, Q27, Q15, and Q24) had the same ranking orders in both tables. It can be inferred that Thai participants and international participants may have similar expectations of the Thai English intelligibility.

Although the ranking orders of the items rated by international and Thai participants were quite similar, the intelligibility mean scores rated by international audience were mainly higher than those rated by Thai respondents, as aforementioned. Table 5.4 shows whether the differences in mean scores between the Thai and international participants reached a significant level ($p < .05$) or not.

Table 5.4 Thai English intelligibility scores rated by international participants (n= 456) and Thai participants (n = 810)

Level	Features		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	Effect size ^a
All items	All	International	4.34	.73	1264	17.33***	.19
	(30 items)	Thai	3.61	.73			
Level 1	All	International	5.38	.77	1153.25	15.59***	.16
	(8 items)	Thai	4.59	1.00			
Level 1	Grammatical	International	5.62	.75	1188.32	15.70***	.16
	(4 items)	Thai	4.83	1.04			
Level 1	Lexico-semantic	International	5.13	.98	1049	12.55***	.11
	(4 items)	Thai	4.37	1.12			
Level 2	All	International	4.83	.84	1264	17.75***	.20
	(12 items)	Thai	3.94	.86			
Level 2	Grammatical	International	5.16	.85	985.21	23.51***	.30
	(8 items)	Thai	3.97	.89			
Level 2	Lexico-semantic	International	4.36	1.05	1260	7.18***	.04
	(4 items)	Thai	3.91	1.07			
Level 3	All	International	2.94	.95	789.68	9.76***	.07
	(10 items)	Thai	2.43	.77			
Level 3	Grammatical	International	3.76	1.24	815.62	11.85***	.10
	(4 items)	Thai	2.94	1.05			
Level 3	Lexico-semantic	International	2.39	1.03	763.06	5.49***	.02
	(6 items)	Thai	2.08	.79			

*** $p < .001$.

^aEta squared.

Table 5.4 shows that the intelligibility scores rated by international participants were higher than the expected intelligibility mean scores rated by Thai respondents. The differences in mean scores rated by non-Thai and Thai participants were statistically significant at $p < .001$ across the ten subcategories, namely 1) all items, 2) Level 1: all items, 3) Level 1: grammatical items, 4) Level 1: lexico-semantic items, 5) Level :all items, 6) Level 2: grammatical items, 7) Level 2: lexico-semantic items, 8) Level 3: all items, 9) Level 3: grammatical items and 10) Level 3: lexico-semantic items.

Bonferroni correction was also applied. With 10 comparisons, the p value was adjusted to $p < .005$ instead of $p < .05$, the differences in mean scores between the groups of Thai and international participants were all $p < .001$, so they were all considered significant.

Regarding the effect size (eta squared), five subcategories, namely 1) all items, 2) Level 1: all items, 3) Level 1: grammatical items, 4) Level 2: all items, 5) Level 2: grammatical items, had a large effect ranging from .16 to .30. Three subcategories, namely 1) Level 1: lexico-semantic items, 2) Level 3: all items, 3) Level 3: grammatical had a moderate effect. Two subcategories, namely 1) Level 2: lexico-semantic items and 2) Level 3: lexico semantic items had a small effect at .04 and .02 respectively. It can be seen that the items with grammatical features across Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 had a larger effect size than the items with lexico-semantic features.

5.2.4 Discussion about Signs with Different Ranking Orders

Based on Tables 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3, it can be seen that in general, the intelligibility mean scores rated by international participants were higher than those rated by Thai participants. This could be because Thai participants could understand both Thai and English messages on signs, therefore they could identify whether there was any misspelling, translation error, or misleading information. Nevertheless, as aforementioned, there were two items (Q29 and Q12) that Thai participants thought that overseas tourists could understand better; the intelligibility mean scores of Q29 and Q12 rated by Thai participants were higher than those rated by international audience. In addition, this section mentions some interesting signs in detail based on the interviewing data from both Thai and international interviewees.

5.2.4.1 Q29

The intelligibility mean score for Q29 (see Figure 5.1) was $M = 2.36$ when rated by international participants and $M = 2.43$ when rated by Thai participants. This sign was in Level 3 under lexico-semantic items.



Figure 5.1 Q29: Ovalcano sign

Q29 displays the message ‘Ovalcano’ (see Figure 5.1). In Thai, it states, ‘Ovaltine drink in volcano style’. This sign was in the subcategory of creativity as *Ovalcano* is a combination of two words, namely Ovaltine and volcano. The photos of Ovalcano can be seen in Figure 5.2.



Figure 5.2 Ovalcano drink

From the interviews, 3 (10.3%) out of 29 overseas interviewees inferred the correct meaning. In addition, these three interviewees come from Asia. They are from Singapore, Taiwan and the Philippines.

Based on the interview with the Singaporean participant, the interviewee said ‘*I could get it right because we have a similar thing in Singapore, but we call it Milo Dinosaur.*’ In the same way, the Taiwanese interviewee said ‘*I guess it would be something like shave ice that we have in our country but it is made of Ovaltine.*’

On the other hand, some non-Thai interviewees did not know about the existence of the malt chocolate Swiss drink branded *Ovaltine*, which is also called *Ovalmaltine* in some countries (Twining and Company Limited, 2014). Therefore, if the tourists did not know about the drink, it would surely be difficult for them to guess the meaning from this creativity. Only two (or approximately 7%) of the overseas interviewees said that they might order Ovalcano to try. In contrast, other interviewees revealed that they would just ignore the message and only order a drink that they were familiar with only. A French interviewee said ‘*I won’t order this drink. I think trying a new menu when travelling to a*

new country isn't a good idea. If the drink isn't as expected, I'll end up losing my money or I may have a stomach ache.'

5.2.4.2 Q12

Thai participants rated the intelligibility score for Q29 (see Figure 5.3) at $M = 1.64$ while overseas respondents rated it at $M = 1.49$. This sign was in Level 3 under lexico-semantic items. As Q12 comes in the last place in Table 5.1 (see Figure 5.3), it implies that among international visitors, this is the item that they could understand the least.



Figure 5.3 Q12: A motorcycle works for...

The English message on the sign displays as 'A motorcycle works for invite 2 ladders'. In Thai, it says, 'For a motorcycle taxi service, please use exit 2.' The translation was originally done by online translation software.

In this case, for Thai participants, it was obvious that the translation was completely wrong. The word มอเตอร์ไซด์รับจ้าง (motorcycle taxi service) in Thai is a compound noun from a combination of two words, which are มอเตอร์ไซด์ (motorcycle) and the verb รับจ้าง (work for). However, the translation software did not recognise it as one word but two words, so the translation software mistranslated the word as 'a motorcycle works for' instead of 'a motorcycle taxi service'. The word เชิญ (please use) can be variously translated depending on contexts and situations. In many occasions, it means 'to invite'. Nevertheless, on the sign (Q12), in this case, it is supposed to mean 'please use', but the translation software picked up the word 'invite' instead.

The sign in Figure 5.3 was found at on an elevated train station in Bangkok. To leave the station, passengers have to take a stair to come down. In this case, a stair means an exit. Although the word บันได literally means a set of stairs, from the contexts, it does not refer to the steps but the way that people use in order to leave the station or an exit. In this case, it appears that the online translation software picked up the wrong word choices.

Although participants could see the main word ‘a motorcycle’, all of the international interviewees (N = 29) could not understand the intended meaning of the message. A British female interviewee said ‘I can’t understand it. Of course, it doesn’t make any sense to me. So, I’ll just ignore the sign’.

However, seven interviewees, who used to live in Thailand or visit Thailand often, could understand the intended message after having been given the right translation. They knew what a motorcycle taxi service was while the other participants who went to Thailand for a few days or had never been to Thailand (n =22) admitted that they still did not understand the messages even after an explanation. Nevertheless, some participants remarked that if they were to see the sign in context, they may be able to discern the meaning better. A photo of a motorcycle taxi rank can be found in Figure 5.4.



Figure 5.4 A motorcycle taxi rank

In order to learn why the sign was made presented into two languages, I had a conversation with two motorcyclists at the motorcycle taxi rank. They reported that they added the English message on the sign in order to get more international customers.

However, as they did not know who to ask about the translation, one of them suggested using online translation software because it was free of charge.

5.2.4.3 Q13

Q13 (see Figure 5.5) is worth mentioned because it was ranked with the lowest intelligibility score ($M = 1.38$) by Thai participants. This implies that Thai participants expected that it would be difficult for non-Thai audience to be able to correctly guess the original meaning. This sign was in Level 3: lexico-semantic items.



Figure 5.5 Q13: Forbidden Island Glass in English/ Don't touch the glass in Thai

‘Forbidden Island Glass’ was translated by translation software. In Thai, it says ‘ห้ามเกาะกระจก’ meaning ‘Don’t touch the glass’. The problem here was with the main word ‘เกาะ’, which is homonymic. The word ‘เกาะ’ in Thai can be both a noun and a verb. If it is used as a verb, it can mean ‘to touch’, ‘to grab’, or ‘to hold’ depending on the context. If it is used as a noun, it means ‘an island’. To conjugate a verb into a negative form for a comparative sentence, the word ‘ห้าม’ (Do not) must be added in front the verb. However, the same word can also mean ‘Forbidden’ when being used on its own. Therefore, in this case, the online translation software picked up the wrong word choices for both the word ‘ห้าม’ (‘Forbidden’ was chosen instead of ‘Don’t/ Do not’) and the word ‘เกาะ’ (‘island’ was chosen instead of ‘touch’). Therefore, the only word that has the right translation is ‘กระจก’, or glass.

Based on the interviews with 29 non-Thai participants, some of them who first thought that they could understand the message revealed that they actually got the message wrong. Only four (accounting for 13.8%) out of 29 participants could correctly

guess the original meaning. When being asked about the meaning of ‘Forbidden island glass’, most of the international interviewees reported that the main word that they focused on is ‘Island’ as Thailand is famous for beautiful beaches and islands. A Scottish male interviewee said *‘My focus was on the word island. When I was doing the questionnaire, I thought the products behind the glass were brought from the island called ‘Forbidden.’* In reality, ‘Forbidden Island’ does not exist in Thailand. Therefore, it can be inferred that this sign could mislead non-Thai audience.

All participants made a further comment that the translation had completely misled them and showed some concern that translation software should not be extensively used for translating a sign or any printed document. They proposed that translation software could be useful when being used for translating some words or some phrases that users would like to generally know about the topic at hand, however it should not be used as a main tool for translation; in many cases, it cannot pick up the right contextual translation if the message contains hyponyms.

5.2.4.4 Q9

Q9 (see Figure 5.6) had the highest intelligibility score when rated by Thai participants but its intelligibility score came in the ninth place when rated by international participants. This implies that according to Thai participants, there should not be any problem for international audience to understand this sign, but for the non-Thai audience, there could be some problems with the message on the sign. This sign was in Level 1 under lexico-semantic items.



Figure 5.6 Q9: Please take off your shoes

According to the interviews, Thai participants viewed that there should not be any problem for non-Thai people to understand that they are required to take off their shoes and change to the sandals provided in order to keep the toilet area clean from the mud or sand that might stick to their shoes. Non-Thai people, on the other hand, did not realise that they were supposed to change their shoes to the sandals provided.

International participants did not understand why they had to take off their shoes in order to use the toilet. A male Italian interviewee said ‘I don’t understand why I have to take off my shoes to use the toilet. Of course, I don’t want to do it. This isn’t hygienic.’ When being explained about the sandals provided for visitors, he said ‘*Really? I don’t know that these sandals are for visitors. I thought these belong to other people who’re using the toilets*’. A female interviewee from Hong Kong said ‘*No, I don’t want to wear these sandals. They have been used by others inside the toilets. They aren’t clean. I will bring my own pair of sandals to Thailand just in case that I am asked to take off my shoes and wear sandals to use the toilet.*’

Regarding the contribution of international participants, it implies that non-Thai people did not understand this sign because of their cultural differences, and Thai participants did not consider that the non-Thai audience would not be used to wearing

sandals into some public toilets to keep the toilets clean from mud and sand under visitors' shoes.

5.2.4.5 Q19

Another item having markedly different ranking orders between the two tables is Q19 (see Figure 5.7). It was ranked eighth place ($M = 4.25$) when rated by Thai participants but 22nd place ($M = 3.67$) when rated by international participants. This sign was in Level 2 under lexico-semantic items.



Figure 5.7 Q19: 2 free 1

The English message on the sign says '2 free 1' and in Thai it says 'Buy 2 items and get 1 item for free'.

According to the interviews with international participants, 19 out of 29 participants (accounting for 65.5%) understood that when they bought one item, they would get another one for free (which is equivalent to '2 for 1' or 'buy 1 get 1 free'). Therefore, they expected to pay for only one item and get another free one. When I told the interviewees that they had to buy two items in order to get the third item for free, five interviewees said that they would then not take the items then. A male French interviewee said *'I expected to buy one item and get the other one for free. If they charge me for two items and give me the third one for free, I would return all the items at the counter. Seriously, this is annoying. They made the sign ambiguous.'*

For Thai participants, 18 out of 22 interviewees (accounting for 81.8%) could immediately perceive that it means 'buy 2 get 1 free'. The Thai interviewees gave two main reasons why they got the intended message right. First, the English message is based on the structure of Thai language. When they did a direct translation from English into

Thai, they could understand the message immediately. Second, it is quite unlikely that a bakery in Thailand would give away a free product at the same size when you buy just one item. Four participants agreed and added that even when the sign stated clearly as ‘buy 1 get 1 free’, it could also be possible that you could get a cheaper item as a compliment instead of getting the same item. A female Thai participant said *‘the deal ‘2 for 1’ was too good to be true. I am sure there must be terms and conditions applied. For example, a sign in a bakery near my place says ‘Buy 1 get 1 free’. But, actually, when you buy one butter cake for 30 Baht, you get one bottle of water, which is 5 baht for free.’* It can be seen that in the case of Q19, the same message could be differently interpreted based on the audience’s background and expectation.

5.2.4.6 Q20

Another item with significantly different order rankings is Q20 (see Figure 5.8). When rated by Thai participants, this item was in ninth place ($M = 4.23$), but it was in seventeenth place ($M = 4.50$) when rated by international participants. This sign was in Level 2 under lexico-semantic items.



Figure 5.8 Q20: 3 pcs up

According to the interviews with non-Thai participants, 7 out of 29 overseas interviewees (accounting for 24.1%) were not familiar with the wholesale activity when customers can get items at cheaper prices if they buy the items in large quantities. Some of the overseas interviewees had an issue with the abbreviation PC as they were not certain whether it meant a ‘piece’ or not. However, they accepted that they could guess from the context that ‘3 pcs up’ should mean ‘buy 3 pieces or more’ because the price per

item when buying 3 pcs up is cheaper (50 B/ each) than the price for buying one item (70 B).

In addition, some of the participants who had never been to Thailand before did not know that B, in this case, means ‘Baht’, the Thai currency. A Scottish interviewee said *‘I think it is THB not only B. But, as I have never been to Thailand, I don’t know that B also means Baht. But, I can guess that ‘B’ on this sign should mean the Thai currency.’*

Thai participants, on the other hand, did not think that this sign could potentially lead to misunderstanding because 19 Thai interviewees out of 22 (accounting for 86.4%) could understand the intended message immediately although 12 people commented that the sign could have been written better.

5.2.4.7 Q25

Another problematic sign with different ranking orders is Q25 with the English message ‘No trolley inside’ (see Figure 5.9). When rated by international participants, this item was in seventh place ($M = 5.05$) while it was in fifteenth place ($M = 3.53$) when rated by Thai participants. This sign was in Level 2 under grammatical items.



Figure 5.9 Q25: No trolley inside

In general, international participants understood that ‘no trolleys allowed beyond this point’ or ‘they cannot bring trolleys into the area’. Nevertheless, as this item is a monolingual English sign, many Thai participants interpreted that the sign could mean that people could not get trolleys from the area, and if they would like to get one, they had to go somewhere else. Based on the interviews with Thai participants, 8 people out

of 22 (accounting for 36% of Thai interviewees) understood that the sign informed people about the lack of trolleys in the area instead of not allowing people to bring trolleys inside.

On the contrary, only 4 participants out of 29 or 13.8% of non-Thai interviewees, understood that they could not get trolleys from the area. The international interviewees also added that they could use their common sense that usually trolleys were not allowed in some areas at the airport anyway.

In addition, there was another interesting issue about American English and British English. Some American participants commented that the English message of this item was problematic because to them it made no sense for a trolley (or a tram in American English) to be at the airport. One American participant left a comment at the end of the questionnaire, *‘Does it mean airport carts? In America, a tram is on the street not the airport. So, this doesn’t make much sense to me.’*

5.2.4.8 Q2

The last item with markedly different ranking orders is Q2 with the English message ‘Open Time’ (see Figure 5.10). When rated by international participants, this item was in thirteenth place ($M = 5.05$), while it was in twentieth place ($M = 3.53$) when rated by Thai participants. This sign was in Level 2 under grammatical items.



Figure 5.10 Q2: Open time

The phrase ‘Open Time’ was highly criticised by both Thai and international participants due to poor phrasing, as this could mislead the audience. In general, when

participants saw the phrase ‘Open Time’ at first glance, the first thought springing to Thai and non-Thai participants’ mind was the phrase ‘opening time’, which refers to the time that the place is opened and closed. However, after being asked to have a close look at the surrounding context, the international interviewees realised that this did not mean ‘opening time’, but instead ‘showtime’ or the time that the show begins.

An Italian male participant said *‘It means opening time, doesn’t it? It’s just the wrong part of speech here.’* After being asked to take a close look at the sign again, he said *‘No, it means Showtime because there are four time slots here. This sign is misleading. But, it’s quite easy to get the right meaning because of the photos and the context.’* Twenty-four out of 29 non-Thai participants (accounting for 82.8%) agreed that this sign misled them to think that the farm was opened at 11.30 and closed at 16.00. Nevertheless, it was not too difficult for them to get the intended meaning when they looked at the four different time slots and the background photo as their clues.

Based on the detailed discussion about the eight signs having markedly different ranking orders between Tables 5.1 and 5.2, it can be seen that six items, namely Q29, Q12, Q13, Q9, and Q20, contained lexico-semantic features while only two items, Q25 and Q2, contained grammatical features. This implies that the understanding gaps between Thai and international participants were mainly caused by lexico-semantic issues, such as the lack of knowledge of Thai ways of life, as well as the structure of the Thai language. However, grammatical items could also mislead non-Thai people when the message was ambiguous and the international audience interpreted the message based on their own cultural background, or made another such wrong assumption.

The next section analyses different factors contributing to the intelligibility or lack thereof of Thai English signs.

5.3 The Effects of Gender, Trip to Thailand, Geographic Origin, Non/Native English Background, Age and English Proficiency

This section presents the statistical results based on the gender, trip to Thailand, geographic origin, non/native English background, age and English proficiency of participants.

5.3.1 Gender and Intelligibility

This section analyses whether being male or female would affect participants' intelligibility of Thai English or not.

5.3.1.1 International Participants

Table 5.5 International participants' intelligibility and gender
(Female n = 227, Male n = 218)

Level	Feature	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	Effect size ^a
All items	All (30 items)	Female	4.26	.72	443	-2.51*	.01
		Male	4.43	.73			
Level 1	All (8 items)	Female	5.33	.83	443	-1.26	
		Male	5.42	.71			
Level 1	Grammatical (4 items)	Female	5.57	.82	434.77	-1.42	
		Male	5.67	.68			
Level 1	Lexico-semantic (4 items)	Female	5.09	1.01	443	-0.85	
		Male	5.17	.96			
Level 2	All (12 items)	Female	4.74	.85	443	-2.33*	.01
		Male	4.92	.82			
Level 2	Grammatical (8 items)	Female	5.10	.90	443	-1.48	
		Male	5.22	.81			
Level 2	Lexico-semantic (4 items)	Female	4.23	1.03	442	-2.76**	.02
		Male	4.50	1.06			
Level 3	All (10 items)	Female	2.83	.90	443	-2.47*	.01
		Male	3.06	1.00			
Level 3	Grammatical (4 items)	Female	3.62	1.16	431.07	-2.71**	.02
		Male	3.93	1.30			
Level 3	Lexico-semantic (6 items)	Female	2.31	1.01	443	-1.56	
		Male	2.47	1.06			

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

^aEta squared.

Table 5.5 shows that for international participants, male participants appeared to award higher intelligibility mean scores than female participants across the three levels (Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3) for both grammatical features and lexico-semantic features. The differences in mean scores between male and male participants were statistically at $p < .05$ for three subcategories, namely all 30 items, Level 2: all items, and Level 3: all items. In addition, there were other two subcategories, namely Level 2: lexico-

semantic and Level 3: grammatical items reaching a significant level at $p < .01$. Nevertheless, the effect sizes (eta squared) of these five subcategories were small because they ranged between .01 and .02.

Therefore, based on the statistical results, it can be concluded that different genders would not be the main factor leading to different levels of intelligibility of Thai English for overseas participants.

5.3.1.2 Thai participants

Table 5.6 Expected intelligibility of international participants rated by Thais and gender (Female $n = 548$, Male $n = 246$)

Level	Feature	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	Effect size ^a
All items	All (30 items)	Female	3.57	.72	792	-2.18*	.01
		Male	3.69	.71			
Level 1	All (8 items)	Female	4.58	.98	790	-1.04	
		Male	4.66	1.02			
Level 1	Grammatical (4 items)	Female	4.82	1.03	785	-.56	
		Male	4.86	1.03			
Level 1	Lexico-semantic (4 items)	Female	4.34	1.11	787	-1.66	
		Male	4.48	1.12			
Level 2	All (12 items)	Female	3.90	.86	792	-1.93	
		Male	4.03	.84			
Level 2	Grammatical (8 items)	Female	3.93	.91	790	-1.74	
		Male	4.05	.85			
Level 2	Lexico-semantic (4 items)	Female	3.87	1.06	791	-1.76	
		Male	4.01	1.08			
Level 3	All (10 items)	Female	2.39	.78	792	-2.36*	.01
		Male	2.52	.73			
Level 3	Grammatical (4 items)	Female	2.84	1.06	791	-3.93***	.01
		Male	3.15	1.01			
Level 3	Lexico-semantic (6 items)	Female	2.08	.80	792	-.570	
		Male	2.11	.77			

* $p < .05$.

*** $p < .001$.

^aEta squared.

Similar to Table 5.5 rated by international participants, Thai male participants expected non-Thai participants to have a higher degree of Thai English comprehension than Thai female participants did. However, there were only three subcategories, namely all items, Level 3: all items, and Level 3: grammatical items, reaching a significant level

at $p < .05$ with the effect sizes (eta squared) of 0.1. Hence, it can be concluded that different genders would not have much effect on Thai participants' expectation on the intelligibility of non-Thai participants.

5.3.1.3 All participants

To make a bigger sample size, the data from international participants and Thai participants were combined together, and the results can be found in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7 All participants' intelligibility and gender
(Female $n = 775$, Male $n = 464$)

Level	Feature	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	Effect size ^a
All items	All (30 items)	Female	3.77	.79	1237	-5.72***	.03
		Male	4.04	.81			
Level 1	All (8 items)	Female	4.80	1.00	1000.63	-3.81***	.01
		Male	5.02	.96			
Level 1	Grammatical (4 items)	Female	5.04	1.03	1015.58	-3.50***	.01
		Male	5.24	.97			
Level 1	Lexico-semantic (4 items)	Female	4.56	1.13	1232	-3.73***	.01
		Male	4.81	1.10			
Level 2	All (12 items)	Female	4.15	.94	1237	-5.46***	.02
		Male	4.45	.94			
Level 2	Grammatical (8 items)	Female	4.27	1.05	1235	-5.37***	.02
		Male	4.60	1.01			
Level 2	Lexico-semantic (4 items)	Female	3.98	1.07	1235	-4.23***	.01
		Male	4.24	1.09			
Level 3	All (10 items)	Female	2.52	.84	1237	-5.06***	.02
		Male	2.77	.91			
Level 3	Grammatical (4 items)	Female	3.07	1.14	1235	-6.59***	.03
		Male	3.52	1.21			
Level 3	Lexico-semantic (6 items)	Female	2.15	.87	1237	-2.50*	.01
		Male	2.28	.94			

* $p < .05$.

*** $p < .001$.

^aEta squared.

Table 5.7 shows that male participants still award higher intelligibility scores than female participants in all ten subcategories. It can be seen that when the sample size was bigger, apart from the subcategory of Level 3: lexico-semantic items, the differences in mean scores of the nine subcategories reached a significant level at $p < .001$. Nevertheless, the effect sizes (eta squared) of all ten subcategories were still small as they

ranged from .01 to .03. Therefore, it can be concluded that despite the increased sample size, gender did not play a key role as a factor contributing to participants' intelligibility of Thai English.

The conclusion that gender did not have much effect on participants' intelligibility can be supported by the information from the interviews with participants. Based on the interview data, while going through the 30 items in the questionnaire with participants, it is apparent that male participants tended to rate a higher number on the six-point scale than female participants. When questioned about their actual intelligibility towards the English messages on signs, it was found that the intelligibility of both male and female participants were quite similar, but the way they expressed their ideas through the scale were different.

Female participants appeared to choose 6 *comprehensible* only when they were certain that they really knew the intended meaning of the message. If they thought they knew what it meant but were not entirely sure about the intended meaning, they tended to go for 5 rather than 6. On the other hand, male participants tended to choose 6 *comprehensible* instead of 5 even if they were not quite confident that they could get the message right. Male interviewees generally explained that if the message made sense to them, they preferred going for 6 rather than 5. For the items in Level 3, female participants usually chose 1 *incomprehensible* while male participants preferred going for 2, even though they might have just only a rough idea, such as knowing that the sign was selling food or a product or giving information about the place.

According to the numerical results from Table 5.5, Table 5.6, and Table 5.7, male participants appeared to award higher intelligibility scores than female participants, however, the effect sizes were small. In addition, the interview data supported that male and female participants may have the same level of actual intelligibility towards Thai English messages, but male participants tended to choose a higher number on the intelligibility scale than female participants did.

5.3.2 Trip to Thailand and Intelligibility

According to the research question no. 2 of this study, to find out whether those who have been to Thailand understand Thai English better than those who have never been to Thailand or not, a t-test was conducted, and the results can be found in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8 Participants' trip to Thailand and intelligibility (Yes n = 224, No n = 222)

Level	Feature	Visiting Thailand	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	Effect size ^a
All items	All (30 items)	Yes	4.45	.74	444	3.05**	.02
		No	4.24	.71			
Level 1	All (8 items)	Yes	5.42	.76	444	1.22	
		No	5.33	.78			
Level 1	Grammatical (4 items)	Yes	5.64	.77	444	.52	
		No	5.60	.74			
Level 1	Lexico-semantic (4 items)	Yes	5.20	.95	444	1.47	
		No	5.07	1.01			
Level 2	All (12 items)	Yes	4.98	.85	444	3.76***	.03
		No	4.68	.81			
Level 2	Grammatical (8 items)	Yes	5.23	.87	444	1.72	
		No	5.09	.84			
Level 2	Lexico-semantic (4 items)	Yes	4.61	1.02	442	5.22***	.06
		No	4.11	1.03			
Level 3	All (10 items)	Yes	3.04	.96	444	2.20*	.01
		No	2.84	.94			
Level 3	Grammatical (4 items)	Yes	3.94	1.26	442	2.82**	.02
		No	3.61	1.21			
Level 3	Lexico-semantic (6 items)	Yes	2.44	1.03	444	1.13	
		No	2.33	1.04			

* $p < .05$.** $p < .01$.*** $p < .001$.^aEta squared.

Table 5.8 shows that participants who had been to Thailand had higher intelligibility scores than those who had never been to Thailand across the ten subcategories. However, only five subcategories reached a significant level at $p < .001$ for Level 2: all items and Level 2: lexico-semantic items, $p < .01$ for all items and Level 3: grammatical items and at $p < .05$ for Level 3: all items. Regarding the effect sizes (eta squared), only the subcategory of Level 2: lexico-semantic features had a moderate effect while the other four subcategories had a small effect.

According to the interviews, participants who went to Thailand just for a short trip or for a few days could not understand the Thai English messages on signs better than those who had never been to Thailand. However, those who used to live in Thailand or had visited Thailand a few times spent less time on negotiating the meanings of the Thai English messages on signs than those who had never been to Thailand. When asking for

a reason why they could understand the English messages in Level 2 quite well, the interviewees revealed that they knew what Thai people wanted to say as they had been to Thailand before.

In response to research question no.2, it can be concluded that participants who had been to Thailand gave higher intelligibility scores than those who had never been to Thailand, but the trip to Thailand was not the key factor contributing to their intelligibility of Thai English. However, those who had been to Thailand may be able to negotiate the meanings of Thai English messages with minor errors under lexico-semantic features better than those who had never been to Thailand.

5.3.3 Geographic Origin and Intelligibility

According to research question no. 3 of this study, it was hypothesised that people from Asia should be able to understand Thai English better than those from totally different cultural background like Europe. To test this hypothesis, a t-test was conducted, and the results can be found in Table 5.9.

Table 5.9 Geographic origin and intelligibility (Asian n = 139, European n = 192)

Level	Features	Continent	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	Effect size ^a
All items	All (30 items)	Asian	4.08	.86	239.91	-4.44***	.06
		European	4.46	.63			
Level 1	All (8 items)	Asian	4.95	1.02	193.17	-6.80***	.12
		European	5.59	.53			
Level 1	Grammatical (4 items)	Asian	5.26	1.08	176.08	-5.41***	.08
		European	5.79	.47			
Level 1	Lexico-semantic (4 items)	Asian	4.65	1.21	220.76	-6.45***	.11
		European	5.40	.79			
Level 2	All (12 items)	Asian	4.48	1.02	224.60	-5.19***	.08
		European	4.99	.68			
Level 2	Grammatical (8 items)	Asian	4.76	1.10	195.53	-5.84***	.09
		European	5.36	.59			
Level 2	Lexico-semantic (4 items)	Asian	4.09	1.17	266.26	-3.25**	.03
		European	4.49	1.00			
Level 3	All (10 items)	Asian	2.91	1.00	329.00	-.06	
		European	2.91	.93			
Level 3	Grammatical (4 items)	Asian	3.70	1.29	328.00	-.61	
		European	3.79	1.17			
Level 3	Lexico-semantic (6 items)	Asian	2.36	1.09	329.00	.30	
		European	2.33	1.02			

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

^aEta squared.

Table 5.9 shows that European participants had higher intelligibility scores than Asian participants across seven subcategories, namely all items, Level 1: all items, Level 1: grammatical items, Level 1: lexico-semantic items, Level 2: all items, Level 2: grammatical items, and Level 2: lexico-semantic items. The differences in mean scores for the first six subcategories reached a significant level at $p < .001$ with a moderate effect ranging from .06 to .12. The differences in mean scores of the seventh subcategory, Level 2: lexico-semantic items, reached a significant level at $p < .01$ with a small effect.

In response to research question no. 3, it can be concluded that Asian participants did not understand Thai English better than European participants. The hypothesis was therefore rejected. On the contrary, European participants could understand Thai English with no errors (Level 1) and with minor errors (Level 2) better than Asian participants.

There was a concern about the number of native English speakers in the group of European participants as this could affect the results in terms of being native or non-native speakers. Therefore, the answers from British people were excluded, and the analysis was done again to find out whether European participants could still understand Thai English, especially Level 1 and Level 2, better than Asian participants or not. The results can be found in Table 5.10.

Table 5.10 Geographic origin excluding those from UK and intelligibility
(Asian n = 139, European excluding UK n = 83)

Level	Feature	Continent	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	Effect size ^a
All items	All (30 items)	Asian	4.08	.86	213.09	-2.91**	.04
		European ex. UK	4.37	.61			
Level 1	All (8 items)	Asian	4.95	1.02	219.94	-4.75***	.09
		European ex. UK	5.47	.61			
Level 1	Grammatical (4 items)	Asian	5.26	1.08	218.08	-3.94***	.07
		European ex. UK	5.70	.58			
Level 1	Lexico-semantic (4 items)	Asian	4.65	1.21	210.24	-4.22***	.07
		European ex. UK	5.24	.89			
Level 2	All (12 items)	Asian	4.48	1.02	216.47	-4.32***	.08
		European ex. UK	4.98	.69			
Level 2	Grammatical (8 items)	Asian	4.76	1.10	214.91	-5.55***	.12
		European ex. UK	5.38	.55			
Level 2	Lexico-semantic (4 items)	Asian	4.09	1.17	219.00	-2.08*	.02
		European ex. UK	4.41	1.09			
Level 3	All (10 items)	Asian	2.91	1.00	220.00	1.14	
		European ex. UK	2.76	.80			
Level 3	Grammatical (4 items)	Asian	3.70	1.29	219.00	.25	
		European ex. UK	3.66	1.10			
Level 3	Lexico-semantic (6 items)	Asian	2.36	1.09	220.00	1.46	
		European ex. UK	2.16	.92			

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

^aEta squared

After native English speakers (n = 109) were excluded from the group of European participants, European participants (n = 83) still had higher intelligibility mean scores than Asian participants (n = 139) across the same seven subcategories, namely all items, Level 1: all items, Level 1: grammatical items, Level 1: lexico-semantic items, Level 2: all items, Level 2: grammatical items, and Level 2: lexico-semantic items. The

differences in mean scores for five subcategories, namely Level 1: all items, Level 1: grammatical items, Level 1: lexico-semantic items, Level 2: all items, and Level 2: grammatical items, reached a significant level at $p < .001$ with a moderate effect ranging from .07 to .12. The differences in mean scores for the subcategories of all items and Level 2: lexico-semantic items reached a significant level at $p < .01$ and $p < .05$ respectively with a small effect size.

The results showed that European participants with native English speakers excluded still had higher intelligibility mean scores than Asian participants.

Based on the interviews, participants from Europe including British people ($n = 11$) spent a shorter time on doing the survey and negotiating the meanings of Thai English messages compared to Asian participants. In general, European interviewees took around 30-40 minutes for the interviews while it took Asian participants ($n = 18$) approximately 40-60 minutes for the interviews because they spent more time on guessing the meanings of the items.

For the items in Level 1, European participants, especially British interviewees, did not have many difficulties understanding Thai English messages. However, for the items with minor errors (Level 2), some European interviewees had to look at the messages twice when trying to guess the meanings while British participants could immediately guess the right meanings of the messages because they knew what was right or wrong. On the other hand, some Asian interviewees had to look at the messages three or four times to ensure that they did not misread any word. However, for items with major errors (Level 3), both groups of participants could hardly guess the intended meanings of the messages. .

According to Table 5.9 and 5.10, European participants had higher intelligibility scores than Asian participants. When looking closely at English proficiency of European excluding British ($n = 83$) and Asian participants ($n = 139$), European participants appeared to have higher levels of English proficiency than Asian participants (see Table 5.11).

Table 5.11 English proficiency of international participants
(European n =83, Asian n = 139)

	Asian		European	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Proficient	31	22.3%	31	37.3%
Advanced	45	32.4%	35	42.2%
Upper intermediate	28	20.1%	11	13.3%
Intermediate and below	18	12.9%	2	2.4%
Missing information	17	12.3%	4	4.8%
Total	139	100.0%	83	100.0%

Table 5.11 shows that 37.3% of European participants belonged to proficient level while only 22.3% for Asian respondents did. Regarding advanced level, 42.2% of European respondents belonged to this level while 32.4% of Asian participants did. In total, 79.5% of European participants were at proficient and advanced levels while 54.7% of Asian participants were at these levels.

Hence, it can be concluded that European participants had higher English proficiency than Asian participants and the former could understand Thai English better than the latter.

5.3.4 Non/Native English Background and Intelligibility

As English proficiency appeared to have an effect on the intelligibility of European and Asian participants, the variable of participants being native or non-native speakers of English should also be worth considering.

Table 5.12 Non/native English background and intelligibility
(Native n = 192, Non-native n = 244)

Level	Features		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	Effect size ^a
All items	All	Native	4.54	.62	433.89	5.36***	.06
	(30 items)	Non-native	4.19	.77			
Level 1	All	Native	5.66	.45	377.21	7.35***	.11
	(8 items)	Non-native	5.17	.89			
Level 1	Grammatical	Native	5.86	.34	321.91	6.58***	.09
	(4 items)	Non-native	5.44	.92			
Level 1	Lexico-semantic	Native	5.45	.70	415.64	6.36***	.09
	(4 items)	Non-native	4.90	1.11			
Level 2	All	Native	5.04	.66	429.86	5.07***	.06
	(12 items)	Non-native	4.66	.93			
Level 2	Grammatical	Native	5.38	.63	420.28	4.93***	.05
	(8 items)	Non-native	5.00	.97			
Level 2	Lexico-semantic	Native	4.58	.91	432.96	4.03***	.04
	(4 items)	Non-native	4.18	1.14			
Level 3	All	Native	3.06	.98	434.00	2.33*	.01
	(10 items)	Non-native	2.84	.93			
Level 3	Grammatical	Native	3.92	1.25	433.00	2.14*	.01
	(4 items)	Non-native	3.66	1.22			
Level 3	Lexico-semantic	Native	2.48	1.04	406.11	1.96	
	(6 items)	Non-native	2.29	1.02			

* $p < .05$.

*** $p < .001$.

^aEta squared.

The group of native speakers ($n = 192$) was derived from the participants from five countries, namely the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, based on the criteria of native speakers by Kachru (1989). Table 5.12 illustrates that native speakers ($n = 192$) had higher intelligibility mean scores than non-native speakers ($n = 244$) across the ten subcategories. For the categories of all items, Level 1: all items, Level 1: grammatical items, Level 1: lexico-semantic items, and Level 2: all items, the differences in mean scores reached a significant level at $p < .001$ with a moderate effect. The differences in mean scores for Level 2: grammatical items and Level 2: lexico-semantic items reached a significant level at $p < .001$ with a small effect. The differences in mean scores for Level 3: all items and Level 3: grammatical items reached a significant level at $p < .05$ with a small effect.

Based on the in-depth interviews with 11 native speakers of English, they reported that they did not have any problem understanding English used on signs in Level 1, although some of the native-speaking interviewees who had never been to Thailand commented about Q9 ‘Please take off your shoes’ sign that they did not understand why people had to take their shoes off to use the toilet. In terms of what signs told them to do, they all could follow the instructions. Regarding items in Level 2, native speakers revealed that they mainly knew what Thai people wanted to say in English. However, 18 non-native speakers admitted that they were not entirely confident in guessing what Thai people wanted to say to a non-Thai audience by using English because they were not native speakers of English. In addition, they saw some signs that could mislead people who speak different mother languages from them in their countries as well. Regarding the eight items in Level 3, both native and non-native speakers found that it was very difficult for them to make sense of any sign under this level even though they had tried to bring the contexts into account.

From the results, it can be concluded that native speakers could understand Thai English messages on signs better than non-native speakers.

5.3.5 Age and Intelligibility

As participants’ ages were different, the data were analysed by using one-way ANOVA to find out whether age played an important role in participants’ Thai English intelligibility or not.

5.3.5.1 International Participants

Table 5.13 International participants' intelligibility and age (N =444)

Level	<i>M (SD)</i>				F	Effect size ^a
	18-25 (n = 102)	26-34 (n = 210)	35-44 (n = 85)	45 &over (n = 47)		
All 30 items	4.29 (.63)	4.31 (.75)	4.35 (.81)	4.55 (.68)	1.55	
Level 1 All	5.43 (.76)	5.29 (.80)	5.37 (.82)	5.62 (.44)	2.53	
Level 1 Grammatical	5.60 (.81)	5.56 (.77)	5.62 (.81)	5.91 (.22)	2.88*	.02
Level 1 Lexico-semantic	5.26 (.92)	5.03 (1.01)	5.11 (1.09)	5.32 (.75)	1.95	
Level 2 All	4.65 (.79)	4.83 (.84)	4.88 (.95)	5.09 (.73)	3.05*	.02
Level 2 Grammatical	5.05 (.89)	5.15 (.86)	5.18 (.88)	5.37 (.67)	1.49	
Level 2 Lexico-semantic	4.10 (.89)	4.38 (1.05)	4.45 (1.20)	4.69 (1.03)	3.89**	.02
Level 3 All	2.94 (.85)	2.92 (.97)	2.92 (.99)	3.05 (1.09)	.26	
Level 3 Grammatical	3.75 (1.11)	3.79 (1.24)	3.71 (1.29)	3.80 (1.47)	.10	
Level 3: Lexico-semantic	2.40 (.98)	2.33 (1.06)	2.40 (1.02)	2.56 (1.05)	.65	

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

^aEta squared.

Across the ten subcategories, it can be seen that participants aged 45 years old and over ($n = 47$) provided higher intelligibility scores than participants aged 35-44 years old ($n = 85$), aged 26-34 years old ($n = 210$) and aged 18 years old and over ($n = 102$). However, only three subcategories reached a significant level; at $p < .01$ with a small effect for Level 2: lexico-semantic items; and at $p < .05$ with a small effect for both Level 1: grammatical items and Level 2: all items.

Post-hoc tests were done across the three significant levels. For Level 1: grammatical items, it can be seen from Table 5.13 that participants aged 45 years old and over ($M = 5.62$) could understand better than participants aged 18-25 years old ($M = 5.43$). The Turkey HSD test showed that the mean differences between the groups of 25-34 years old and 45 years old and over were significant at $p < .05$.

Regarding Level 2: all items, participants aged 45 years old and over ($M = 5.09$) got a higher score than participants aged 18-25 years old ($M = 4.65$). The Turkey HSD showed the differences in mean scores between these two groups were significant at $p < .05$.

For the group of Level 2: lexico-semantic items, the Turkey HSD test showed that the differences in mean scores between participants aged 18-25 years old ($M = 4.10$) and participants aged 45 years old and over ($M = 4.69$) were significant at $p < .01$.

According to the interviews with international participants, there were three interviewees aged 45 years old and over and four interviewees aged 18-25 years old. The interviewees from the first group seemed to understand Thai English better because they had all visited Thailand before. It appears that for international visitors, the older they are, the more they have travelled to different places. They accepted that they could understand Thai English mainly from their travelling experience and life experience. For those under 25 years old, only one out of four had been to Thailand. The other three said they would love to visit other countries, but they did not have much money to do so.

Table 5.14 International participants who had been and never been to Thailand and age
(N = 442)

	Been to Thailand		Never	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
18-24 years old (n = 102)	36	16.2%	66	30%
25-34 years old (n = 209)	93	41.9%	116	52.7%
35-44 years old (n = 84)	59	26.6%	25	11.4%
45 and over (n = 47)	34	15.3%	13	5.9%
Total	n = 222	100%	n = 220	100%

From Table 5.14, the numbers of the participants who had been to Thailand (n = 222) and the participants who had never been to Thailand (n = 220) were rather similar. However, 36 out of 102 participants aged between 18-24 years old had been to Thailand, which accounts for 35.3% of the 18-24 year-old participants. Conversely, 34 out of 47 participants aged 45 years old and over, accounting for 72.3%, had been to Thailand. Therefore, the data shown in Table 5.14 could be used to support the interview data that the participants aged 45 years old and over were more likely to have been to Thailand than the participants aged 18-24 years old. Hence, they have had more chances to broaden their travelling experience as well as life experience; that is why these two groups had a significant relationship between each other.

5.3.5.2 Thai Participants

Table 5.15 Expected intelligibility of international participants rated by Thais and age (N =798)

Level	<i>M (SD)</i>			F	Effect size ^a
	18-34 (n = 156)	35-44 (n = 404)	45 & over (n = 238)		
All 30 items	3.69 (.74)	3.66 (.70)	3.44 (.71)	8.53***	.02
Level 1 All	4.65 (1.07)	4.69 (.97)	4.40 (.97)	6.93***	.02
Level 1 Grammatical	4.84 (1.13)	4.90 (.99)	4.71 (1.04)	2.52	
Level 1 Lexico-semantic	4.50 (1.12)	4.50 (1.09)	4.08 (1.10)	12.17***	.03
Level 2 All	4.02 (.89)	4.01 (.83)	3.77 (.85)	7.1***	.02
Level 2 Grammatical	4.07 (1.09)	4.04 (1.01)	3.77 (1.13)	8.50***	.02
Level 2 Lexico-semantic	3.97 (.80)	3.97 (.77)	3.77 (.74)	3.04*	.01
Level 3 All	2.55 (.80)	2.45 (.77)	2.32 (.74)	4.46**	.01
Level 3 Grammatical	3.12 (1.00)	2.99 (1.07)	2.37 (1.01)	7.43***	.02
Level 3 Lexico-semantic	2.17 (.86)	2.09 (.78)	2.04 (.76)	1.19	

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

^aEta squared.

In general, participants aged 18-34 years old expected that international visitors should be able to understand Thai English better than participants aged 45 years old and over.

Table 5.15 shows that differences in mean scores were significant at $p < .001$ across the subcategories of all items, Level 1: all items, Level 1: lexico-semantic items, Level 2: all items, Level 2: grammatical items, and Level 3: grammatical items; at $p < .01$ for Level 3: all items; and at $p < .05$ for Level 2: lexico-semantic items. However, the effect sizes were small across the eight subcategories.

The post-hoc tests illustrated that mean differences between the group of participants aged 45 and overs and participants aged 18-24 years old were statistically significant at $p < .05$ for the subcategories of all items, Level 1: all items, Level 1: lexico-semantic items, Level 2: all, Level 2: grammatical items, and Level 3: grammatical items. However, there was no significance between the participants aged 18-24 years old and aged 25-34 years old.

Based on the interviews with four Thai participants aged 45 years old and over, they revealed that in their generation people did not have many chances to learn English or pay attention to English as much as people in the younger generations did. When they had to rate the scale, they themselves could not understand the English messages on signs well enough, hence they thought that international visitors should not clearly understand the English messages on signs either.

5.3.6 English Proficiency and Intelligibility

It was hypothesised that English proficiency may have an effect on participants' intelligibility of Thai English. Therefore, one-way ANOVA was conducted and the result can be found in Tables 5.16 and 5.17

5.3.6.1 International Participants

Table 5.16 International participants' intelligibility and English proficiency (N = 448)

Level	<i>M (SD)</i>					F	Effect
	Native (n = 189)	Proficient (n = 82)	Advanced (n = 108)	Upper intermediate (n = 46)	Intermediate and below (n = 23)		
All 30 items	23.58	21.98 (4.49)	21.50 (3.69)	21.17 (3.33)	21.39 (3.12)	8.24***	.07
Level 1 All	6.43 (1.40)	5.35 (1.92)	4.94 (2.22)	4.96 (1.75)	4.70 (1.69)	17.36***	.14
Level 1 Grammatical	3.48 (0.73)	3.01 (1.11)	2.82 (1.24)	2.72 (1.09)	2.74 (1.21)	11.18***	.09
Level 1 Lexico-semantic	2.95 (1.02)	2.34 (1.21)	2.12 (1.30)	2.24 (1.16)	1.96 (1.02)	12.67***	.10
Level 2 All	8.19 (2.68)	7.95 (3.03)	7.86 (3.10)	7.57 (2.74)	8.13 (2.47)	0.56	
Level 2 Grammatical	5.67 (2.14)	5.24 (2.33)	5.26 (2.24)	4.89 (2.08)	5.17 (2.10)	1.59	
Level 2 Lexico-semantic	2.52 (0.98)	2.78 (1.15)	2.60 (1.21)	2.67 (1.17)	2.96 (1.02)	1.35	
Level 3 All	8.96 (1.49)	8.67 (2.12)	8.69 (1.89)	8.65 (1.93)	8.57 (1.41)	.77	
Level 3 Gramatical	3.70 (0.69)	3.49 (0.97)	3.54 (0.87)	3.50 (0.94)	3.39 (0.66)	1.83	
Level 3 Lexico-semantic	5.25 (1.08)	5.27 (1.22)	5.16 (1.28)	5.15 (1.21)	5.17 (1.03)	.02	

***p < .001.

^aEta squared.

Table 5.17 International participants' (excluding native speakers) intelligibility and English proficiency (N = 259)

Level	<i>M (SD)</i>				F	Effect size ^a
	Proficient (n = 82)	Advanced (n = 108)	Upper intermediate (n = 46)	Intermediate & below (n = 23)		
All 30 items	4.25 (.74)	4.21 (.79)	4.06 (.74)	4.02 (.79)	.98	
Level 1 All	5.29 (.88)	5.20 (.87)	5.01 (.85)	4.84 (1.02)	2.17	
Level 1 Grammatical	5.55 (.97)	5.53 (.72)	5.16 (1.04)	5.08 (1.09)	3.44*	.04
Level 1 Lexico-semanatic	5.03 (1.03)	4.87 (1.17)	4.85 (1.02)	4.61 (1.17)	.99	
Level 2 All	4.80 (0.86)	4.68 (0.91)	4.51 (1.00)	4.32 (1.01)	2.14	
Level 2 Grammatical	5.15 (0.89)	5.02 (0.88)	4.82 (1.05)	4.54 (1.21)	3.06*	.03
Level 2 Lexico-semantic	4.30 (1.05)	4.21 (1.20)	4.08 (1.17)	4.02 (1.00)	.58	
Level 3 All	2.74 (0.93)	2.84 (0.93)	2.77 (0.89)	3.00 (0.89)	.52	
Level 3 Grammatical	3.44 (1.21)	3.67 (1.25)	3.64 (1.12)	3.87 (1.17)	.98	
Level 3 Lexico-semantic	2.27 (1.05)	2.29 (0.97)	2.20 (1.03)	2.41 (1.06)	.24	

*p < .05.

^aEta squared.

Based on Table 5.16, it can be seen that generally native speakers had higher intelligibility scores than other groups of participants. The differences in mean scores between native speakers and other groups were significant at $p < .001$ with a moderate effect for the subcategories of all items, Level 1: grammatical items and Level 1: lexico-semantic items, and at $p < .001$ with a large effect for Level 1: all items.

Turkey HSD and LSD tests showed that there was a significant relationship between the group of 1) native speakers and the groups of 2) proficient, advanced, upper intermediate, and intermediate & below levels. The post-hoc tests did not show any significant relationship among or between proficient, advanced, upper intermediate, or intermediate & below levels.

When excluding native speakers of English, Table 5.17 showed that participants at proficient level mainly had higher intelligibility than other groups of participants. However, the differences in mean scores reached a significant level at $p < .05$ with a small effect for Level 1: grammatical items and Level 2: grammatical items.

The post-hoc test showed that for Level 1: grammatical items, there was a significant relationship between the groups of upper intermediate and proficient levels, and upper intermediate and advanced levels. In the same way, there was also a significant relationship between the groups of intermediate & below and proficient levels, and intermediate & below and advanced levels. For Level 2: grammatical items, the results revealed a significant relationship between intermediate & below and proficient levels, and intermediate & below and advanced levels.

5.3.6.2 Thai Participants

Table 5.18 Expected intelligibility of international participants rated by Thais and English proficiency (N = 789)

Level	<i>M (SD)</i>						F	Effect size ^a
	Proficient (n = 82)	Advanced (n = 198)	Upper intermediate (n = 234)	Intermediate (n = 63)	Elementary (n = 113)	Beginner (n = 99)		
All 30 items	3.86 (.72)	3.69 (.68)	3.59 (.67)	3.48 (.73)	3.42 (.74)	3.56 (.84)	4.65***	.03
Level 1 All	4.90 (1.06)	4.86 (.87)	4.63 (.93)	4.44 (1.00)	4.21 (.99)	4.27 (1.12)	10.67***	.06
Level 1 Grammatical	5.24 (.95)	5.13 (.87)	4.83 (.99)	4.61 (1.03)	4.45 (1.05)	4.44 (1.18)	13.14***	.08
Level 1 Lexico-semantic	4.64 (1.19)	4.59 (1.03)	4.44 (1.04)	4.28 (1.14)	3.96 (1.06)	4.10 (1.24)	7.14***	.04
Level 2 All	4.34 (.81)	4.09 (.81)	3.93 (.82)	3.76 (.83)	3.71 (.83)	3.72 (.93)	8.70***	.05
Level 2 Grammatical	4.45 (.84)	4.13 (.85)	3.95 (.86)	3.77 (.82)	3.71 (.84)	3.71 (.97)	10.81***	.06
Level 2 Lexico-semantic	4.21 (1.02)	4.04 (1.05)	3.91 (1.03)	3.74 (1.13)	3.70 (1.08)	3.75 (1.14)	3.51**	.02
Level 3 All	2.49 (.83)	2.30 (.68)	2.37 (0.69)	2.39 (.73)	2.47 (.85)	2.80 (.89)	6.39***	.04
Level 3 Grammatical	3.00 (1.13)	2.85 (1.10)	2.88 (.96)	2.80 (.93)	2.94 (1.02)	3.32 (1.14)	3.31**	.02
Level 3 Lexico-semantic	2.15 (.85)	1.92 (.66)	2.02 (.72)	2.12 (.81)	2.16 (.91)	2.43 (.89)	6.30***	.04

***p < .001.

**p < .01.

^aEta squared.

From Table 5.18, participants at proficient level assumed that international visitors could understand Thai English better than other groups.

The differences in mean scores across ten subcategories were found significant at $p < .001$ with a moderate effect for the subcategories of Level 1 all items, Level 1: grammatical items, Level 2: grammatical items, and Level 2: lexico-semantic items; at $p < .001$ with a small effect for the subcategories of all items, Level 1: lexico-semantic items, Level 2: all items, Level 3: all items and Level 3: lexico-semantic items, and at $p < .01$ with a small effect for the subcategories of Level 2: lexico-semantic items and Level 3: grammatical items.

Based on the results from the post-hoc tests, in general, the scores of those at proficient level were significant with the scores of elementary participants while the scores of those at beginner, intermediate and upper intermediate levels showed no significance with each other as they were usually in the same group. The scores of those at upper intermediate and advanced levels showed no significance with each other as well. For items in Level 2, participants at beginner, elementary, upper intermediate and intermediate levels showed no significance with each other as they were usually in the same group. The scores of those at upper intermediate, advanced and proficient levels showed no significance with each other as they usually go together. For items in Level 3, the scores of participants at beginner and native levels showed no significance with each other. The scores of those at elementary, intermediate, upper intermediate, advanced and proficient levels showed no significance with each other as they usually belonged to the same group.

5.3.6.3 All Participants

Table 5.19 All participants' intelligibility of Thai English and English proficiency (N = 1237)

Level	<i>M (SD)</i>							F	Effect size ^a
	Native (n=189)	Proficient (n = 164)	Advanced (n = 306)	Upper intermediate (n = 280)	Intermediate (n = 78)	Elementary (n = 118)	Beginner (n = 102)		
All 30 items	4.57 (.61)	4.05 (.75)	3.87 (.76)	3.67 (.70)	3.60 (.76)	3.41 (.73)	3.59 (.85)	46.55***	.19
Level 1 All	5.67 (.42)	5.10 (.99)	4.98 (.88)	4.69 (.93)	4.54 (1.01)	4.20 (.99)	4.30 (1.13)	48.59***	.19
Level 1: Grammatical	5.88 (.29)	5.40 (.97)	5.27 (.84)	4.88 (1.01)	4.74 (1.04)	4.43 (1.06)	4.47 (1.18)	50.38***	.20
Level 1: Lexico-semantic	5.46 (.67)	4.84 (1.12)	4.69 (1.09)	4.51 (1.05)	4.36 (1.17)	3.96 (1.05)	4.14 (1.24)	34.22***	.14
Level 2: All	5.06 (.65)	4.57 (.87)	4.30 (.89)	4.03 (.88)	3.92 (.89)	3.69 (.83)	3.76 (.94)	52.21***	.20
Level 2: Grammatical	5.41 (.61)	4.80 (.93)	4.45 (.96)	4.09 (.95)	3.98 (.94)	3.68 (.87)	3.75 (.99)	74.03***	.27
Level 2: Lexico-semantic	4.58 (.90)	4.25 (1.03)	4.10 (1.11)	3.94 (1.05)	3.83 (1.12)	3.68 (1.07)	3.78 (1.13)	13.65***	.06
Level 3: All	3.11 (.99)	2.62 (.89)	2.49 (.82)	2.43 (.74)	2.48 (.76)	2.48 (.85)	2.83 (.91)	15.95***	.07
Level 3: Grammatical	3.98 (1.26)	3.22 (1.18)	3.14 (1.21)	3.01 (1.03)	2.99 (1.03)	2.95 (1.01)	3.38 (1.19)	17.72***	.08
Level 3: Lexico-semantic	2.53 (1.05)	2.21 (.95)	2.05 (.80)	2.05 (.78)	2.14 (.84)	2.17 (.92)	2.45 (.91)	8.64***	.04

***p < .001.

^aEta squared.

From Table 5.19, the differences in mean scores among seven groups of participants were significant across the ten subcategories at $p < .001$ with a large effect for the subcategories of all items, Level 1: all items, Level 1: grammatical items, Level 1: lexico-semantic items, Level 2: all items and Level 2: grammatical items, with a moderate effect for Level 2: lexico-semantic items, Level 3: all items and Level 3: grammatical items, and with a small effect for Level 3: lexico-semantic items.

The post-hoc tests showed that for all 30 items, the scores of native speakers, participants at proficient level and participants at advanced level were significant with every other group. The scores of participants at upper intermediate, intermediate, and beginner levels showed no significance with each other. In the same way, the scores of those at elementary, beginner and intermediate levels also showed no significance with each other.

Regarding Level 1: all items, grammatical and lexico-semantic items, the intelligibility mean scores of native speakers showed a significant relationship with every other group while the scores of participants at proficient and advanced levels showed no significance with each other. The scores of participants at upper intermediate and advanced levels showed no significance with each other. In the same way, the scores of participants at upper intermediate and intermediate levels showed no significance with each other. In addition, the scores of participants at elementary and beginner levels showed no significance with each other.

For items in Level 2, the intelligibility scores of native speakers and of participants at proficient and advanced levels showed a significant relationship with every level. The scores of participants at upper intermediate and intermediate levels showed no significant relationship with each other. Likewise, the scores of those at elementary and beginner levels showed no significance with each other.

For items in Level 3, the scores of native speakers and those at beginner level showed no significance with each other, but their scores were significant with the score of other subcategories. The scores of those at the proficient, advanced, upper intermediate, intermediate and elementary levels showed no significance with each other.

In conclusion, for non-native speakers, the higher their English proficiency level was, the better their mean scores for items in Level 1 and Level 2. However, for items in

Level 3, English proficiency did not seem to be a matter of concern because it would be too difficult for non-Thai speakers to understand Thai English messages with major errors.

5.4 Findings from the Study

According to the statistical analysis and interview data, the study of the international participants' intelligibility of Thai English on signs in tourist domains in Thailand reveals the findings as follows:

First of all, international participants appeared to understand Thai English messages in Level 1 (no errors) and Level 2 (minor errors) better than Thai people expected because when looking at the original messages in Thai, Thai respondents realised that some signs were mistranslated. Therefore, it would be very difficult for non-Thai speakers to get the intended meanings of the original messages.

Second, based on the interviews, some participants guessed that they could understand the English messages in Level 2 and Level 3 (major error) items well. However, when being told about the intended meanings of the messages, they came to realise that they misunderstood the messages or they were misled. Therefore, they accepted that they had overrated the scale of intelligibility of some items. This could help to explain why the intelligibility scores rated by international participants were higher than those rated by Thai respondents.

Third, male participants generally had higher mean scores of intelligibility than female participants. However, during the interviews male and female participants seemed to show a similar intelligibility degree, but male participants tended to be risk-takers and thought that they could understand better.

Fourth, if the participants visited Thailand before, they tended to understand Thai English containing minor errors better than those who had never been to Thailand. However, if signs were grammatically correct, both those who had previously visited Thailand and those who had never been to Thailand could understand the English messages well.

Fifth, European people could understand Thai English messages better if the signs were grammatically correct and contained minor errors because European participants

appeared to have higher English proficiency than Asian participants, which helped to have a better understanding towards Thai English. However, if the English messages contained major errors, English proficiency did not play a role.

Sixth, if the English messages were grammatically correct or contained minor errors, native English speakers could grasp the intended meanings better than non-native speakers.

Seventh, it appeared that international participants aged 45 years old and over could understand Thai English better than other groups because of their travelling experience and life experience. On the other hand, Thai participants aged 18-25 years old assumed that international participants should be able to understand Thai English better than the participants from other age groups.

5.5 Conclusion

In response to the research questions in Section 5.1, the conclusion of the study about the intelligibility of Thai English is as follows:

First, international and Thai participants had different beliefs regarding the intelligibility of Thai English messages on signs. The study showed that international participants could understand Thai English better than Thai people expected if the Thai English signs contained no errors or minor errors.

Second, participants who had been to Thailand may be able to understand Thai English better than those who had never been to Thailand because the former could negotiate the meaning of Thai English messages containing lexico-semantic features better than the latter. However, this was not a key factor contributing to participants' intelligibility.

Third, although coming from Asia, Asian participants could not understand Thai English better than European participants. On the other hand, European participants could understand Thai English on signs with no errors and minor errors better than Asian participants because the former appeared to have higher English proficiency than the latter.

Finally, among different variables, the study found that English proficiency played a key role in participants' intelligibility of Thai English. Participants with high English proficiency could understand Thai English better than those with low English proficiency if Thai English signs contained no errors or minor errors. In addition, native speakers of English could understand Thai English the best and could negotiate the meanings quicker and better than non-native speakers.

This chapter has presented both quantitative and qualitative results from the study about the intelligibility of Thai English based on the data drawn from the online questionnaire and the participant interviews. In the next chapter, the results and findings from the study about participants' recognition of English Standard norms on signs in tourist domains in Thailand will be presented.

Chapter 6 The Extent of the Correct Recognition of the Meanings of the Signs

This chapter presents the results of a study about the extent of the correct recognition of the meanings of the Thai English signs. in tourist domains in Thailand. The results and findings provided in the chapter are based on the answers of 1,266 respondents from the online questionnaire followed by in-depth interviews with 51 participants regarding the factors that made participants consider which sign was problematic to them.

6.1 Research Questions for the Study about Correct Recognition

This study aims to explore the perceptions of international respondents and Thai respondents regarding the extent of the correct recognition of the meanings of English messages on signs. The research questions are as follows:

- 1) Do international participants and Thai participants view the Thai English items problematic to them at the same degree?
- 2) Do international participants who have been to Thailand have better recognition of Thai English than those who have never been to Thailand?
- 3) Do Asian participants have better recognition of Thai English than European participants?
- 4) To what extent do different variables affect the extent of participants' correct recognition of the meanings of the signs?

6.2 Participants' Correct Recognition of Thai English Messages


This section shows the scores of participants' correct recognition of the 30 items in the questionnaire. Participants had to choose whether the erroneous message on a sign was problematic for them to understand or not. In the online questionnaire, they were

asked ‘Do you think that there is a problem in the English version/ on the sign?’ and given two choices between ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ as shown in Figure 6.1.

The Use of English in Tourist Domains in Thailand

III. Questions 1-3

1. You see this sign at an airline counter at the airport.



1.1 How well do you understand the English message on the sign?

1 incomprehensible 2 3 4 5 6 comprehensible

1.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the English version?

☐ Yes
☐ No


1.3 If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?

1 not serious at all 2 3 4 5 6 very serious

Figure 6.1 Question about participants’ correct recognition (English version)

Thai participants were asked the same question as the international participants, but the question was translated from English into Thai language (see Figure 6.2).

1. ท่านเห็นป้ายนี้ที่สนามบิน



1.1 ท่านคิดว่าชาวต่างชาติจะสามารถเข้าใจภาษาอังกฤษบนป้ายนี้ได้ในระดับใด

1 ไม่เข้าใจเลย 2 3 4 5 6 เข้าใจได้ดี

1.2 ท่านคิดว่าข้อความภาษาอังกฤษบนป้าย มีปัญหาหรือไม่

☐ มี
☐ ไม่มี

1.3 หากมีปัญหานั้น ท่านคิดว่าควรต้องแก้ไขหรือไม่

1 ไม่จำเป็นเลย 2 3 4 5 6 จำเป็นมาก

Figure 6.2 Question’s about participants’ correct recognition (Thai version)

The eight items in Level 1 were grammatically correct, so participants should not see that they were problematic for them to understand the intended messages for both grammatical items (Q7, Q10, Q18 and Q26) and lexico-semantic items (Q6, Q8, Q9 and Q17). If participants chose ‘No’, they were given ‘one’ mark as it meant that they could recognise the message correctly. However, if they chose ‘No’, it could mean that even though the messages were grammatically correct, contexts and other factors could prevent them from their full understanding the intended messages. In this case, they would be given a ‘zero’ mark/ no mark.

The twelve items in Level 2 which contained minor errors. There were eight grammatical items (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5, Q16, Q25 and Q28) and four lexico-semantic items (Q19, Q20, Q21 and Q27). If participants chose ‘Yes’, they would get ‘one’ mark for their correct recognition because the English messages contained some mistakes and should be problematic for them to understand the intended messages. However, as some mistakes could be very minor, it was assumed that participants should be able to get the intended messages by taking contexts or their personal background/ experience into account. Even more, it was assumed that some participants might not be able to notice any problem.

The ten items in Level 3 contained major errors/ serious mistakes. For both grammatical items (Q22, Q23, Q24, Q30) and lexico-semantic items (Q11, Q12, Q13, Q14, Q15, Q29), participants were supposed to choose ‘Yes’, which meant that the items were problematic to them. If choosing ‘Yes’, participants would be given ‘one’ mark. However, if they chose ‘No’, participants were given ‘zero’ mark.

Table 6.1 Marks for the items in each level

	Yes	No
Level 1 (8 items)	0	1
Level 2 (12 items)	1	0
Level 3 (10 items)	1	0

6.2.1 International Participants

Table 6.2 International participants' scores for correct recognition (N = 456)

No.	Question	Message	Level	Features		Sum	<i>M^a</i> (<i>SD</i>)
				GR ^b	LS ^b		
1	Q 12	A motorcycle works for	3		✓	440	.97 (.17)
2	Q 24	Please it neatly	3	✓		433	.96 (.20)
3	Q 23	Hire a pet	3	✓		428	.95 (.22)
4	Q 11	Food order	3		✓	421	.93 (.26)
5	Q 13	Forbidden island glass	3		✓	420	.92 (.27)
6	Q 30	Exhibition hell	3	✓		409	.91 (.29)
7	Q 19	2 free 1	2		✓	409	.90 (.29)
8	Q 15	Please ring to bring	3		✓	402	.89 (.31)
9	Q 18	Foot massage	1	✓		389	.86 (.34)
10	Q 29	Ovalcano	3		✓	371	.84 (.37)
11	Q 4	Wel come	2	✓		374	.82 (.38)
12	Q 5	Please next counter	2	✓		364	.81 (.40)
13	Q 22	Thai house style	3	✓		360	.79 (.40)
14	Q 3	Cannot be changes	2	✓		359	.79 (.40)
15	Q 10	No littering	1	✓		356	.79 (.41)
16	Q 7	Museum hours	1	✓		351	.77 (.42)
17	Q 9	Toilet/shoes	1		✓	335	.74 (.44)
18	Q 26	Tourist discount	1	✓		329	.73 (.44)
19	Q 14	OTOP	3		✓	327	.72 (.45)
20	Q 1	Close	2	✓		321	.71 (.45)
21	Q 2	Open time	2	✓		315	.70 (.46)
22	Q 27	Wat Phra Kaew	2		✓	307	.69 (.46)
23	Q 17	Fake goods	1		✓	276	.61 (.49)
24	Q 16	No parking across	2	✓		275	.61 (.49)
25	Q 8	Feed a pigeon	1		✓	267	.59 (.49)
26	Q 6	Beautiful girl passport	1		✓	268	.59 (.49)
27	Q 20	3 pcs up	2		✓	243	.54 (.50)
28	Q 28	Coming soon	2	✓		232	.51 (.50)
29	Q 21	Happy toilet	2		✓	233	.51 (.50)
30	Q 25	No trolley	2	✓		219	.48 (.50)

^aScore 1 = correct and 0 = incorrect

^bGR = grammatical features, LS = lexico-semantic features

From Table 6.2, it can be seen that in the first ten items, eight items (Q12, Q24, Q23, Q11, Q13, Q30, Q15, and Q29) out of ten belonged to Level 3 (major error). The correct recognition scores range from 97% to 84%. Six items out of ten contained lexico-semantic features and the other four items contained grammatical features.

On the other hand, for the last ten items, seven items (Q2, Q27, Q16, Q20, Q28, Q21, and Q25) out of ten belonged to Level 2 (minor errors). The correct recognition scores ranged from 70% to 48%. Six items contained lexico-semantic features while the other four items contained grammatical features.

Based on Table 6.2, it can be interpreted that international participants could mainly recognise items with major errors (Level 3) correctly. However, for items that contained minor errors, around 70-50 per cent of the participants considered the items problematic while the rest did not see that the mistakes on the items created a problem for them to understand the intended messages on the signs.

6.2.2 Thai Participant

Table 6.3 Thai participants' scores of the correct recognition (N = 810)

No.	Question	Message	Level	Features		Sum	<i>M^a</i> (<i>SD</i>)
				GR ^b	LS ^b		
1	Q 13	Forbidden island glass	3		✓	774	.96 (.20)
2	Q 12	A motorcycle works for	3		✓	767	.95 (.21)
3	Q 11	Food order	3		✓	763	.95 (.22)
4	Q 23	Hire a pet	3	✓		754	.94 (.24)
5	Q 4	Wel come	2	✓		748	.93 (.25)
6	Q 30	Exhibition hell	3	✓		711	.88 (.32)
7	Q 24	Please it neatly	3	✓		701	.87 (.34)
8	Q 27	Wat Phra Kaew	2		✓	673	.84 (.37)
9	Q 15	Please ring to bring	3		✓	675	.84 (.37)
10	Q 2	Open time	2	✓		674	.84 (.37)
11	Q 5	Please next counter	2	✓		635	.79 (.41)
12	Q 9	Toilet/shoes	1		✓	632	.79 (.41)
13	Q 18	Foot massage	1	✓		612	.77 (.42)
14	Q 22	Thai house style	3	✓		592	.74 (.44)
15	Q 16	No parking across	2	✓		581	.72 (.45)
16	Q 29	Ovalcano	3		✓	570	.71 (.45)
17	Q 28	Coming sooon	2	✓		557	.69 (.46)
18	Q 1	Close	2	✓		546	.68 (.47)
19	Q 26	Tourist discount	1	✓		543	.68 (.47)
20	Q 3	Cannot be changes	2	✓		539	.67 (.47)
21	Q 6	Beautiful girl passport	1		✓	510	.63 (.48)
22	Q 14	OTOP	3		✓	474	.59 (.49)
23	Q 7	Museum hours	1	✓		457	.57 (.50)
24	Q 19	2 free 1	2		✓	450	.56 (.50)
25	Q 21	Happy toilet	2		✓	436	.54 (.50)
26	Q 25	No trolley	2	✓		434	.54 (.50)
27	Q 10	No littering	1	✓		436	.54 (.50)
28	Q 20	3 pcs up	2		✓	413	.51 (.50)
29	Q 8	Feed a pigeon	1		✓	355	.44 (.50)
30	Q 17	Fake goods	1		✓	348	.43 (.50)

^aScore 1 = correct and 0 = incorrect

^bGR = grammatical features, LS = lexico-semantic features

According to Table 6.3, it can be seen from the first ten items that seven items (Q 13, Q12, Q11, Q23, Q30, Q24, and Q15) out of ten belonged to Level 3 (major errors) while the other three items (Q4, Q9 and Q10) belong to Level 2 (minor errors). In addition, five items contained grammatical features and the other five items contained

lexico-semantic features. The correct recognition scores ranged from 96% to 84%. Half of the ten items contained lexico-semantic features and the other five items contained grammatical features.

On the other hand, the last ten items came from all levels. Five items (Q6, Q7, Q10, Q8, and Q17) out of ten belonged to Level 1 (grammatically correct). Four items (Q19, Q21, Q25, and Q20) belonged to Level 1, and one item (Q14) belonged to Level 3. The correct recognition scores ranged from 63% to 43%. Seven items contained lexico-semantic features while the other four items contained grammatical features.

Based on Table 6.3, it can be interpreted that Thai participants could mainly recognise the items with minor errors (Level 2) and major errors (Level 3) correctly. However, for items that were grammatically correct, approximately 40-60 per cent of Thai participants considered the English messages on the signs problematic and might prevent non-Thai people from understanding the intended messages.

6.2.3 All Participants

Table 6.4 All participants' scores for correct recognition (30 items)

International Participants				Thai Participants			
No.	Q.	Message	<i>M</i>	Q.	Message	<i>M</i>	
1	12	A motorcycle works	0.97	13	Forbidden island glass	0.96	
2	24	Please it neatly	0.96	12	A motorcycle works for	0.95	
3	23	Hire a pet	0.95	11	Food order	0.95	
4	11	Food order	0.93	23	Hire a pet	0.94	
5	13	Forbidden island glass	0.92	4	Wel come	0.93	
6	30	Exhibition hell	0.91	30	Exhibition hell	0.88	
7	19	2 free 1	0.90	24	Please it neatly	0.87	
8	15	Please ring to bring	0.89	27	Wat Phra Kaew	0.84	
9	18	Foot massage	0.86	15	Please ring to bring	0.84	
10	29	Ovalcano	0.84	2	Open time	0.84	
11	4	Wel come	0.82	5	Please next counter	0.79	
12	5	Please next counter	0.81	9	Toilet/shoes	0.79	
13	22	Thai house style	0.79	18	Foot massage	0.77	
14	3	Cannot be changes	0.79	22	Thai house style	0.74	
15	10	No littering	0.79	16	No parking across	0.72	
16	7	Museum hours	0.77	29	Ovalcano	0.71	
17	9	Toilet/shoes	0.74	28	Coming soon	0.69	
18	26	Tourist discount	0.73	1	Close	0.68	
19	14	OTOP	0.72	26	Tourist discount	0.68	
20	1	Close	0.71	3	Cannot be changes	0.67	
21	2	Open time	0.70	6	Beautiful girl passport	0.63	
22	27	Wat Phra Kaew	0.69	14	OTOP	0.59	
23	17	Fake goods	0.61	7	Museum hours	0.57	
24	16	No parking across	0.61	19	2 free 1	0.56	
25	8	Feed a pigeon	0.59	21	Happy toilet	0.54	
26	6	Beautiful girl passport	0.59	25	No trolley	0.54	
27	20	3 pcs up	0.54	10	No littering	0.54	
28	28	Coming soon	0.51	20	3 pcs up	0.51	
29	21	Happy toilet	0.51	8	Feed a pigeon	0.44	
30	25	No trolley	0.48	17	Fake goods	0.43	
Average score			0.76	Average score			0.72

*GR = Grammatical features, LS = Lexico-semantic features, L1 = Level 1, L2 = Level 2, L3 = Level 3

Based on Table 6.4, overall, international participants and Thai participants could recognise items across the three levels at rather similar ranking orders. However, nine items, namely Q19, Q4, Q10, Q7, Q2, Q27, Q17, Q16, and Q 28, had big differences in

the ranking orders between the perspectives of Thai participants and international participants.

It is interesting that all the nine items belonged to Level 1 (Q10, Q7, and Q17) and Level 2 (Q4, Q19, Q2, Q27, Q16, and Q28). According to Table 6.4, it can be seen that both Thai and international participants could correctly recognise most of the items in Level 3, except Q14: OTOP, as problematic. Therefore, these items were mainly ranked at the top of Table 6.4. To see whether the differences in mean scores for correct recognition rated by international participants and Thai participants were significant or not, a t-test was conducted, and the result can be found in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5 Correct recognition scores of international and Thai participants
(International N = 456, Thai N = 810)

Level	Features		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	Effect
All items	All (30 items)	International	22.44	3.83	848.81	4.69***	.02
		Thai	21.43	3.37			
Level 1	All (8 items)	International	5.64	1.90	1053.33	7.03***	.04
		Thai	4.81	2.18			
Level 1	Grammatical (4 items)	International	3.13	1.05	1091.69	8.95***	.06
		Thai	2.53	1.26			
Level 1	Lexico-semantic (4 items)	International	2.51	1.20	1263	3.29***	.01
		Thai	2.28	1.21			
Level 2	All (12 items)	International	8.01	2.83	1264	-1.58	
		Thai	8.25	2.58			
Level 2	Grammatical (8 items)	International	5.39	2.19	812.69	-3.54***	.01
		Thai	5.82	1.83			
Level 2	Lexico-semantic (4 items)	International	2.63	1.10	1002.99	2.79**	.01
		Thai	2.44	1.19			
Level 3	All (10 items)	International	8.80	1.75	1263	4.15***	.01
		Thai	8.38	1.68			
Level 3	Grammatical (4 items)	International	3.59	0.81	1038.99	3.53***	.01
		Thai	3.41	0.92			
Level 3	Lexico-semantic (6 items)	International	5.22	1.16	1263	3.82***	.01
		Thai	4.97	1.08			

**p < .01.

***p < .001.

^aEta squared.

Table 6.5 showed that in general, international participants had higher mean scores for correct recognition than Thai participants except the two subcategories of Level 2: all items and Level 2: grammatical items.

The differences in mean scores between international participants and Thai participants for the eight subcategories, namely all items, Level 1: all items, Level 1: grammatical items, Level 1: lexico-semantic items, Level 2: grammatical items, Level 3: all items, Level 3: grammatical items, and Level 3: lexico-semantic items reached a significant level at $p < .001$ with a small effect, except for Level 1: grammatical features, which had a moderate effect. The differences in mean scores under the subcategory of Level 2: lexico-semantic items reached a significant level at $p < .01$ with a small effect.

According to Table 6.5, it can be concluded that international participants appeared to get higher mean scores of correct recognition than Thai participants, and the differences in mean scores were significant but mainly with a small effect.

6.2.4 Discussion

Based on the information from the Table 6.2, Table 6.3, Table 6.4 and Table 6.5, it can be seen that participants could mainly recognise that the items in Level 3 were problematic. However, they seemed not to be able to sensibly decide whether the items in Level 3 were correct and items in Level 2 were incorrect.

According to the interviews with 29 international participants and 22 Thai participants, it was found that the perspectives between Thai and non-Thai interviewees were different as follows:

6.2.4.1 Different Perspectives towards ‘Problem’

First of all, the way both groups of participants defined the word ‘problem’ was different. For international participants, especially native speakers, grammatical mistakes did not seem to be a major source of concern as long as they could understand the intended message.



Figure 6.3: Q4: Wel come

For example, regarding the item in Level 2 (minor error), Q4 Wel come (see Figure 6.3), all 14 interviewees whose English is their mother tongue said that this item was not problematic for them. So, they chose ‘No’ when being asked whether there was any problem on the sign or not. Based on the interview with a female Canadian participant who spent two years teaching English in Thailand, she said

No, this sign is not problematic for me. So, when being asked whether she could see whether the message was misspelt or not. She replied ‘Yes, of course, I can see that the word “Welcome” is misspelt. But, to me, as I still understand that it means “Welcome”, I consider this item fine for me. It is just a spelling mistake.

Thai participants, on the other hand, tended to associate the word ‘problem’ with ‘obvious grammatical mistakes’ on the signs. The ‘obvious grammatical mistakes’ in this case refer to the English messages that can be seen easily at first glance, especially misspelling, spacing, and the translation done by translation software. Nevertheless, for the items with ambiguous English messages from literal translation, homophone, verb conjugation, or inflection, some interviewees accepted that they did not even notice that there was something wrong with the English messages.

Regarding items with misspellings, the majority of Thai interviewees revealed that they felt embarrassed that some easy words were misspelt. The authorities should have checked the English messages carefully. A female Thai participant who works as a programmer expressed her opinion on the item, Q4, as follows:

It is very obvious to see that the word “Welcome” is misspelt. I think this should not have happened. This word is very universal and the sign maker should not

have missed this. For example, when people turn a mobile phone or a computer on, the word ‘welcome’ usually appears on the screen. I have to say that this is embarrassing.

Next, the opinions towards the ‘problem’ on the English version of the messages, particularly items in Level 2, between Thai and non-Thai participants appeared to be different.

For international participants, regarding the items in Level 2, if the items are misspelt like Q30 Exhibition Hell (see Figure 6.4), non-Thai participants mainly viewed that these items were funny. A female Chinese interviewee who has never been to Thailand commented that *‘I like the sign “Exhibition Hell” (Q30) the most. It makes me laugh a lot. If I go to Thailand, I want to go to this place and take a photo of the sign, take a photo with it and send it to my friend’*.

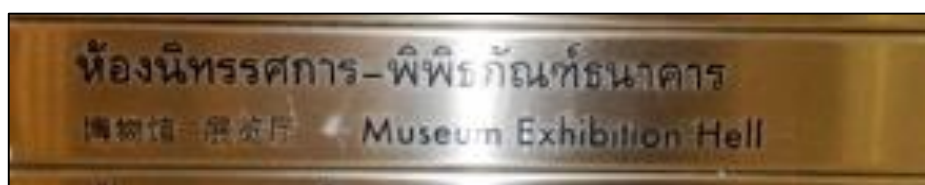


Figure 6.4: Q30: Exhibition Hell

Thai participants, on the other hand, felt embarrassed when seeing misspellings of common words. When being asked about the same item, a female Thai interviewee who works as a university lecturer revealed that *‘In my opinion, the authorities should have a better check or paid more attention to the spelling rather than letting it display on the sign this way.’* She also added that *‘the word “hall” is very common. To me, I consider it a mistake and it is embarrassing.’*

In summary, the word ‘problem’ to international participants meant ‘problems to understand the English message’ but ‘obvious grammatical problems’ to Thai participants. International participants did not seem to view grammatical mistakes on signs, especially misspelling, in a negative way, while Thai participants felt embarrassed about having spelling mistakes on signs.

6.2.4.2 Being Native and Non-Native Speakers

Native speakers and non-native speakers tended to view the problems of Thai English with grammatical features from different perspectives. Thai English with grammatical features in this thesis contained five sub-categories, namely 1) misspelling, 2) parts of speech (conversion), 3) inflection of nouns and verbs, 4) punctuation marks, spacing and capitalisation, and 5) ellipsis, all native speakers agreed that these items did not prevent them from understanding the intended meanings of the messages.

Native speakers generally suggested that having correct English signs would be ideal, but as English is now a lingua franca, they already expected to see some non-Standard English messages in Thailand. A male British interviewee said that

Although I am not a linguist, I have no problem understanding the messages of these items. Some of them made me laugh, and some of them made me smile. Maybe I am kind of prepared that when English is used by non-native speakers, it can contain some mistakes or errors, as this also happens in other countries worldwide not only just in Thailand.

Non-native speakers, on the other hand, appeared to have negative attitudes towards the grammatical mistakes. A male Chinese interviewee said

I think it is very important that English messages on sign have to be written correctly because some kids, including me when I was a child, may learn from signs, especially official ones. If the English messages on the signs are wrong, some people may think that they are right and memorise them that way.

The interviews implied that native speakers of English tended to have higher tolerance toward Thai English than non-native speakers, so they did not see many problems on Thai English signs with minor errors.

6.2.4.3 Opinions about Thai English with Major Errors

Finally, regarding the items with major errors, both Thai and non-Thai interviewees could easily recognise that there were some problems with the signs. In general, nobody could understand the intended messages of the items with major errors.

The items with the translation issues, especially ‘direct translation’ and ‘google translation’ were considered the most problematic as they could sometimes mislead the readers if they could not read Thai.



Figure 6.5 Q11: Food Order

For example, the item Q11 (see Figure 6.5) contained the direct translation ‘food order’ with no Thai message. All 29 non-Thai interviewees accepted that they could not make any sense of the message. Two interviewees who lived in Thailand for a while could understand after knowing the original message that ‘Food order’ referred to the Thai dishes freshly made to one’s order. The female Canadian interviewee who lived in Thailand for two years accepted that

When looking at only the English menu, it is far too advance for me to understand. However, after listening to your explanation, I think I am kind of know what they wanted to mean. But, I think I won’t go for this menu, as I am still not entirely sure what I will get.

For Thai interviewees, at first glance, none of them could explain what the menu was. However, after spending some time and thinking over, a male interviewee who works as a computer programmer in an international company explained that *‘I have to be frank that even for Thai people, I don’t think that every Thai person can understand. So, it is usual if non-Thai people cannot make sense of the message’*.

In conclusion, it can be summarised that in general, international participants would consider Thai English problematic or not depending on whether they could understand the intended messages or not. If they could understand the messages without difficulties although there were some mistakes, they would not feel that the mistakes on the signs were problematic to them. On the other hand, if the messages were grammatically correct or contained some minor errors but were still ambiguous,

international participants would consider the Thai English messages on signs problematic.

6.3 The Effects of Gender, Trip to Thailand, Geographic Origin, Non/Native English Background, Age and English Proficiency

This section presents the statistical results based on the gender, trip to Thailand, geographic origin, non/native English background, age and English proficiency of participants.

6.3.1 Gender and Correct Recognition

This section analyses whether being male or female would affect participants' correct recognition or not.

6.3.1.1 International Participants

In general, female participants had higher mean scores for correct recognition than male participants. However, the differences did not reach a significant level as $p > .05$.

6.3.1.2 Thai Participants

Overall, male participants had higher mean scores for correct recognition than female participants. Nevertheless, the differences did not reach a significant level as $p > .05$.

6.3.1.3 All Participants

When combining both international participants ($n = 445$) and Thai participants ($n = 794$) together for a bigger sample size, in general, male participants had a higher mean score ($M = 21.93$, $SD\ 3.69$) than female participants ($M = 21.74$, $SD\ 3.41$). Nevertheless, the differences in mean score between the two genders reached the significant level at $p < .05$ with a small effect size ($r^2 < 0.1$) for only two subcategories, namely Level 1: all items and Level 1: lexico-semantic items.

In summary, it could be concluded that gender did not have an impact on participants' correct recognition for both international and Thai participants. However, when combining international and Thai participants together, gender differences were significant with the sub-categories of Level 1: all 30 items and Level 1: lexico-semantic items with a small effect.

6.3.2 Trip to Thailand and Correct Recognition

It was assumed that participants who visited Thailand before should get higher correct recognition scores than those who had never been to Thailand. However, based on the statistical results, there were 224 participants who previously went to Thailand and 222 participants who had never been to Thailand.

The results showed that in general, participants who visited Thailand before had a higher mean score of correct recognition ($M = 22.51$, $SD 3.88$) than those who had never been to Thailand ($M = 22.35$, $SD 3.82$). In addition, across the three sub-categories in Level 1 and the three sub-categories in Level 3, participants who went to Thailand before had higher scores than those who had never been to Thailand. Nevertheless, it appeared that the differences in mean scores for correct recognition between participants who had been and never been to Thailand in eight subcategories did not reach a significant level. Only the differences in mean scores in two subcategories, namely Level 2: lexico-semantic items reached a significant level at $p < .001$ with a small effect and Level 2: all items at $p < .05$ with a small effect.

In conclusion, it can be said that whether the participants had been or never been to Thailand did not have much effect on their correct recognition.

6.3.3 Geographic Origin and Correct Recognition

According to research question no. 3 of this study, it was hypothesised that people from Asia should be able to recognise items that were grammatically correct and that contained errors better than European participants as people in the same region should share some common background. A t-test was conducted to test the hypothesis, and the results can be found in Table 6.6.

Table 6.6 International participants' correct recognition and geographic origin
(Asian n = 139, European n = 192)

Level	Features	Continent	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	Effect
All items	All (30 items)	Asian	21.10	4.14	329	-5.19***	.08
		European	23.25	3.38			
Level 1	All (8 items)	Asian	4.82	1.98	329	-5.27***	.08
		European	5.94	1.86			
Level 1	Grammatical (4 items)	Asian	2.78	1.14	329	-3.80***	.04
		European	3.23	1.01			
Level 1	Lexico-semantic (4 items)	Asian	2.04	1.25	329	-5.05***	.07
		European	2.71	1.15			
Level 2	All (12 items)	Asian	7.88	3.03	329	-1.28	
		European	8.29	2.65			
Level 2	Grammatical (8 items)	Asian	5.12	2.23	329	-2.50*	.02
		European	5.71	2.04			
Level 2	Lexico-semantic (4 items)	Asian	2.78	1.22	328	1.67	
		European	2.57	1.05			
Level 3	All (10 items)	Asian	8.40	2.26	218.51	-2.86**	.02
		European	9.02	1.45			
Level 3	Grammatical (4 items)	Asian	3.39	1.04	208.68	-3.07**	.03
		European	3.70	0.63			
Level 3	Lexico-semantic (6 items)	Asian	5.03	1.42	329	-2.17*	.01
		European	5.32	1.04			

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

^aEta squared.

According to Table 6.6, it can be seen that in general, participants from Europe had a better correct recognition score ($M = 23.25$, $SD 3.38$) than participants from Asia ($M = 21.10$, $SD 4.14$). The differences in mean scores of both groups were significant at $p < .001$ with a moderate effect for all items. For Level 1 items, European participants had better correct recognition scores than Asian participants, and the differences in mean scores reached a significant level at $p < .001$ with a moderate effect for Level 1: all items and Level 1: lexico-semantic items and with a small effect for Level 1: grammatical items.

For Level 2 and Level 3, European participants still had higher correct recognition scores than Asian participants. The differences in mean scores in the three subcategories reached the significant level at $p < .01$ with a small effect for Level 3: all items and Level

3: grammatical items and at $p < 0.5$ with a small effect for Level 2: grammatical items and Level 3: lexico-semantic items.

In summary, in response to the research question no. 3 of this study, the hypothesis that Asian participants should have a better recognition of Thai English messages than European participants was rejected because the study found that European participants had higher scores for correct recognition than Asian participants. In addition, the differences in mean scores in the eight subcategories between European and Asian participants were found significant with moderate and small effects.

6.3.4 Non/Native English Background and Correct Recognition

This section presents the correct recognition scores of native and non-native speakers of English.

Table 6.7 International Participants' correct recognition and non/native English background (Native speakers n = 192, Non-native speakers n = 244)

Level	Features		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	Effect
All items	All (30 items)	Native	23.46	3.53	434	4.90***	.05
		Non-native	21.71	3.83			
Level 1	All (8 items)	Native	6.41	1.44	430.62	8.20***	.13
		Non-native	5.05	2.01			
Level 1	Grammatical (4 items)	Native	3.45	0.76	422.09	6.23***	.08
		Non-native	2.87	1.16			
Level 1	Lexico-semantic (4 items)	Native	2.96	1.03	432.43	7.26***	.11
		Non-native	2.18	1.23			
Level 2	All (12 items)	Native	8.10	2.78	434	.39	
		Non-native	7.99	2.84			
Level 2	Grammatical (8 items)	Native	5.61	2.19	434	1.60	
		Non-native	5.27	2.15			
Level 2	Lexico-semantic (4 items)	Native	2.49	1.00	429.71	-2.31*	.01
		Non-native	2.73	1.16			
Level 3	All (10 items)	Native	8.95	1.47	433.10	1.73	
		Non-native	8.66	1.95			
Level 3	Grammatical (4 items)	Native	3.71	0.66	430.14	2.90**	.02
		Non-native	3.49	0.91			
Level 3	Lexico-semantic (6 items)	Native	5.24	1.07	430.62	.46	
		Non-native	5.19	1.25			

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

^aEta squared.

Table 6.7 shows that overall native speakers got higher scores for correct recognition than non-native speakers across the nine subcategories. Only in one subcategory, Level 2: lexico-semantic items, did non-native speakers achieve a higher mean score. The differences in mean scores between the two groups reached a significant level at $p < .001$ with a moderate effect for all items, Level 1: all items, Level 1: grammatical items and Level 1: lexico-semantic items; at $p < .01$ with a small effect for Level 3: grammatical items; and at $p < .05$ with a small effect for Level 2: lexico-semantic items.

It can be concluded that being native/non-native speakers played a moderate role on participants' correct recognition when Thai English messages on signs were grammatically correct.

6.3.5 Age and Correct Recognition

As participants' ages were different, the data were analysed by using one-way ANOVA to find out whether age played an important role on participants' correct recognition or not.

6.3.5.1 International Participants

Table 6.8 International participants' correct recognition and age (N = 444)

Level	<i>M (SD)</i>				F	Effect size ^a
	18-25 (n = 102)	26-34 (n = 210)	35-44 (n = 85)	45 &over (n = 47)		
All 30 items	22.35 (3.65)	22.46 (3.97)	22.34 (3.74)	22.87 (3.31)	8.24***	.07
Level 1 All	5.95 (1.68)	5.32 (2.04)	5.61 (1.90)	6.40 (1.28)	17.36***	.14
Level 1 Grammatical	3.24 (.91)	2.99 (1.11)	3.06 (1.09)	3.60 (.71)	11.18***	.09
Level 1 Lexico-semantic	2.72 (1.13)	2.33 (1.27)	2.55 (1.16)	2.81 (.99)	12.67***	.10
Level 2 All	7.92 (2.73)	8.25 (2.82)	7.84 (2.88)	7.45 (2.94)	.56	
Level 2: Grammatical	5.23 (2.24)	5.66 (2.08)	5.20 (2.27)	4.91 (2.35)	1.59	
Level 2 Lexico-semantic	2.70 (1.04)	2.60 (1.15)	2.64 (1.13)	2.53 (.88)	1.35	
Level 3 All	8.48 (1.76)	8.89 (1.87)	8.89 (1.68)	9.02 (1.05)	.77	
Level 3 Grammatical	3.44 (.86)	3.65 (.80)	3.60 (.79)	3.68 (.75)	1.83	
Level 3 Lexico-semantic	5.04 (1.28)	5.26 (1.21)	5.29 (1.10)	5.34 (.73)	.20	

*** $p < .001$.

^aEta squared.

It can be seen from Table 6.8 that overall, participants aged 45 years old and over ($n = 47$) had the highest score for correct recognition in comparison with other groups, and three subcategories, namely all items, Level 1: grammatical items and Level 1: lexico-semantic items reached a significant level at $p < .001$ with a moderate effect. In addition, the differences in mean scores for the subcategory of Level 1: all items reached a significant level at $p < .001$ with a large effect

According to the Turkey HSD post-hoc test, for Level 1: all items, there was a significant relationship between the group of participants aged 25-34 years old and the group of those aged 18-24 years old and aged 45 years old and over. For Level 1: grammatical items, there was a significant relationship between the group of participants aged 45 years old and over and the groups of those aged 25-34 years old and aged 35-44 years old. For Level 1: lexico-semantic features, there was a significant relationship

between the group of participants aged 18-24 years old and the group of those aged 25-34 years old.

It can be concluded that overall, international participants aged 45 years old and over had higher correct recognition scores than participants from the other three age groups when the items containing no errors or minor errors.

6.3.5.2 Thai Participants

For Thai participants ($N = 798$), for all 30 items, Thai participants aged 35-44 years old ($n = 156$) got the higher mean score for correct recognition in comparison with those aged 18-24 years old and those aged 35-44 years old. However, the differences in mean scores did not reach a significant level as $p > .05$.

Unlike international participants, Thai participants aged 18-34 years old got the highest mean scores for correct recognition across the three subcategories, namely Level 1: all items, Level 1: grammatical items, and Level 1: lexico-semantic items with the significant levels at $p < .01$, $p < .05$, and $p < .05$ respectively. However, all of them had a small effect.

According to the Turkey HSD post-hoc test, for Level 1: all items, there was a significant relationship between the group of participants aged 45 years old and over and the groups of those aged 18-34 years old and those aged 35-44 years old. For Level 1: grammatical items, there was no significant relationship between any age group of participants for Turkey HSD. However, there was a significant relationship between the group of participants aged 45 years old and over and the groups of those aged 18-34 years old and those aged 35-44 years old for Level 1: lexico-semantic items.

It can be concluded that for items with no errors in Level 1, Thai participants aged 18-24 years old had higher correct recognition scores than participants from the other age groups, but the effect size was small.

6.3.6 English Proficiency and Correct Recognition

It was hypothesised that English proficiency may have an effect on participants' correct recognition of Thai English messages. Therefore, one-way ANOVA was conducted and the result can be found in Table 6.9 for international participants and Table 6.10 for Thai participants

6.3.6.1 International Participants

Table 6.9 International participants' correct recognition and English proficiency (N = 448)

Level	<i>M (SD)</i>					F	Effect size ^a
	Native (n = 189)	Proficient (n = 82)	Advanced (n = 108)	Upper intermediate (n = 46)	Intermediate & below (n = 23)		
All 30 items	23.58 (3.52)	21.98 (4.49)	21.50 (3.69)	21.17 (3.33)	21.39 (3.12)	8.24***	.07
Level 1 All	6.43 (1.40)	5.35 (1.92)	4.94 (2.22)	4.96 (1.75)	4.70 (1.69)	17.36***	.14
Level 1 Grammatical	3.48 (.73)	3.01 (1.11)	2.82 (1.24)	2.72 (1.09)	2.74 (1.21)	11.18***	.09
Level 1 Lexico-semantic	2.95 (1.02)	2.34 (1.21)	2.12 (1.30)	2.24 (1.16)	1.96 (1.02)	12.67***	.10
Level 2 All	8.19 (2.68)	7.95 (3.03)	7.86 (3.10)	7.57 (2.74)	8.13 (2.47)	.56	
Level 2 Grammatical	5.67 (2.14)	5.24 (2.33)	5.26 (2.24)	4.89 (2.08)	5.17 (2.10)	1.59	
Level 2 Lexico-semantic	2.52 (.98)	2.78 (1.15)	2.60 (1.12)	2.67 (1.17)	2.96 (1.02)	1.35	
Level 3 All	8.96 (1.49)	8.67 (2.12)	8.69 (1.89)	8.65 (1.93)	8.57 (1.41)	.77	
Level 3 Grammatical	3.70 (.69)	3.49 (.97)	3.54 (.87)	3.50 (.94)	3.39 (.66)	1.83	
Level 3 Lexico-semantic	5.25 (1.08)	5.27 (1.22)	5.16 (1.28)	5.15 (1.21)	5.17 (1.03)	.20	

***p < .001.

^aEta squared.

6.3.6.2 Thai Participants

Table 6.10 Thai participants' correct recognition and English proficiency (N = 789)

Level	<i>M (SD)</i>						F	Effect size ^a
	Proficient (n = 82)	Advanced (n = 198)	Upper intermediate (n = 234)	Intermediate (n = 63)	Elementary (n = 113)	Beginner (n = 99)		
All 30 items	21.68 (3.33)	22.56 (2.82)	21.67 (3.10)	21.97 (2.90)	20.57 (3.14)	19.38 (3.74)	16.00***	.09
Level 1 All	5.30 (2.00)	5.00 (2.12)	4.78 (2.13)	4.57 (2.45)	4.58 (2.25)	4.45 (2.28)	2.10	
Level 1 Grammatical	2.83 (1.13)	2.61 (1.21)	2.50 (1.26)	2.40 (1.41)	2.45 (1.32)	2.34 (1.33)	1.76	
Level 1 Lexico-semantic	2.48 (1.17)	2.39 (1.19)	2.27 (1.17)	2.17 (1.33)	2.12 (1.21)	2.11 (1.30)	1.61	
Level 2 All	7.90 (2.67)	8.76 (2.29)	8.38 (2.49)	8.62 (2.61)	7.87 (2.72)	7.64 (2.72)	3.97**	.02
Level 2 Grammatical	5.60 (1.84)	6.20 (1.62)	5.91 (1.72)	6.05 (1.94)	5.53 (1.87)	5.36 (2.05)	4.22***	.03
Level 2 Lexico-semantic	2.30 (1.25)	2.56 (1.14)	2.48 (1.19)	2.57 (1.10)	2.34 (1.26)	2.27 (1.22)	1.38	
Level 3 All	8.48 (1.44)	8.80 (1.28)	8.51 (1.52)	8.78 (1.11)	8.12 (1.82)	7.29 (2.35)	13.45***	.08
Level 3 Grammatical	3.61 (.73)	3.75 (.58)	3.48 (.87)	3.57 (.67)	3.08 (1.12)	2.72 (1.18)	23.50***	.13
Level 3 Lexico-semantic	4.87 (1.05)	5.05 (.98)	5.03 (1.01)	5.21 (.90)	5.04 (1.09)	4.58 (1.44)	3.93**	.02

**p < .01.

***p < .001.

^aEta squared.

According to Table 6.9, it can be seen that in general, native speakers achieved the highest mean scores for correct recognition in almost all the subcategories except the two subcategories of Level 2: lexico-semantic items and Level 3: lexico-semantic items. However, the differences in mean scores among the five groups of participants reached a significant level at $p < .001$ with a moderate effect in three subcategories, namely all items, Level 1: grammatical items and Level 1: lexico-semantic items and at $p < .001$ with a large effect for the subcategory of Level 1: all items.

According to the Turkey HSD post-hoc tests, for the subcategory of all 30 items, there was a significant relationship between the group of native speakers and those at proficient level, advanced level, and upper intermediate level. Level 1: all items, Level 1: grammatical items, and Level 1: lexico-semantic items shared a similar post-hoc result in that there was a significant relationship between the group of native speakers and all the other groups of participants, namely the participants at proficient level, advanced level, upper intermediate level, and intermediate and below levels.

To ensure that the state of being native speakers was associated with the scores of participants' correct recognition, the analysis was done again by excluding the group of native speakers. The results showed that without native speakers, the differences in mean scores among participants at different English proficiency levels were not significant as $p > .05$. Therefore, it can be concluded that native speakers could recognise Thai English messages better than the other groups of participants when Thai English messages contained no errors (Level 1 items).

Table 6.10 shows that, in general, Thai participants at proficient and advanced levels had higher scores for correct recognition than other groups of participants. However, the differences in mean scores among the six groups of participants reached a significant level at $p < .001$ with a moderate effect for the subcategories of all items, Level 3: all items and Level 3: grammatical items, at $p < .001$ with a small effect for Level 2: grammatical items, and at $p < .01$ with a small effect for Level 2: all items and Level 3: lexico-semantic items.

The Turkey HSD post-hoc tests showed that for the subcategory of all items, there was a significant relationship between the group of beginners and those at

proficient level, at advanced level, at upper intermediate level and at intermediate level, but not with the group of participants at elementary level. There was also a significant relationship between the group of participants at advanced level and the group of those at elementary level. Level 2: all items and Level 2: grammatical items showed similar post-hoc results in that there was a significant relationship between the group of participants at advanced level and those at elementary level and beginner level.

Regarding Level 3: all items, there was a significant relationship between the group of participants at beginner level and participants from the other five groups, namely proficient, advanced, upper intermediate, intermediate and elementary levels. In addition, there was also a significant relationship between the groups of participants at elementary level and those at advanced level. For Level 3: grammatical items, there was a significant relationship between the group of participants at elementary level and participants from the other five groups, namely proficient, advanced, upper intermediate, intermediate and beginner levels. In addition, there was also a significant relationship between the groups of participants at beginner level and those at proficiency, advanced, upper intermediate and intermediate levels. Moreover, there was a significant relationship between the groups of participants at advanced level and those at intermediate level. For Level 3: lexico-semantic items, there was a significant relationship between the group of participants at the beginner level and the other four groups at the advanced, upper intermediate, intermediate, and elementary levels.

6.3.6.3 All participants

When combining the two groups of international and Thai participants together for a bigger sample size, the number of participants increased to 1,237 and the results can be found in Table 6.11.

Table 6.11 All participants' correct recognition and English proficiency (N = 1,237)

Level	<i>M (SD)</i>							F	Effect size ^a
	Native (n = 189)	Proficient (n = 164)	Advanced (n = 306)	Upper intermediate (n = 280)	Intermediate (n = 78)	Elementary (n = 118)	Beginner (n = 102)		
All 30 items	23.58 (3.52)	21.83 (3.95)	22.19 (3.19)	21.59 (3.14)	21.83 (2.87)	20.61 (3.21)	19.45 (3.72)	20.35***	.09
Level 1 All	6.43 (1.40)	5.33 (1.96)	4.98 (2.15)	4.81 (2.07)	4.56 (2.37)	4.59 (2.20)	4.47 (2.25)	18.59***	.08
Level 1 Grammatical	3.48 (.73)	2.92 (1.12)	2.69 (1.22)	2.54 (1.24)	2.47 (1.40)	2.47 (1.31)	2.34 (1.31)	18.04***	.08
Level 1 Lexico-semantic	2.95 (1.02)	2.41 (1.19)	2.29 (1.23)	2.27 (1.17)	2.09 (1.29)	2.13 (1.20)	2.13 (1.29)	10.43***	.05
Level 2 All	8.19 (2.68)	7.93 (2.85)	8.44 (2.64)	8.24 (2.55)	8.51 (2.55)	7.87 (2.37)	7.67 (2.70)	1.87	
Level 2 Grammatical	5.67 (2.14)	5.42 (2.10)	5.87 (1.91)	5.74 (1.82)	5.85 (1.99)	5.53 (1.89)	5.37 (2.04)	1.62	
Level 2 Lexico-semantic	2.52 (.98)	2.54 (1.22)	2.58 (1.16)	2.51 (1.19)	2.67 (1.10)	2.35 (1.25)	2.29 (1.22)	1.39	
Level 3 All	8.96 (1.49)	8.57 (1.81)	8.76 (1.52)	8.54 (1.59)	8.76 (1.16)	8.14 (1.80)	7.31 (2.34)	13.48***	.06
Level 3 Grammatical	3.70 (.69)	3.55 (.86)	3.67 (.70)	3.48 (.88)	3.55 (.66)	3.08 (1.11)	2.74 (1.17)	22.39***	.10
Level 3 Lexico-semantic	5.25 (1.08)	5.07 (1.15)	5.09 (1.09)	5.05 (1.04)	5.21 (.93)	5.06 (1.07)	4.58 (1.43)	4.43***	.02

***p < .001.

^aEta squared.

According to Table 6.11, in general, across the ten subcategories, native speakers got the highest correct recognition scores compared to other groups while the lowest scores usually belonged to either those at beginner level or elementary level.

Except the three subcategories in Level 2, the differences in mean scores among the seven groups of participants reached a significant level at $p < .001$ with a moderate effect for the subcategories of all items, Level 1: all items, Level 1: grammatical items, Level 3: all items and Level 3: grammatical items and at $p < .001$ with a small effect for the subcategories of Level 1: lexico-semantic items and Level 3: lexico-semantic items.

Based on the Turkey HSD post-hoc tests, for the subcategory of all items, there was a significant relationship between the group of native speakers and those at proficient, advanced, upper intermediate, intermediate, elementary, and beginner levels. In addition, there was a significant relationship between the group of participants at beginner level and those at proficient, advanced, upper intermediate, and intermediate levels. Furthermore, there was also a significant relationship between the group of participants at elementary level and those at proficient and advanced levels.

For Level 1: all items, there was a significant relationship between the group of native speakers and the other six groups. There was also a significant relationship between participants at proficient level and those at beginner level. For Level 1: grammatical items, there was a significant relationship between the group of native speakers and the other six groups. Moreover, there was also a significant relationship between the group of participants at proficient level and those at upper intermediate, elementary and beginner levels. For Level 1: lexico-semantic items, there was a significant relationship between the group of native speakers and the other six groups.

Level 3: all items and Level 3: lexico-semantic items shared a similar result in that there was a significant relationship between the group of beginners and the other six groups. In addition, for Level 3: all items, there was also a significant relationship between the group of participants at elementary level and the groups of native speakers and those at advanced level. Regarding Level 3: grammatical items, the groups of participants at beginner and elementary levels showed a significant relationship with every other group of participants.

In summary, it can be concluded that native speakers of English had the highest correct recognition scores of Thai English messages in comparison with the other six groups of participants with different levels of English proficiency when the items contained no errors (Level 1) and minor errors (Level 2).

6.4 Findings from the study

Based on the statistical results in Section 6.3, the findings from the study about participants' correct recognition of Thai English messages are as follows:

First, international participants and Thai participants had different views regarding problems with Thai English messages. Although international participants got higher correct recognition scores than Thai participants, they tended to see the items with minor errors (Level 2) containing grammatical features, especially misspellings less problematic than Thai participants. They viewed that as long as the Thai English messages were clear and did not mislead them, they considered these items not problematic but fine.

Second, international participants who visited Thailand before usually had lower correct recognition scores than those who had never been to Thailand. Therefore, it could be concluded that participants' trip to Thailand was not an important factor as long as those who went to Thailand did not have enough time to explore the country and to know about Thai society and Thai culture well enough.

Third, European participants generally got higher correct recognition scores than Asian participants. Hence, it can be concluded that in everyday life, we should not assume that people from the same continent should be able to easily get the messages that we want to convey when English is used as a lingua franca within a particular context, in this case, Thai context.

Fourth, when the data were separately analysed, gender did not have any effect on the extent of the correct recognition of international participants or Thai participants. However, when combining the two groups together for a bigger sample size, different genders played a role with a small effect for the subcategories of Level 1: all items and Level 1: lexico-semantic items.

Fifth, native speakers generally got higher mean scores for correct recognition than non-native speakers. In addition, native speakers tended to have higher tolerance towards Thai English mistakes on signs than non-native speakers, so they generally saw some items with minor mistakes as not posing a problem for them.

Sixth, international participants aged 45 years old and over usually had higher correct recognition scores than the other group when the messages contained no errors (Level 1), as did Thai participants aged 18-34 years old.

Seventh, as regards English proficiency, native speakers generally had better correct recognition scores than the other groups of participants because they mostly knew what went wrong on the signs; therefore, they could better recognise Thai English messages with lexico-semantic features. Non-native speakers, especially those at lower English proficiency, were mainly uncertain whether the messages were wrong or used in the wrong context, or maybe they did not know the relevant English words.

In general, signs with grammatical mistakes could be more easily recognised than those with lexico-semantic mistakes. However, when signs contained messages with major errors (Level 3), almost all participants could recognise that there were some problems on the signs and considered these mistakes problematic to them.

Finally, regarding the English messages translated by translation software, international participants widely accepted that these messages were problematic for them. In addition, they added that they were not confident enough to guess the meanings of the intended messages and they were concerned that the google-translated messages could mislead them.

6.5 Conclusion

In response to the research questions in Section 6.1, the conclusion of the study about participants' correct recognition of Thai English is as follows:

First, international participants and Thai participants had different views regarding problems with Thai English messages. Although the study showed that international participants had higher scores for correct recognition of the meanings of the signs better than Thai participants, based on the interviews, international participants saw the messages as problematic to them when they were ambiguous or could mislead them,

not simply when they contained a mistake. However, Thai participants associated the word ‘problem’ with ‘grammatical problems’.

Second, the hypothesis that participants who have been to Thailand should have better correct recognition of Thai English than those who had never been to Thailand was rejected because international participants who visited Thailand before usually had lower correct recognition scores than those who had never been to Thailand, and the differences in mean scores of the subcategories of Level 2: all items and Level 2: lexico-semantic items were statistically significant. Therefore, participants’ trip to Thailand was not a key factor contributing to their correct recognition.

Third, the hypothesis that Asian participants should have better correct recognition of Thai English than European participants was rejected because the study showed that European participants generally got higher correct recognition scores than Asian participants. The former tended to have higher English proficiency than the latter.

Finally, among different variables, non-native and native English background played an important role. The study showed that native speakers got better correct recognition scores than non-native speakers, especially when the items contained lexico-semantic features, because native speakers could negotiate the meanings of the messages better and knew what went wrong in the Thai English messages.

This chapter has presented both quantitative and qualitative results from the study about the extent of the correct recognition of the meanings of Thai English signs based on the data drawn from the online questionnaire and the participant interviews. In the next chapter, the results and findings from the study about participants’ attitudes towards Thai English messages on signs in Thai tourist domains will be presented.

Chapter 7 The Attitudes of Participants towards Thai English Mistakes on Signs

The study in this chapter, along with the one in Chapter 6, acts as a supporting chapter for the main study about the intelligibility of Thai English in Chapter 5. This chapter focuses on the attitudes of international and Thai participants towards Thai English mistakes on signs. The study was done by using both quantitative and qualitative methods to compare and contrast the attitudes of the two groups of participants. At first, the results were quantitatively analysed based on the answers from the online questionnaire responded to by 456 non-Thai and 810 Thai participants. Following, in-depth interviews with 51 participants were conducted to better reflect participants' opinions towards Thai English messages on signs.

7.1 Research Questions for the Study about Participants' Attitudes towards Thai English Mistakes on Signs

The study aims to find out about the attitudes of participants towards Thai English messages on signs. The research questions are as follows:

- 1) Do international participants and Thai participants have similar perspectives towards Thai English mistakes on signs?
- 2) What are the differences in perception of participants who have been to Thailand and those who have never been to Thailand regarding Thai English mistakes on signs?
- 3) What are the differences in perception of Asian and European participants regarding Thai English mistakes on signs?
- 4) To what extent do different variables affect participants' perceptions towards Thai English mistakes on signs?


7.2 Participants' Attitudes towards Thai English Mistakes on Signs

This section presents the mean scores of participants' attitudes towards the erroneous English messages on the 30 signs in the questionnaire about the attitudes of participants towards Thai English mistakes on signs.

In the questionnaire, the question for this study was linked with the other two questions about the intelligibility of Thai English (see Chapter 5) and the extent of the correct recognition of Thai English (see Chapter 6). At first, participants were shown a photo of a Thai English sign and asked to rate to what extent they could understand the English message on the sign (see Chapter 5). Then they were asked to decide whether the English message was problematic to them or not (see Chapter 6). Finally, they were asked to rate the six-point Likert scale to indicate how serious the mistake was in their opinions. The actual question asked in the questionnaire was **'If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?'** as in Figure 7.1.

The screenshot shows a questionnaire titled "The Use of English in Tourist Domains in Thailand" with a progress bar at 21%. It contains three questions:

1. You see this sign at an airline counter at the airport.



1.1 How well do you understand the English message on the sign?

1 incomprehensible 2 3 4 5 6 comprehensible

1.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the English version?

☐ Yes ☐ No


1.3 If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?

1 not serious at all 2 3 4 5 6 very serious

Figure 7.1 The question about participants' attitudes towards Thai English mistakes on signs (English version)

For the Thai version, Thai participants were asked the same question, but it was translated into Thai language (see Figure 7.2).

1. ท่านเห็นป้ายนี้ที่สนามบิน



1.1 ท่านคิดว่าชาวต่างชาติจะสามารถเข้าใจภาษาอังกฤษบนป้ายนี้ได้ในระดับใด

1 ไม่เข้าใจเลย 2 3 4 5 6 เข้าใจได้

1.2 ท่านคิดว่าข้อความภาษาอังกฤษบนป้าย มีปัญหาหรือไม่

☐ มี

☐ ไม่มี

1.3 หากมีปัญหามา ท่านคิดว่าควรแก้ไขหรือไม่

1 ไม่จำเป็นเลย 2 3 4 5 6 จำเป็นมาก

Figure 7.2 The question about participants' attitudes towards Thai English mistakes on signs (Thai version)

The questionnaire contained 30 items, combining eight items in Level 1: no errors, twelve items in Level 2: minor errors, and ten items in Level 3: major errors.

As previously explained in Chapters 5 and 6, the eight items in Level 1 referred to signs with no erroneous message but that could be difficult for non-Thai people to understand the intended messages. There were four grammatical items (Q7, Q10, Q18, and Q26) and four lexico-semantic items (Q6, Q8, Q9, and Q17).

The items in Level 2 referred to signs containing minor errors, such as misspelling, wrong verb conjugation, and omission of a preposition. There were eight grammatical items (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5, Q16, Q25, and Q28) and four lexico-semantic items (Q19, Q20, Q21, and Q27).

The ten items in Level 3 referred to signs with some major errors or serious mistakes, such as word-by-word translation and the use of local abbreviations that would be difficult for those who do not have in-depth knowledge of Thai language and Thai culture. There were four grammatical items (Q22, Q23, Q24, and Q30) and six lexico-semantic-feature items (Q11, Q12, Q13, Q14, Q15 and Q29).

Table 7.1 and Table 7.2 show the descending mean scores rated by internal participants and Thai participants respectively regarding how serious they thought the mistake on each sign was, from 1 *not serious at all* to 6 *very serious*.

7.2.1 International Participants

Table 7.1 International participants' attitudes towards Thai English mistakes (N = 456)

No.	Question	Message	Level	Features		<i>M^a</i> (<i>SD</i>)
				GR ^b	LS ^b	
1	Q 12	A motorcycle works for	3		✓	5.29 (1.15)
2	Q 13	Forbidden island glass	3		✓	4.49 (1.50)
3	Q 11	Food order	3		✓	4.34 (1.52)
4	Q 24	Please it neatly	3	✓		4.14 (1.51)
5	Q 23	Hire a pet	3	✓		3.97 (1.57)
6	Q 30	Exhibition hell	3	✓		3.90 (1.80)
7	Q 15	Please ring to bring	3		✓	3.81 (1.52)
8	Q 29	Ovalcano	3		✓	3.74 (1.71)
9	Q 14	OTOP	3		✓	3.51 (1.82)
10	Q 19	2 free 1	2		✓	3.38 (1.46)
11	Q 27	Wat Phra Kaew	2		✓	3.15 (1.74)
12	Q 22	Thai house style	3	✓		2.78 (1.49)
13	Q 21	Happy toilet	2		✓	2.61 (1.59)
14	Q 20	3 pcs up	2		✓	2.52 (1.60)
15	Q 16	No parking across	2	✓		2.49 (1.49)
16	Q 5	Please next counter	2	✓		2.41 (1.45)
17	Q 3	Cannot be changes	2	✓		2.41 (1.37)
18	Q 9	Toilet/shoes	1		✓	2.40 (1.80)
19	Q 17	Fake goods	1		✓	2.39 (1.72)
20	Q 8	Feed a pigeon	1		✓	2.39 (1.65)
21	Q 2	Opening time	2	✓		2.29 (1.29)
22	Q 6	Beautiful girl passport	1		✓	2.25 (1.51)
23	Q 1	Close	2	✓		2.09 (1.14)
24	Q 4	Wel come	2	✓		2.07 (1.37)
25	Q 25	No trolley	2	✓		1.94 (1.38)
26	Q 10	No littering	1	✓		1.74 (1.21)
27	Q 28	Coming sooon	2	✓		1.67 (1.23)
28	Q 26	Tourist discount	1	✓		1.63 (1.14)
29	Q 7	Museum hours	1	✓		1.48 (1.06)
30	Q 18	Foot massage	1	✓		1.37 (0.86)

^aScore 6 = very serious and 1 = not serious at all

^bGR = grammatical features, LS = lexico-semantic features

Table 7.1 shows the descending mean scores of participants' attitudes towards how serious the mistake on each sign was. The questionnaire was rated by 456 international participants. It can be seen that the first nine items with the highest scores on the rank (Q12, Q13, Q11, Q24, Q23, Q30, Q15, Q29, and Q14) belonged to Level 3 (major errors) although there were only ten items from Level 3 in the questionnaire. The

mean scores ranged from $M = 5.29$ to $M = 3.74$ out of 6 *very serious*. The tenth item from the top was from Level 2 (Q19). From the first ten items, seven items contained lexico-semantic features, and the other three contained grammatical features.

On the other hand, the last ten items with the lowest scores belonged to Level 1 (no errors) and Level 2 (minor errors). Half of the last ten items belonged to Level 1 (Q6, Q10, Q26, Q7, and Q18) and the other half belonged to Level 2 (Q2, Q1, Q4, Q25, and Q28). Out of the last ten items, only one item (Q6) contained lexico-semantic features while the other nine items (Q10, Q26, Q7, Q18, Q2, Q1, Q4, Q25, and Q28) contained grammatical features. The mean scores ranged from $M = 2.29$ to $M = 1.37$ out of 6.

According to the Table 7.1, it could be concluded that international participants viewed that mainly items with major errors were difficult for them to understand, so the mistakes on these signs were considered serious. On the other hand, they could probably negotiate the meanings of the items with no errors and minor errors effectively, so the mistakes on these signs were not serious to them because they could still get the gist of the messages.

7.2.2 Thai Participant

Table 7.2 Thai participants' attitudes towards Thai English mistakes (N = 810)

No.	Question	Message	Level	Features		M ^a (SD)
				GR ^b	LS ^b	
1	Q 13	Forbidden island glass	3		✓	5.72 (.87)
2	Q 12	A motorcycle works for	3		✓	5.57 (.97)
3	Q 30	Exhibition hell	3	✓		5.35 (1.44)
4	Q 11	Food order	3		✓	5.28 (1.13)
5	Q 23	Hire a pet	3	✓		5.20 (1.20)
6	Q 24	Please it neatly	3	✓		4.91 (1.42)
7	Q 4	Wel come	2	✓		4.78 (1.52)
8	Q 27	Wat Phra Kaew	2		✓	4.64 (1.67)
9	Q 15	Please ring to bring	3		✓	4.55 (1.57)
10	Q 2	Opening time	2	✓		4.26 (1.51)
11	Q 5	Please next counter	2	✓		4.03 (1.58)
12	Q 22	Thai house style	3	✓		3.90 (1.71)
13	Q 16	No parking across	2	✓		3.88 (1.72)
14	Q 1	Close	2	✓		3.87 (1.69)
15	Q 3	Cannot be changes	2	✓		3.77 (1.73)
16	Q 29	Ovalcano	3		✓	3.72 (1.84)
17	Q 14	OTOP	3		✓	3.67 (1.92)
18	Q 17	Fake goods	1		✓	3.66 (1.98)
19	Q 8	Feed a pigeon	1		✓	3.46 (1.89)
20	Q 25	No trolley	2	✓		3.44 (1.92)
21	Q 28	Coming sooon	2	✓		3.39 (1.94)
22	Q 21	Happy toilet	2		✓	3.24 (1.85)
23	Q 19	2 free 1	2		✓	3.22 (1.80)
24	Q 20	3 pcs up	2		✓	3.03 (1.73)
25	Q 10	No littering	1	✓		3.03 (1.89)
26	Q 7	Museum hours	1	✓		2.98 (1.95)
27	Q 6	Beautiful girl passport	1		✓	2.59 (1.77)
28	Q 26	Tourist discount	1	✓		2.56 (1.72)
29	Q 18	Foot massage	1	✓		2.22 (1.67)
30	Q 9	Toilet/shoes	1		✓	2.18 (1.67)

^aScore 6 = very serious and 1 = not serious at all

^bGR = grammatical features, LS = lexico-semantic features

Table 7.2 shows that from the first ten items, seven items (Q 13, Q12, Q30, Q11, Q23, Q24, and Q15) belonged to Level 3 (major errors) while the other three items (Q4, Q27 and Q2) belonged to Level 2 (minor errors). In addition, four items contained

grammatical features and the other six items contain lexico-semantic features, and the mean scores of the first ten items ranged from $M = 5.72$ to $M = 4.26$.

Regarding the last ten items, six items (Q10, Q7, Q6, Q26, Q18, and Q9) belonged to Level 1, and the other four items (Q28, Q21, Q19, and Q20) belonged to Level 2. Five items contained lexico-semantic features, and the others contained grammatical features. The scores of the last ten items range from $M = 3.39$ to $M = 2.18$.

It can be concluded that Thai people considered Thai English messages with major errors more serious than the items with minor errors or no errors. The scores were rated higher than those rated by international participants, which could mean that Thai people saw the Thai English mistakes on signs as more serious than international participants did. For a clearer picture, Table 7.3 combined the mean scores rated by international participants and Thai participants together.

7.2.3 All Participants

Table 7.3 All participants' attitudes towards Thai English mistakes (N = 1, 266)

International Participants				Thai Participants			
No.	Q.	Message	M	Q.	Message	M	
1	12	A motorcycle works for (L3 LS)	5.29	13	Forbidden island glass (L3 LS)	5.72	
2	13	Forbidden island glass (L3 LS)	4.49	12	A motorcycle works for (L3	5.57	
3	11	Food order (L3 LS)	4.34	30	Exhibition hell (L3 GR)	5.35	
4	24	Please it neatly (L3 GR)	4.14	11	Food order (L3 LS)	5.28	
5	23	Hire a pet (L3 GR)	3.97	23	Hire a pet (L3 GR)	5.20	
6	30	Exhibition hell (L3 GR)	3.90	24	Please it neatly (L3 GR)	4.91	
7	15	Please ring to bring (L3 LS)	3.81	4	Wel come (L2 GR)	4.78	
8	29	Ovalcano (L3 LS)	3.74	27	Wat Phra Kaew (L2 LS)	4.64	
9	14	OTOP (L3 LS)	3.51	15	Please ring to bring (L3 LS)	4.55	
10	19	2 free 1 (L2 LS)	3.38	2	Opening time (L2 GR)	4.26	
11	27	Wat Phra Kaew (L2 LS)	3.15	5	Please next counter (L2 GR)	4.03	
12	22	Thai house style (L3 GR)	2.78	22	Thai house style (L3 GR)	3.90	
13	21	Happy toilet (L2 LS)	2.61	16	No parking across (L2 GR)	3.88	
14	20	3 pcs up (L2 LS)	2.52	1	Close (L2 GR)	3.87	
15	16	No parking across (L2 GR)	2.49	3	Cannot be changes (L2 GR)	3.77	
16	5	Please next counter (L2 GR)	2.41	29	Ovalcano (L3 LS)	3.72	
17	3	Cannot be changes (L2 GR)	2.41	14	OTOP (L3 LS)	3.67	
18	9	Toilet/shoes (L1 LS)	2.40	17	Fake goods (L1 LS)	3.66	
19	17	Fake goods (L1 LS)	2.39	8	Feed a pigeon (L1 LS)	3.46	
20	8	Feed a pigeon (L1 LS)	2.39	25	No trolley (L2 GR)	3.44	
21	2	Opening time (L2 GR)	2.29	28	Coming soon (L2 GR)	3.39	
22	6	Beautiful girl passport (L1 LS)	2.25	21	Happy toilet (L2 LS)	3.24	
23	1	Close (L2 GR)	2.09	19	2 free 1 (L2 LS)	3.22	
24	4	Wel come (L2 GR)	2.07	20	3 pcs up (L2 LS)	3.03	
25	25	No trolley (L2 GR)	1.94	10	No littering (L1 GR)	3.03	
26	10	No littering (L1 GR)	1.74	7	Museum hours (L1 GR)	2.98	
27	28	Coming soon (L2 GR)	1.67	6	Beautiful girl passport (L1 LS)	2.59	
28	26	Tourist discount (L1 GR)	1.63	26	Tourist discount (L1 GR)	2.56	
29	7	Museum hours (L1 GR)	1.48	18	Foot massage (L1 GR)	2.22	
30	18	Foot massage (L1 GR)	1.37	9	Toilet/shoes (L1 LS)	2.18	
Average score			2.82	Average score			3.87

*GR = Grammatical features, LS = Lexico-semantic features, L1 = Level 1, L2 = Level 2, L3 = Level 3

According to Table 7.3, overall, international participants considered Thai English mistakes on the 30 signs less serious ($M = 2.82$) than Thai participants ($M = 3.87$) did.

Although the ranking orders of all the items rated by international and Thai participants were quite similar, eight items, namely Q29, Q14, Q19, Q21, Q20, Q9, Q2, and Q4, had markedly different ranking orders. Among the eight items, only one item, Q9, belonged to Level 1; five items, namely Q19, Q21, Q20, Q2, and Q4, belonged to Level 2, and the last two items, Q 29 and Q14, belonged to Level 3.

From Table 7.3, it can be concluded that items that were grammatically correct might not always convey intended messages to the audience when used in a specific context. In contrast, if signs contained some grammatical mistakes but surrounded by appropriate contexts, they could still convey the intended messages to the audience. In addition, the results showed that grammatical mistakes on signs were mainly considered less serious than lexico-semantic mistakes.

When looking at the scores from the six-point Likert scale, it is apparent that Thai participants considered Thai English mistakes on signs more serious than non-Thai participants, as the former mostly had higher scores. To find out whether the differences in mean scores between the two groups were statistically significant or not, a t-test was conducted, and the results can be found in Table 7.4.

Table 7.4 Attitudes towards Thai English mistakes of international participants and Thai participants (International N= 456, Thai N = 810)

Level	Features		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	Effect size ^a
All items	All	International	2.97	.78	1053.71	-20.61***	.25
	(30 items)	Thai	3.96	.90			
Level 1	All	International	2.11	1.04	1050.70	-12.25***	.11
	(8 items)	Thai	2.96	1.31			
Level 1	Grammatical	International	1.59	.83	1066.61	-17.62***	.22
	(4 items)	Thai	2.79	1.44			
Level 1	Lexico-semantic	International	2.43	1.25	919.81	-8.09***	.05
	(4 items)	Thai	3.07	1.40			
Level 2	All	International	2.44	.82	1116.12	-26.61***	.36
	(12 items)	Thai	3.84	1.02			
Level 2	Grammatical	International	2.18	.84	1120.39	-32.88***	.46
	(8 items)	Thai	3.95	1.05			
Level 2	Lexico-semantic	International	2.98	1.12	1037.34	-9.03***	.06
	(4 items)	Thai	3.61	1.27			
Level 3	All	International	4.01	.99	807.85	-14.86***	.15
	(10 items)	Thai	4.82	.82			
Level 3	Grammatical	International	3.71	1.18	850.01	-17.14***	.19
	(4 items)	Thai	4.86	1.05			
Level 3	Lexico-semantic	International	4.22	1.07	768.12	-9.89***	.07
	(6 items)	Thai	4.79	.84			

*** $p < .001$.

^aEta squared.

Table 7.4 shows that in general, Thai participants considered Thai English messages on signs more serious than international participants did across the ten subcategories. The more serious mistakes the signs contained, the higher mean scores rated by the participants were.

Bonferroni correction was also applied. With 10 comparisons, the p value was adjusted to $p < .005$ instead of $p < .05$. The differences in mean scores between the groups of Thai and international participants were all $p < .001$, so they were all considered significant. The differences in mean scores between international participants and Thai participants reached a significant level at $p < .001$ with a large effect for the subcategories of all items, Level 1: grammatical items, Level 2: all items, Level 2: grammatical items, Level 3: all items and Level 3: grammatical items; at $p < .001$ with a moderate effect for

Level 1: all items, Level 2: lexico-semantic items and Level 3: lexico-semantic items and at $p < .001$ with a small effect for Level 1: lexico-semantic items.

7.2.4 Discussion about Participants' Attitudes towards Thai English Mistakes

Based on the in-depth interviews with 51 participants, when participants chose *1 not serious at all*, it normally implied that the mistake on the sign was considered not serious for them. In addition, they sometimes overlooked the mistake. Although in some cases the mistakes were noticeable, as long as they could still understand the intended message, they would still choose *1 not serious at all* or 2 out of 6 *very serious*. On the other hand, if they chose *6 very serious*, it implied that the item was difficult for them to understand. This would suggest that the sign owner or sign maker should correct the message as soon as possible because the mistake could mislead them or prevent them from understanding the message.

Based on the information from the Table 7.1, Table 7.2, Table 7.3 and Table 7.4, it can be seen that international and Thai participants did not share similar attitudes towards Thai English mistakes on signs regarding different issues.

7.2.4.1 Negative and Positive Attitudes towards the Mistakes

According to the interviews with Thai participants, it seemed that Thai interviewees tended to hold negative attitudes towards the mistakes. They thought that it was embarrassing when mistakes, especially misspellings, appeared on signs. To Thai participants, signs with grammatical mistakes posed serious problems and should be corrected as soon as possible, rather than those with lexico-semantic mistakes. A male Thai interviewee working as a programmer said '*signs with misspellings should be corrected as soon as possible as it shows that people who made the sign were reckless.*' He also added that '*Thailand has earned a lot from overseas tourists each year, so we should make our visitors impressed rather than confused or laugh at our signs.*' In addition, they connected these spelling mistakes with Thai people's image as well as the Thai government's, as a female Thai interviewee working as a physical therapist said, '*I think all misspelling items should be corrected as soon as possible. It affects not only the image of the business but the face of the country.*'



Figure 7.3 Q30: Exhibition Hall

Based on the interview data, it can be concluded that to international participants seemed to be taking the question about how serious the mistakes on the signs as ‘serious impediment to comprehension’ while the Thai participants took the sign as ‘an embarrassing or shameful display’.

7.2.4.2 Ownership and Materials that Signs Were Made of

The majority of the interviewees accepted that to decide how serious the mistake on the sign was to them also depended on the location where the sign was found and who owned the sign. Take the sign ‘2 free 1’ (see Figure 7.4) as an example. This sign was found in a branch of a famous bakery in Thailand that has an outlet nationwide.



Figure 7.4 Q19: 2 free 1

According to the interview with a Thai female interviewee working as a lecturer at a state university in Thailand, she first said that *‘To me, it’s fine. Although it is Thai English, it shouldn’t be too difficult for non-Thai participants to guess that it means buy two get one free.’* However, after knowing that the sign was located in a famous bakery, she changed her mind and said *‘Really? Oh, this is serious. The owner should correct the message as soon as possible. They should be more professional.’* She also commented about the sign ownership that *‘if this sign was found in the local market, it would be*

reasonable for me. But, as a big company, they should pay for a native speaker to proofread their English signs.'

In the same way, non-Thai interviewees revealed that the location and the ownership of the sign affected the way the degree to which they considered how serious the mistake was. A female British interviewee talked about the material that the Exhibition 'Hell' sign (see Figure 7.3) was made of:

If the message was written on a piece of paper and found in a tourist attraction, I am definitely sure that they mean "hall" instead of "hell". But, in this case, the sign looks too expensive to be misspelt. Seriously, it is engraved. So, I am not sure whether it is their intention to spell it this way, or maybe this could be a transliterated word.

Another male British interviewee also mentioned the permanence of the sign as a factor to rate how serious the mistake of the sign was for him. He talked about the Exhibition 'Hell' sign (see Figure 7.3) that

If the sign is not permanent, I wouldn't see that it's important for the message to be corrected as it might be removed soon or be there on purpose or for a short period of time. Nevertheless, if the sign is displayed on a permanent material and located in a tourist place, I think these spelling mistakes should be corrected as soon as possible.

It can be seen that where the sign was found and what material it was made from had an impact on the interviewees' assessments. If signs are located in prime areas and made of permanent materials, the participants viewed that the mistakes should be corrected as soon as possible.

7.2.4.3 Direct Translation and Translation Software

In the study, there were three signs translated by translation software or *google translate*, namely Q11 (see Figure 7.5), Q12 (see Figure 7.6) and Q13 (see Figure 7.7).



Figure 7.5 Q11: Food Order



Figure 7.6 Q12: A motorcycle works for...



Figure 7.7 Q13: Forbidden Island Glass

It can be seen from Table 7.3 that all three of these three items were in the top four items in the ranking orders, which meant that participants considered these items serious and should be corrected. International participants commented that they could not get the gist of the messages and found the English messages on these signs useless. Regarding Q13 (see Figure 7.7), a Chinese male interviewer said, *‘I don’t understand this message at all. Having English messages here doesn’t help.’*

In the same way, Thai participants accepted that if they did not look at the Thai messages, it would be impossible to understand the English messages. They viewed that translation software should not be used for helping translating Thai messages into English. A female Thai participant said, *‘People use google to help translate messages including me. I sometimes use google to translate the gist of the messages from another language into Thai.’* However, in the case of English translation on signs, she commented that *‘they shouldn’t have used google to do this. I’m sure that non-Thai people can’t understand the messages because google even picked up the wrong word because of homonym.’* She also suggested that *‘if sellers want to sell their items, they should correct the signs as soon as possible.’*

From the statistical data and the interviews, it can be concluded that both Thailand international participants considered English messages translated by translation software to be serious problems and should be corrected, as no one could understand these google translated messages.

In conclusion, it can be summarized that the factors contributing to international participants’ decisions on how serious the mistake on each sign was mainly depended on their comprehension of the signs while for Thai participants it depended on how obvious the mistake was. In addition, both groups of participants also considered the location and the material that was used to make the sign as factors. Finally, both groups revealed that English messages translated by translation software did not help to convey meaning from Thai to English and this kind of sign should be corrected as soon as possible.

7.3 The Effects of Gender, Trip to Thailand, Geographic Origin, Non/Native English Background, Age and English Proficiency

This section presents the statistical results based on the gender, trip to Thailand, geographic origin, non/native English background, age and English proficiency of the participants.

7.3.1 Gender and Attitudes towards Thai English Mistakes

This section analyses whether being males or females would affect participants' attitudes towards Thai English mistakes on signs or not.

7.3.1.1 International Participants

In total, there were 445 international participants ($N = 445$) who identified their gender on the questionnaire. The numbers of both female participants ($n = 227$) and male participants ($n = 218$) were rather similar.

Table 7.5 International participants' attitudes towards Thai English mistakes and gender
(Female n = 227, Male n = 218)

Level	Features	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	Effect size ^a
All items	All (30 items)	Female	3.08	.79	443	2.83**	.02
		Male	2.87	.77			
Level 1	All (8 items)	Female	2.20	1.11	413	1.44	
		Male	2.05	.98			
Level 1	Grammatical (4 items)	Female	1.67	.90	342	1.55	
		Male	1.53	.75			
Level 1	Lexico-semantic (4 items)	Female	2.49	1.25	399	0.86	
		Male	2.38	1.27			
Level 2	All (12 items)	Female	2.54	.84	443	2.28*	.01
		Male	2.36	.80			
Level 2	Grammatical (8 items)	Female	2.25	.88	441	1.56	
		Male	2.12	.80			
Level 2	Lexico-semantic (4 items)	Female	3.15	1.13	441	2.79**	.02
		Male	2.85	1.10			
Level 3	All (10 items)	Female	4.17	.94	443	3.36***	.02
		Male	3.85	1.02			
Level 3	Grammatical (4 items)	Female	3.96	1.12	441	4.57***	.05
		Male	3.45	1.20			
Level 3	Lexico-semantic (6 items)	Female	4.33	1.03	443	2.05*	.01
		Male	4.12	1.11			

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

^aEta squared.

In accordance with the previous chapters about the intelligibility of Thai English and the correct recognition of the meanings of the signs, in this chapter, Table 7.5 also showed that there were differences in mean scores of participants' attitudes towards Thai English mistakes on signs between the two genders. In general, female participants awarded higher scores than male participants across the ten subcategories. This implied that female participants considered the Thai English mistakes on signs more serious than male participants did. However, only two subcategories, namely Level 3: all items and Level 3: grammatical items, reached a significant level at $p < .001$ with a small effect. The differences in mean scores of the subcategories of all 30 items and Level 2: lexico-semantic items reached a significant level at $p < .01$ with a small effect. The differences in mean scores of the subcategories of Level 2: all items and Level 3: lexico-semantic items reached a significant level at $p < .05$ with a small effect.

It can be seen that female participants tended to consider errors in Thai English messages on signs more serious than male participants. However, only the differences of six subcategories reached a significant level with a small effect. Therefore, based on the statistical results, it can be concluded that different genders would not be the key factor contributing to overseas participants' attitudes towards Thai English mistakes on signs.

7.3.1.2 Thai Participants

In total, there were 794 Thai participants ($N = 794$) who identified their genders on the questionnaire. The number of female participants ($n = 548$) was higher than the number of male participants ($n = 246$).

Table 7.6 Thai participants' attitudes towards Thai English mistakes and gender
(Female $n = 548$, Male $n = 246$)

Level	Features	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	Effect size ^a
All items	All (30 items)	Female	4.03	.89	792	2.84**	.01
		Male	3.84	.89			
Level 1	All (8 items)	Female	3.04	1.33	776	2.28*	.01
		Male	2.80	1.28			
Level 1	Grammatical (4 items)	Female	2.82	1.46	750	0.84	
		Male	2.72	1.40			
Level 1	Lexico-semantic (4 items)	Female	3.20	1.41	761	3.29***	.01
		Male	2.84	1.34			
Level 2	All (12 items)	Female	3.90	1.00	792	2.58**	.01
		Male	3.70	1.04			
Level 2	Grammatical (8 items)	Female	4.04	1.04	791	3.04**	.01
		Male	3.79	1.06			
Level 2	Lexico-semantic (4 items)	Female	3.64	1.27	784	1.25	
		Male	3.52	1.28			
Level 3	All (10 items)	Female	4.87	.81	792	2.69**	.01
		Male	4.70	.82			
Level 3	Grammatical (4 items)	Female	4.92	1.04	790	2.65**	.01
		Male	4.71	1.06			
Level 3	Lexico-semantic (6 items)	Female	4.84	.83	792	2.03*	.01
		Male	4.71	.84			

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

^aEta squared.

Table 7.6 shows that there were differences in mean scores between the two genders; female Thai participants had higher scores than male Thai participants across

the ten subcategories. Like the case of international participants, this implied that female Thai participants considered Thai English mistakes on signs more serious than male Thai participants. The differences in mean scores of both genders reached a significant level at $p < .001$ with a small effect for the subcategory of Level 1: lexico-semantic items; at $p < .01$ with a small effect for the subcategories of all 30 items, Level 2: all items, Level 2: grammatical items, Level 3: all items, and Level 3: grammatical items; and at $p < .05$ with a small effect for Level 1: all items and Level 3: lexico-semantic items.

Based on Table 7.6, it can be seen that overall, female Thai participants considered Thai English mistakes on signs more serious than male participants. Although the differences in mean scores of eight subcategories reached a significant level with a small effect, it implied that different genders would not have much effect on Thai participants' attitudes towards Thai English mistakes on signs.

7.3.1.3 All Participants

To make a bigger sample size, the data from international participants and Thai participants were combined together, and the results can be found in Table 7.6.

Table 7.7 All participants' attitudes towards Thai English mistakes on signs and gender
(Female n 775 = , Male n = 464)

Level	Features	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	Effect size ^a
All items	All (30 items)	Female	3.75	.96	1237	6.54***	.03
		Male	3.38	.97			
Level 1	All (8 items)	Female	2.80	1.32	1004.89	4.57***	.02
		Male	2.46	1.21			
Level 1	Grammatical (4 items)	Female	2.53	1.43	885.92	3.64***	.01
		Male	2.22	1.31			
Level 1	Lexico-semantic (4 items)	Female	3.00	1.40	1162	4.41***	.02
		Male	2.63	1.33			
Level 2	All (12 items)	Female	3.50	1.14	1237	6.43***	.03
		Male	3.07	1.15			
Level 2	Grammatical (8 items)	Female	3.51	1.29	1234	6.71***	.04
		Male	3.01	1.26			
Level 2	Lexico-semantic (4 items)	Female	3.50	1.25	1227	3.97***	.01
		Male	3.21	1.24			
Level 3	All (10 items)	Female	4.66	.91	892.72	6.30***	.03
		Male	4.30	1.01			
Level 3	Grammatical (4 items)	Female	4.64	1.15	882.23	7.11***	.04
		Male	4.12	1.29			
Level 3	Lexico-semantic (6 items)	Female	4.69	.92	899.15	4.45***	.02
		Male	4.43	1.02			

*** $p < .001$.

^aEta squared.

Overall, female participants considered that Thai English mistakes on signs more serious than male participants did across the ten subcategories, and the differences in mean scores between the two genders reached a significant level at $p < .001$ with a small effect across all ten subcategories.

According to the interviews with male and female participants, female participants tended to be more serious about the mistakes mainly because of their nature. Female participants paid more attention to details than male participants when looking at the same items while male participants sometimes overlooked the mistakes. Hence, it can be concluded that although gender differences may have an effect on participants' attitudes towards Thai English mistakes on signs, other factors should also be considered as different genders only had a small effect on their attitudes.

7.3.2 Trip to Thailand and Attitudes towards Thai English

Mistakes

According to the research question no. 2 of this study, to find out whether those who had been to Thailand and those who had never been to Thailand or not have differences in perceptions towards Thai English mistakes on signs or not, a t-test was conducted, and the results can be found in Table 7.8.

Based on the statistical data, the total number of the respondents to this question was 446 (N = 446). There were 224 participants who went to Thailand before and 222 participants who had never been to Thailand.

Table 7.8 International participants' trip to Thailand and attitudes towards Thai English mistakes (Yes n = 224, No n = 222)

Level	Features	Visiting	M	SD	df	t	Effect
All items	All (30 items)	Yes	2.85	.79	444	-3.36***	.02
		No	3.09	.76			
Level 1	All (8 items)	Yes	2.05	1.05	414	-1.34	
		No	2.19	1.05			
Level 1	Grammatical (4 items)	Yes	1.61	.88	344	0.18	
		No	1.59	.79			
Level 1	Lexico-semantic (4 items)	Yes	2.33	1.22	400	-1.70	
		No	2.54	1.29			
Level 2	All (12 items)	Yes	2.29	.82	444	-3.98***	.03
		No	2.60	.80			
Level 2	Grammatical (8 items)	Yes	2.09	.82	442	-2.41*	.01
		No	2.28	.85			
Level 2	Lexico-semantic (4 items)	Yes	2.73	1.07	441	-5.14***	.06
		No	3.26	1.11			
Level 3	All (10 items)	Yes	3.89	1.01	444	-2.54*	.01
		No	4.12	.95			
Level 3	Grammatical (4 items)	Yes	3.55	1.20	441	-2.75**	.02
		No	3.86	1.15			
Level 3	Lexico-semantic (6 items)	Yes	4.12	1.10	444	-2.06*	.01
		No	4.33	1.04			

*p < .05.

**p < .01.

***p < .001.

^aEta squared.

Table 7.8 shows that, in general participants who had been to Thailand considered the mistakes of Thai English on signs ($M = 2.85$, $SD .79$) less serious than those who had never been to Thailand ($M = 3.09$, $SD .76$). Across the ten subcategories, seven subcategories reached a significant level at $p < .001$ with a moderate effect for the subcategory of Level 2: lexico-semantic items; at $p < .001$ with a small effect for the subcategories of all items and Level 2: all items; at $p < .01$ with a small effect for Level 3: grammatical items; and at $p < .05$ with a small effect for Level 2: grammatical items, Level 3: all items and Level 3: lexico-semantic items.

Based on Table 7.8, it can be summarised that those who had been to Thailand considered Thai English mistakes on signs less serious than those who had never been to Thailand. However, the results were statistically significant for the signs with minor and major errors only. Nevertheless, the effect size was still small. Therefore, other factors should still be taken into account besides participants' trips to Thailand.

7.3.3 Geographic Origin and Attitudes towards Thai English Mistakes

According to research question no. 3 of this study, it was hypothesised that Asian participants may consider the mistakes of Thai English on signs less serious than European participants because they may share some common background with Thai people. To test the hypothesis, a t-test was conducted and the results can be found in Table 7.9.

Table 7.9 Geographic origin and participants' attitudes towards Thai English mistakes
(Asian n = 139, European n = 192)

Level	Features	Continent	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	Effect size ^a
All items	All (30 items)	Asian	3.06	.82	329	.95	
		European	2.98	.74			
Level 1	All (8 items)	Asian	2.32	1.07	310	2.70**	.02
		European	2.00	1.00			
Level 1	Grammatical (4 items)	Asian	1.77	.94	237.85	2.95**	.03
		European	1.47	.71			
Level 1	Lexico-semantic (4 items)	Asian	2.68	1.28	299	2.74**	.02
		European	2.28	1.23			
Level 2	All (12 items)	Asian	2.68	.87	329	3.50***	.04
		European	2.37	.75			
Level 2	Grammatical (8 items)	Asian	2.43	.89	328	3.62***	.04
		European	2.10	.78			
Level 2	Lexico-semantic (4 items)	Asian	3.14	1.16	327	1.49	
		European	2.95	1.09			
Level 3	All (10 items)	Asian	4.08	1.04	329	.16	
		European	4.06	.94			
Level 3	Grammatical (4 items)	Asian	3.85	1.23	327	1.18	
		European	3.70	1.13			
Level 3	Lexico-semantic (6 items)	Asian	4.23	1.13	329	-.69	
		European	4.32	1.04			

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

^aEta squared.

Table 7.9 shows unexpected results because European participants considered Thai English on signs less serious than Asian participants across the ten subcategories. Nevertheless, the differences in mean scores in five subcategories reached a significant level at $p < .001$ with a small effect for the subcategories of Level 2: all items and Level 2: grammatical items and at $p < .01$ with a small effect for the subcategories of Level 1: all items, Level 1: grammatical items and Level 1: lexico-semantic items.

It can be concluded that the hypothesis that Asian participants should consider Thai English mistakes on signs less serious than European participants was rejected because the study showed that European participants considered the mistakes less serious. However, only the items in Level 1 and Level 2 reached a significant level. Therefore, it

can be further interpreted that when items contained major errors, all participants would consider these items serious and think that they should be corrected as soon as possible

There was a concern about the number of native speakers in the group of European participants as this could affect the results in terms of being native or non-native speakers. Therefore, the answers from British people were excluded, and the analysis was done. The results could be found in Table 7.10.

Table 7.10 Geographic origin excluding those from UK and attitudes towards Thai English mistakes (Asian n = 139, European = 83)

Level	Features	Continent	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	Effect size ^a
All items	All	Asian	3.06	.82	220	-.39	
	(30 items)	European ex. UK	3.11	.75			
Level 1	All	Asian	2.32	1.07	215	.71	
	(8 items)	European ex. UK	2.21	1.13			
Level 1	Grammatical	Asian	1.77	.94	185	1.74	
	(4 items)	European ex. UK	1.53	.77			
Level 1	Lexico-semantic	Asian	2.68	1.28	212	.68	
	(4 items)	European ex. UK	2.55	1.38			
Level 2	All	Asian	2.68	.87	220	1.90	
	(12 items)	European ex. UK	2.46	.77			
Level 2	Grammatical	Asian	2.43	.89	219	2.21*	.02
	(8 items)	European ex. UK	2.17	.84			
Level 2	Lexico-semantic	Asian	3.14	1.16	218	.54	
	(4 items)	European ex. UK	3.06	1.07			
Level 3	All	Asian	4.08	1.04	220	-1.09	
	(10 items)	European ex. UK	4.23	.96			
Level 3	Grammatical	Asian	3.85	1.23	218	-.69	
	(4 items)	European ex. UK	3.97	1.18			
Level 3	Lexico-semantic	Asian	4.23	1.13	220	-1.13	
	(6 items)	European ex. UK	4.41	1.03			

* $p < .05$.

^aEta squared.

Table 7.10 shows that when excluding British participants, European participants still mainly considered Thai English mistakes less serious than European participants except four subcategories, namely all items, Level 3: all items, Level 3: grammatical items and Level 3: lexico-semantic items. However, the differences in mean scores between Asian and European participants in the nine subcategories did not reach a

significant level. Only one subcategory, Level 2: grammatical items, reached a significant level at $p < .05$ with a small effect.

According to Table 7.10, participants from Asia considered mistakes in Thai English more serious than Europe for the items under Level 1 and Level 2, while European participants considered Thai English features in Level 3 more serious than Asian participants. However, the differences in mean scores of both groups of participants reached a significant level for just one subcategory with a small effect. Hence, it could be concluded that being Asian or European did not seem to be an influential factor to consider in this case.

7.3.4 Non/Native English Background and Attitudes towards Thai English Mistakes

As English proficiency appeared to have an effect on the intelligibility of European and Asian participants, the variable of being native and non-native speakers of participants should also be worth considering.

Table 7.11 Non/ native English background and attitudes towards Thai English mistakes
(Native n = 192, Non-native n = 244)

Level	Features		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	Effect size ^a
All items	All (30 items)	Native	2.83	.74	434	-3.29**	.02
		Non-native	3.08	.80			
Level 1	All (8 items)	Native	1.85	.90	393.23	-4.45***	.04
		Non-native	2.29	1.10			
Level 1	Grammatical (4 items)	Native	1.40	.68	323.94	-3.37***	.03
		Non-native	1.69	.88			
Level 1	Lexico-semantic (4 items)	Native	2.06	1.06	374.72	-4.91***	.05
		Non-native	2.65	1.32			
Level 2	All (12 items)	Native	2.24	.73	434	-4.55***	.05
		Non-native	2.59	.85			
Level 2	Grammatical (8 items)	Native	1.98	.72	432.82	-4.43***	.04
		Non-native	2.33	.89			
Level 2	Lexico-semantic (4 items)	Native	2.85	1.09	432	-2.38*	.01
		Non-native	3.10	1.13			
Level 3	All (10 items)	Native	3.88	.95	434	-2.54*	.01
		Non-native	4.12	1.01			
Level 3	Grammatical (4 items)	Native	3.48	1.10	432	-3.54***	.03
		Non-native	3.88	1.22			
Level 3	Lexico-semantic (6 items)	Native	4.16	1.06	434	-1.23	
		Non-native	4.29	1.08			

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

^aEta squared.

Based on Table 7.11, across the ten subcategories, native speakers of English considered Thai English mistakes on signs less serious than non-native speakers. In addition, the differences in mean scores between both groups reached a significant level at $p < .001$ with a small effect for the subcategories of Level 1: all items, Level 1: grammatical items, Level 1: lexico-semantic items, Level 2: all items, Level 2: grammatical items and Level 3: grammatical items; at $p < .01$ with a small effect for the subcategory of all items; and at $p < .05$ with a small effect for the subcategories of Level 2: lexico-semantic items and Level 3: all items.

It can be concluded that being native speakers or non-native speakers of English appeared to be one of the factors that affected international participants' attitudes towards

Thai English mistakes on signs. However, due to the small effect, the factor of non/native English background should be considered in accordance with other factors as well.

7.3.5 Age and Attitudes towards Thai English Mistakes

As participants' ages were different, the data were analysed by using one-way ANOVA to find out whether age played an important role in participants' attitudes towards Thai English mistakes on signs or not. There were four age groups (N = 444) for international participants and three age groups (N = 798) for Thai participants.

7.3.5.1 International Participants

Table 7.12 International participants' attitudes towards Thai English mistakes and age (N = 444)

Level	<i>M (SD)</i>				F	Effect size ^a
	18-25 (n = 102)	26-34 (n = 210)	35-44 (n = 85)	45 &over (n = 47)		
All 30 items	3.06 (.74)	2.99 (.75)	2.98 (.88)	2.73 (.86)	1.96	
Level 1 All	2.10 (.97)	2.16 (.97)	2.24 (1.31)	1.85 (1.01)	1.43	
Level 1 Grammatical	1.66 (.89)	1.60 (.79)	1.70 (.98)	1.21 (.42)	2.62	
Level 1 Lexico-semantic	2.32 (1.17)	2.54 (1.23)	2.54 (1.50)	2.06 (1.04)	2.12	
Level 2 All	2.56 (.78)	2.45 (.80)	2.44 (.89)	2.20 (.88)	2.09	
Level 2 Grammatical	2.19 (.79)	2.21 (.83)	2.21 (.94)	1.99 (.85)	.99	
Level 2 Lexico-semantic	3.35 (1.06)	2.96 (1.13)	2.90 (1.08)	2.61 (1.16)	5.70***	.04
Level 3 All	4.07 (.95)	4.04 (.96)	4.01 (1.04)	3.75 (1.10)	1.32	
Level 3 Grammatical	3.72 (1.16)	3.75 (1.17)	3.75 (1.16)	3.44 (1.32)	.91	
Level 3 Lexico-semantic	4.31 (1.02)	4.26 (1.04)	4.18 (1.17)	3.95 (1.15)	1.33	

*** $p < .001$.

^aEta squared.

Across the ten subcategories, none of the participant groups considered Thai English on signs particularly serious in an obvious way. But, in general, the groups of 18-25 years old and 35-44 years old got a higher score than other groups for five subcategories. However, the differences in mean scores among the four age groups did not reach a significant level except one subcategory only; Level 2: lexico-semantic items, which reached a significant level at $p < .001$ with a small effect size.

The S-N-K post-hoc test showed that the group of participants aged 18-25 years old showed a significant relationship with the other three groups, namely 26-34 years old, 35-44 years old and 45 years old and over.

In summary, it can be said that different age groups of international participants did not have a marked effect on their attitudes towards Thai English mistakes on signs except for the subcategory of Level 2: lexico-semantic items, in which participants aged 18-25 considered the mistakes more serious than other groups, but the effect size was small.

7.3.5.2 Thai Participants

There were three groups of participants with the total number of 798 ($N = 798$). The group of participants aged 18-34 years old was the smallest ($n = 156$). The group of participants aged 35-44 years old was the biggest ($n = 404$), and the number of participants aged 45 years old and over was in the middle ($n = 238$).

Table 7.13 Thai participants' attitudes towards Thai English mistakes and age ($N = 798$)

Level	<i>M (SD)</i>			F	Effect size ^a
	18-34 ($n = 156$)	35-44 ($n = 404$)	45 & over ($n = 238$)		
All 30 items	3.92 (.94)	3.93 (.85)	4.06 (.93)	1.99	
Level 1 All	2.92 (1.40)	2.86 (1.28)	3.14 (1.30)	3.29*	.008
Level 1 Grammatical	2.75 (1.52)	2.68 (1.36)	2.97 (1.49)	3.05*	.008
Level 1 Lexico-semantic	3.02 (1.44)	2.98 (1.38)	3.29 (1.38)	3.83*	.010
Level 2 All	3.72 (1.08)	3.83 (.96)	3.94 (1.07)	2.21	
Level 2 Grammatical	3.81 (1.10)	3.94 (1.00)	4.08 (1.08)	3.25*	.008
Level 2 Lexico-semantic	3.55 (1.32)	3.61 (1.19)	3.64 (1.37)	0.27	
Level 3 All	4.77 (.83)	4.79 (.78)	4.88 (.87)	1.19	
Level 3 Grammatical	4.76 (1.06)	4.83 (1.01)	4.95 (1.11)	1.58	
Level 3 Lexico-semantic	4.77 (.83)	4.77 (.82)	4.84 (.88)	0.59	

* $p < .05$.

^aEta squared.

For Thai participants ($N = 798$), across the ten subcategories, participants aged 45 years old and over ($n = 238$) appeared to consider Thai English mistakes on signs more serious than the other two groups. However, the differences in mean scores among the three groups reached a significant level at $p < .05$ with a small effect.

It can be summarised that Thai participants aged 45 years old and over may consider the Thai English features on signs more serious than participants from other age groups for some subcategories. However, as the effect size was very small, other factors should be brought into account when considering the factors affecting Thai participants' attitudes towards Thai English mistakes on signs.

7.3.6 English Proficiency and Attitudes towards Thai English Mistakes

It was hypothesised that English proficiency may have an effect on participants' attitudes towards Thai English mistakes on signs. Therefore, one-way ANOVA was conducted and the result can be found in Tables 7.15 and 7.16. For international participants ($N = 448$), there were five groups of English proficiency, namely native speakers ($n = 189$), proficient ($n = 82$), advanced ($n = 108$), upper intermediate ($n = 46$), and intermediate and below ($n = 23$). For Thai participants ($N = 789$), there were six groups of English proficiency, namely proficient ($n = 82$), advanced ($n = 198$), upper intermediate ($n = 234$), intermediate ($n = 63$), elementary ($n = 113$) and beginner ($n = 99$).

7.3.6.1 International Participants

Table 7.14 International participants' attitudes towards Thai English mistakes and English proficiency (N = 448)

Level	<i>M (SD)</i>					F	Effect size ^a
	Native (n = 189)	Proficient (n = 82)	Advanced (n = 108)	Upper intermediate (n = 46)	Intermediate (n = 23)		
All 30 items	2.81 (.73)	3.11 (.83)	3.09 (.82)	3.06 (.75)	3.04 (.78)	3.57**	.03
Level 1 All	1.86 (.93)	2.29 (1.17)	2.37 (1.13)	2.16 (.90)	2.27 (.89)	4.89***	.05
Level 1 Grammatical	1.37 (.68)	1.56 (.80)	1.74 (.89)	1.82 (.92)	1.89 (1.01)	4.60**	.05
Level 1 Lexico-semantic	2.08 (1.09)	2.66 (1.41)	2.74 (1.33)	2.48 (1.18)	2.63 (1.10)	5.64***	.05
Level 2 All	2.22 (.71)	2.52 (.88)	2.64 (.87)	2.62 (.82)	2.77 (.90)	6.82***	.06
Level 2 Grammatical	1.95 (.70)	2.23 (.87)	2.40 (.92)	2.35 (.77)	2.59 (1.11)	7.60***	.06
Level 2 Lexico-semantic	2.85 (1.07)	3.09 (1.09)	3.09 (1.19)	3.13 (1.24)	3.17 (1.03)	1.46	
Level 3 All	3.84 (.93)	4.24 (.98)	4.08 (1.02)	4.22 (1.09)	3.87 (.90)	3.39**	.03
Level 3 Grammatical	3.44 (1.08)	4.07 (1.17)	3.79 (1.25)	4.02 (1.23)	3.65 (1.22)	5.42***	.05
Level 3 Lexico-semantic	4.12 (1.06)	4.36 (1.07)	4.30 (1.07)	4.36 (1.17)	4.04 (.94)	1.26	

**p < .01.

***p < .001.

7.3.6.2 Thai Participants

Table 7.15 Thai participants' attitudes towards Thai English mistakes and English proficiency (N = 789)

Level	<i>M (SD)</i>						F	Effect size ^a
	Proficient (n = 82)	Advanced (n = 198)	Upper intermediate (n = 234)	Intermediate (n = 63)	Elementary (n = 113)	Beginner (n = 99)		
All 30 items	3.73 (.90)	3.94 (.81)	3.99 (.86)	4.15 (.78)	4.04 (.99)	4.00 (1.05)	1.92	
Level 1 All	2.52 (1.21)	2.70 (1.25)	2.98 (1.30)	3.19 (1.21)	3.24 (1.29)	3.32 (1.43)	6.40***	.04
Level 1 Grammatical	2.27 (1.23)	2.50 (1.33)	2.86 (1.46)	2.99 (1.43)	3.02 (1.43)	3.28 (1.54)	6.90***	.04
Level 1 Lexico-semantic	2.67 (1.37)	2.83 (1.33)	3.08 (1.36)	3.37 (1.15)	3.42 (1.45)	3.35 (1.53)	5.27***	.03
Level 2 All	3.48 (1.11)	3.82 (.95)	3.83 (1.00)	4.02 (.90)	3.92 (1.08)	4.00 (1.07)	3.16**	.02
Level 2 Grammatical	3.58 (1.19)	3.97 (.98)	3.95 (1.01)	4.12 (.97)	4.05 (1.12)	4.09 (1.10)	2.98*	.02
Level 2 Lexo-semantic	3.32 (1.27)	3.53 (1.21)	3.62 (1.27)	3.80 (1.23)	3.64 (1.36)	3.80 (1.29)	1.71	
Level 3 All	4.78 (.87)	4.95 (.67)	4.88 (.76)	4.89 (.67)	4.72 (.97)	4.50 (.99)	4.95***	.03
Level 3 Grammatical	4.94 (1.10)	5.14 (.78)	4.91 (1.00)	4.95 (.86)	4.52 (1.18)	4.40 (1.34)	9.48***	.06
Level 3 Lexico-semantic	4.67 (.88)	4.84 (.79)	4.86 (.77)	4.85 (.77)	4.85 (.96)	4.56 (.91)	2.46*	.02

*p < .05

**p < .01.

***p < .001.

^aEta squared.

According to Table 7.15, it can be seen that in general, native speakers got the lowest mean scores, which meant that they considered Thai English mistakes on signs less serious than other groups of participants. The differences in mean scores reached a significant level at $p < .001$ with a moderate effect for the subcategories of Level 2: all items and Level 2: grammatical items; at $p < .001$ with a small effect for the subcategories of Level 1: all items, Level 1: lexico-semantic items and Level 3: grammatical items; and at $p < .01$ with a small effect for the subcategories of all items, Level 1: grammatical items and Level 3: all items.

As regards Turkey HSD post-hoc tests, the results show that mainly there were significant relationships between the mean scores of native speakers and those at proficient level and advanced level for the subcategories of all 30 items (both at $p < .05$); Level 1: all items at $p < .05$ for proficient level and at $p < .01$ for advanced level; Level 1: lexico-semantic items at $p < .01$ for proficient level and at $p < .001$ for advanced level.

For Level 1: grammatical items, the mean score of native speakers was significant with the groups of advanced, upper intermediate, and intermediate and below levels at $p < .05$. For Level 2: all items, the mean score of native speakers was significant with every group. For Level 2: grammatical items, the mean score of native speakers was significant with those at advanced level at $p < .001$, upper intermediate level and intermediate and below level at $p < .01$. For Level 3: all items, the mean score of native speakers was significant with those at proficient level at $p < .05$. Finally, for Level 3: grammatical items, the mean score of native speakers was significant with those at upper intermediate level at $p < .05$ and with those at proficient level at $p < .01$.

In summary, it can be concluded that native speakers considered Thai English mistakes on signs less serious than the other four groups of participants, so being native speakers could play a role in international participants' attitudes towards Thai English mistakes on signs in combination with other factors.

Table 7.16 shows that Thai participants at proficient level ($n = 82$) considered Thai English mistakes on signs less serious than the other five groups. The differences in mean scores reached a significant level at $p < .001$ with a moderate effect for the subcategory of Level 3: grammatical items; at $p < .001$ with a small effect for the subcategories of Level 1: all items, Level 1: grammatical items, Level 1: lexico-semantic items and Level 3: all items; at $p < .01$ with a small effect for the subcategory of Level 2:

all items and at $p < .05$ with a small effect for the subcategory of Level 2: grammatical items.

Regarding the results from the S-N-K post-hoc tests, for Level 1: all items and Level 1: grammatical items, the group of participants at proficient level had a significant relation with every group except the group of those at advanced level. For the subcategory of Level 1: lexico-semantic items, the groups of participants at proficient and advanced levels showed a significant relation with the groups of those at intermediate, elementary and beginner levels. For Level 2: all items and Level 2: grammatical items, the group of participants at proficient level, which provided the lowest mean scores had a significant relation with every other group of participants.

For Level 3: all items, Level 3: grammatical items and Level 3: lexico-semantic items, the group of participants at beginner level, which gave the lowest mean score, had a significant relation with every group. For Level 3: grammatical items, the group of participants at beginner level, who supplied the lowest mean score, had a significant relation with every group of participants except the group of those at elementary level, who got the second lowest score. In the same way, the group of participants at elementary level, who gave the lowest mean score, had a significant relation with every group of participants except the group of those at beginner level.

In summary, it can be concluded that Thai participants with a high English proficiency considered the items in Level 1 (no errors) and items in Level 2 (minor errors) less serious than other groups of participants. Conversely, Thai participants with lower English proficiency, especially the group of those at beginner level considered items in Level 3 (major errors) less serious than other groups.

7.3.6.3 All Participants

When combining both international participants and Thai participants for a bigger sample size, there were 1,237 participants ($N = 1237$) in total. There were seven groups of participants, namely native speakers ($n = 189$), proficient ($n = 164$), advanced ($n = 306$), upper intermediate ($n = 280$), intermediate ($n = 78$), elementary ($n = 118$), and beginner ($n = 10$).

Table 7.16 All participants' attitudes towards Thai English mistakes and English proficiency (N = 1, 237)

Level	<i>M (SD)</i>							F	Effect size ^a
	Native (n = 189)	Proficient (n = 164)	Advanced (n = 306)	Upper intermediate (n = 280)	Intermediate (n = 78)	Elementary (n = 118)	Beginner (n = 102)		
All 30 items	2.81 (.73)	3.42 (.92)	3.64 (.91)	3.84 (.91)	3.92 (.88)	4.01 (1.01)	3.96 (1.05)	36.54***	.15
Level 1 All	1.86 (.93)	2.40 (1.19)	2.59 (1.22)	2.85 (1.28)	2.99 (1.19)	3.21 (1.29)	3.28 (1.43)	23.60***	.11
Level 1 Grammatical	1.37 (.68)	1.93 (1.10)	2.25 (1.26)	2.69 (1.44)	2.72 (1.42)	3.00 (1.44)	3.24 (1.54)	30.73***	.14
Level 1 Lexico-semantic	2.08 (1.09)	2.67 (1.38)	2.80 (1.33)	2.98 (1.35)	3.24 (1.15)	3.39 (1.44)	3.30 (1.53)	15.83***	.08
Level 2 All	2.22 (.71)	3.00 (1.11)	3.40 (1.08)	3.63 (1.07)	3.74 (1.03)	3.90 (1.09)	3.96 (1.09)	57.68***	.22
Level 2 Grammatical	1.95 (.70)	2.91 (1.24)	3.41 (1.22)	3.68 (1.14)	3.77 (1.17)	4.03 (1.15)	4.04 (1.12)	73.20***	.26
Level 2 Lexico-semantic	2.85 (1.07)	3.21 (1.19)	3.38 (1.22)	3.54 (1.28)	3.68 (1.22)	3.62 (1.35)	3.78 (1.28)	10.43***	.05
Level 3 All	3.84 (.93)	4.51 (.96)	4.65 (.91)	4.77 (.85)	4.69 (.81)	4.70 (.98)	4.47 (1.00)	23.04***	.10
Level 3 Grammatical	3.44 (1.08)	4.51 (1.21)	4.66 (1.17)	4.76 (1.09)	4.71 (1.05)	4.51 (1.18)	4.35 (1.37)	30.16***	.13
Level 3 Lexico-semantic	4.12 (1.06)	4.51 (.99)	4.65 (.93)	4.78 (.86)	4.67 (.86)	4.82 (.98)	4.56 (.90)	11.36***	.05

***p < .001.

^aEta squared.

Based on Table 7.17, the results obviously showed that native speakers considered Thai English mistakes on signs less serious than the other groups of participants because they awarded the lowest mean scores across the ten subcategories; participants at proficient level gave the second lowest mean scores across the ten subcategories. However, it cannot be assumed that the better level of English the participants had, the less serious they considered Thai English features on signs, because the groups of participants at beginners, elementary, and upper-intermediate levels provided the highest mean scores for different subcategories.

The differences in mean scores across the ten subcategories reached at significant level at $p < .001$ with a large effect for the subcategories of all items, Level 1: grammatical items, Level 2: all items and Level 2: grammatical items; at $p < .001$ with a moderate effect for the subcategories of Level 1: all items, Level 1: lexico-semantic items, Level 3: all items, and Level 3: grammatical items; and at $p < .001$ with a small effect for Level 2: lexico-semantic items and Level 3: lexico-semantic items.

The S-N-K post-hoc tests showed that the group of native speakers had a significant relationship with every other single group across nine subcategories, namely all 30 items, Level 1: all items, Level 1: grammatical items, Level 1: lexico-semantic items, Level 2: all items, Level 2: grammatical items, Level 2: lexico-semantic items, Level 3: all items, and Level 3: lexico-semantic items. There was only one subcategory, Level 3: grammatical items, showing a significant relationship between the group of native speakers and the groups of participants at beginner level and those at elementary level only.

In addition, the group of participants at proficient level showed a significant relationship with every other group for the subcategories of all 30 items, Level 1: grammatical items, Level 2: all items, and Level 2: grammatical items.

Generally, the group of participants at proficient level did not usually show a significant relation with the group of those at advanced level. In the same way, the group of participants at upper intermediate level did not show a significant relation with the group of those at intermediate level. Finally, the group of participants at elementary level and those at beginner level did not often show a significant relation with each other.

In summary, it can be concluded that participants' English proficiency had a key effect on their attitudes towards Thai English mistakes on signs. In general, native speakers and participants having high English proficiency considered mistakes in Thai English less serious than other groups of participants with lower English proficiency. Native speakers tended to have higher tolerance towards Thai English mistakes on signs than other groups of participants, particularly when Thai English mistakes contained minor errors.

7.4 Findings from the Study

According to the statistical analysis and interview data, the study about the international participants' attitudes towards Thai English mistakes on signs in tourist domains in Thailand reveals findings as follows:

First of all, international participants considered Thai English mistakes less serious than Thai participants did. In addition, international participants revealed that they also brought other contexts, such as the location of the sign, font size, and material of the sign into account to guess the intended meanings of the messages. Furthermore, they accepted that the best way to confirm whether they got the message right was to ask local people for further explanation, but it would, of course, be better if the messages on signs could be clear enough on their own.

Second, the results showed that international participants who had been to Thailand considered Thai English mistakes on signs less serious than those who had never been to Thailand, and the differences in mean scores between both groups reached a significant level for the items with minor errors and the items with major errors. The study found that participants who had been to Thailand may be familiar with Thai contexts more than those who had never been to Thailand, so the former considered Thai English mistakes on signs less serious than the latter for the items containing minor errors and containing major errors. However, this was not a key factor.

Third, for both international and Thai participants, female participants considered Thai English mistakes on signs more serious than male participants. However, when considering the significant levels, the effect sizes and the data from the participant interviews, the differences in mean scores among the two genders did not have a marked effect on their attitudes towards Thai English mistakes on signs.

Fourth, European participants considered Thai English messages with no errors (Level 1) and minor errors (Level 2) on signs less serious than Asian participants. On closer inspection, the main reason behind the lower mean scores of European participants was native speakers who did not usually see Thai English mistakes on signs as serious because it was fairly easy for them to guess the meanings of ambiguous signs. However, if signs contained major errors, both participants from Asia and Europe considered these items quite serious.

Fifth, native speakers considered Thai English mistakes on signs less serious than non-native speakers. Based on the interviews, it was a matter of knowing right forms and the original meanings of the distorted messages because native speakers were more confident to say whether the mistakes on signs were intelligible or not than those who were unsure about the original forms and meanings of the erroneous messages.

Regarding age, overall, for international participants, those aged 45 years old and over considered the erroneous English messages on signs less serious than the other groups. The interview data revealed that international participants at 45 years old and over travelled to many more countries than those at younger ages, so they were more familiar with varieties of English worldwide. For Thai participants, on the other hand, the group of participants aged 45 years old and over considered Thai English mistakes on signs more serious than the other groups because they did not have many chances of exposure to varieties of English as younger generations did. Hence, they tended to stick with the right forms and associated grammatical rules. However, age did not appear to be a key factor contributing to participants' attitudes towards Thai English mistakes on signs.

Seventh, the majority of Thai participants acknowledged that the use of translation software did not help to convey the original meanings of the messages to non-Thai audience because there are many homophones and homographs in Thai language. Translation software often picks up wrong word choices, which could significantly mislead non-Thai people who read the messages. In the same way, international participants accepted that they could not understand Thai English messages translated by translation software, and they also considered these items serious and noted that they should be corrected as soon as possible.

Finally, the participants' attitudes towards Thai English mistakes on signs showed a close relation with participants' intelligibility of Thai English messages in an opposite

direction. If the participants could understand the intended messages well, they would consider the mistakes not serious. On the other hand, if the Thai English message was ambiguous, they would consider the mistake fairly serious. It can be concluded that participants' attitudes towards Thai English mistakes on signs could be high or low depending on their perception of intelligibility of the messages.

7.5 Conclusion

In response to the research questions in Section 7.1, the conclusion of the study about participants' attitudes towards Thai English mistakes on signs is as follows:

First, international and Thai participants had different perspectives towards Thai English mistakes on signs. The study showed that international participants considered Thai English mistakes containing no errors and minor errors less serious than Thai participants. In addition, international participants viewed the mistakes on signs as part of the use of English as a lingua franca around the world. So, for international participants, the word 'serious' seemed to mean 'serious impediment to comprehension'; as long as the overseas participants could still get the gist of the sign or the erroneous part did not mislead them, they still considered the item not very serious. Thai participants, on the other hand, viewed the word 'serious' as 'an embarrassing or shameful display' on signs.

Second, participants who had been to Thailand and had never been to Thailand had different perceptions towards Thai English mistakes on signs. Those who had been to Thailand tended to consider the items with minor errors (Level 2) and major errors (Level 3) less serious than did those who had never been to Thailand. This could be because they could negotiate the meanings of the signs, especially the items with minor errors under lexico-semantic features, better than those who had never been to Thailand. However, the results were statistically significant with only a small effect. Hence, participants' trip to Thailand was not a key factor contributing to participants' attitudes towards Thai English mistakes on signs.

Third, Asian participants and European participants had different perceptions towards Thai English mistakes on signs. European participants considered Thai English mistakes on signs less serious than non-European participants did especially when the items contained no errors and minor errors with grammatical features. However, if the items contained major errors, especially the google translated items, all participants

would consider these items serious and think that they should be corrected as soon as possible

Finally, among different variables, the study found that English proficiency played a key role in participants' attitudes towards Thai English mistakes on signs. The results showed that native speakers viewed Thai English mistakes as less serious than participants with low English proficiency. In addition, participants with high English proficiency also considered the mistakes on signs less serious than participants with low English proficiency. The differences in mean scores reached a significant level with a large effect for Level 1: all items, Level 2: all items and Level 2: grammatical items. It can be concluded that native speakers of English had higher tolerance of Thai English mistakes than the other groups of participants as they also expected to see non-Standard English in Thailand as part of English as a lingua franca worldwide.

Chapter 8 Discussion

This chapter discusses the implications of the research. It includes the limitations of the research and suggestions for further research.

8.1 Areas of Application

It is hoped that the areas of application of this research can be useful in both the academic world and the real world as follows:

8.1.1 A Guideline for English Teachers in Thailand

First, as there are not many pieces of research into the intelligibility of Thai English, the results and findings could act as a guideline for English teachers in Thailand to update their lessons according to the real usage of English for communication in Thailand. Due to the fact that English teachers, especially those who are Thai, usually prioritise grammatical rules over communicative competence, Thai students suffer from a lack of confidence when they have to speak English or use English because they are afraid of making grammatical mistakes and being looked down.

The results from Chapters 5-7, on the other hand, showed that although Thai English could sometimes lead to miscommunication, some issues, especially inflections of verbs and nouns and misspellings, did not much change the meanings of the original messages, and audience could still understand the messages with these errors. Therefore, in this case, English teachers in Thailand should not be too pedantic about some minor grammatical points that students make in class as long as they do not change the original meanings of the messages. If students are not corrected all the time, they should be more confident when using English for communicative purpose. This would encourage Thai learners of English to use English more fluently and serve the purpose of using English for communication. In addition, English teachers should encourage students to use English by telling students not to care too much about grammatical rules as long as it is communicative. After learners are confident to express their ideas in English, the grammatical issues can be focused on later to make their sentences better and more meaningful.

8.1.2 The Use of Signs as Authentic Materials

The second contribution of this research to the academic world is the use of signs as authentic materials in class as examples for English learners to link what they have learned to what exists in the real world. Across 10 years' experience being an English teacher, the researcher and colleagues have found a common problem; learners cannot make use of the grammatical points, word lists, idioms and other conversational models in the textbooks in their everyday life. They still have many problems when it is time to use English for communication. The researcher and colleagues have tried adapting signs containing Thai English as authentic materials in class to raise learners' awareness of how Thai English or the lack of a careful proofread of English signs can affect a communication between the Thais and their visitors in their real life.

It has been found that Thai English signs help to make students more careful when using English, especially written language, because they claim that they did not want to embarrass themselves by using words that do not fit the context, or by misspelling them. In addition, in some classes, learners are assigned to find a sign containing different features of Thai English in their neighbourhood in order learn how English is used outside classroom and analyse why a Thai English message is there. This activity has encouraged learners to adapt their theoretical knowledge to the real usage of English. It has been found that students enjoy doing this activity as well as analysing the data from their perspective in comparison with their classmates. Hence, if the technique of using signs as part of teaching materials works for us, it should also yield a positive result in other countries. So, it should be worthwhile for English teachers in other countries to play with signs as they are authentic materials with no additional cost like software or textbooks.

8.1.3 A Theoretical Model for Future Research

This research could act as a theoretical model for those who are interested in doing research about English as a lingua franca and world English varieties. Due to the further integration of the ten members of The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), which aims to transform the region into a single market (ASEAN Secretariat, 2013), English is considered to be the only official language of the association, as the ten members of ASEAN, namely Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and

Vietnam, have different mother tongues (ASEAN Secretariat, 2013). Currently, more studies are needed concerning the variety of English used in each nation state to enhance better understandings among members (Kirkpatrick, 2010). This research could be of use for researchers from this region because other varieties of English may share some similarities with Thai English. Such a comparison and contrast study may give further insights into varieties of English in Southeast Asia in particular.

8.1.4 A Source of Information for Scholars and Public

In December 2013, the Facebook page *Thai English*³ was started to share the photos of Thai English signs to public (see Appendix 10). As it is a bilingual page, the page has both Thai and international members totalling over 3,000 people. When a photo of an erroneous sign is published along with an explanation of the mistakes. For Thai people, they will learn the right word, or a more suitable phrase if they want the sign to convey what they want to say to international audience. In the same way, non-Thai people can learn more about Thai culture and Thai language affecting the existence of the mistake on the sign. The page has had positive comments and thank-you messages from some members. They all said that the page is very useful as they can learn something from each post.

8.1.5 Enhancing More Successful Communication between Thai and Non-Thai Speakers

When the research is published, it should help to raise awareness of Thai people, for whom English is not their mother tongue, when using English in Thai contexts. This could help to enhance more successful communication between the Thai people and overseas visitors who are unfamiliar with Thai contexts. In addition, the findings should likewise be of use for visitors to Thailand to be more aware of socio-cultural contexts attached to the English language of Thai users. Hence, the communication gaps between the Thai people and international visitors could be bridged or at least minimised if the findings are applied appropriately.

³ www.facebook.com/ELFonsigns

8.1.6 A Guidance for Thai Government

The Royal Thai government could use this research as a guidance for pursuing further research to improve English proficiency of Thai people. As Thailand mainly earns from tourism, the government should provide supports for enhancing Thai people's abilities to successfully communicate with non-Thai people through English. In this case, the government may have to go back to review the education policy and curriculum so that, in the long run, Thai people can be successful learners of English. However, in the meantime, the government should provide correct English patterns that can commonly be found on signs and make them available online so that the problems with translation from Thai into English could be reduced. In addition, the government could also provide online support for Thai people who need help with translations, such as allowing them to leave a message if they have questions about English translation. Then the government should provide professional translators or native speakers to help these people out. If Thai people can have this option, they would not have to rely on translation software and this would more or less help to reduce the number of Thai English mistakes on signs.

8.2 Limitations of the Research

This research has four main limitations as follows:

The first limitation is the areas for data collection. The results and findings from this research were based on the data from only 40 tourist domains in five provinces in Thailand because, as the researcher was mainly based in England, the time for data collection was quite limited. The research could have collected more data and included more tourist domains due to the fact that Thailand has 76 provinces. If there had been more time, at least two provinces in each region should have been visited; the more data that are collected, the more reliable the results.

Second, as this research focuses only on the written language, it is lacking in information about the spoken English language of Thai people. Some issues, especially misspelling and punctuation marks, would no longer be an issue when Thai people speak English. Instead, there should be some other issues, such as the pronunciation of certain sounds, that could lead to misunderstanding between Thai and non-Thai people. To have a complete study about the features of Thai English, spoken language should be included.

Finally, the use of other theories, such as discourse analysis, and other way to collect the data, such as ethnography, could offer different results or make the findings more interesting, since the same set of data can yield different results when being analysed or interpreted by a different researcher, tool, or theory. If this research had been done by other professional researchers, they might have been able to offer insightful views or interesting findings and results from other perspectives.

8.3 Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the limitations of the research, there are many areas for other researchers to explore as follows:

First, as this research has covered tourist domains, future researchers are advised to focus a study in different domains particularly government offices and business venues, as the findings from this research have indicated the influence of location on the intelligibility of Thai English signs. Alternatively, a similar piece of research but with a focus on the attitudes of sign makers and sign owners is also worth investigating. In addition, the data should be collected from more provinces and tourist domains to make the results more reliable.

Second, as this research has focused on the features of Thai English on signs, a written form, spoken Thai English still needs to be studied, for there might be other factors involved which may yield another interesting insight into the characteristics of Thai English.

Finally, a comparative study to this research could also be done. For example, a Thai researcher might use the same tools, i.e. the online questionnaire and in-depth interviews, but collect the data from other provinces. The results could be different based on the data collection sites and the researcher's background. On the other hand, it would also be interesting if other theoretical frameworks or tools are used for data collection and data analysis, as they should be able to present the results and findings from different perspectives.

Chapter 9 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter presents a summary of the whole thesis and a conclusion.

9.1 Summary

The research project titled *English as a Lingua Franca in Thailand: A Case Study of English Used on Signs in Tourist Domains* has eventually reached its final part.

Chapter 1 has set out the background knowledge regarding the main frameworks used along the whole thesis for the readers followed by the description of the research project. It has also presented the main research aims and research questions followed by the rationale of this research and the organisation of all the chapters in the thesis.

Chapter 2 has given the definitions of the terms World Englishes (WE), English as a lingua franca (ELF), English as an international language (EIL) and Standard English (SE) for a clear understanding from the beginning. Then it has moved on to the area of global English in terms of English around the world, English in Asia and English in Thailand. This chapter has also mentioned the literature regarding linguistic landscape (LL) in general, linguistic landscape in Asia and linguistic landscape in Thailand.

Chapter 3 starts with the discussion about research methodology ranging from quantitative methods, qualitative methods to mixed methods or the combination of the two original paradigms. It has then discussed the features of English as a lingua franca on signs in Thailand in comparison with the existing categories of English as a lingua franca and World Englishes. This chapter has presented the findings about the characteristics of Thai English and the features of linguistic landscape (LL) on signs in Thai tourist domains.

Chapter 4 has presented all the important information about the online questionnaire used in the three studies in Chapters 5-7. It has started with the information about the suitability of the questionnaire followed by the development of the questionnaire. It has given the detailed information about the research participants who did the online questionnaire as well as the information about 51 interviewees. The Chapter has included the reliability analysis of the second version of the online questionnaire and the methods used for data analysis.

Chapter 5, Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 have quantitatively and qualitatively presented the results based on the online questionnaire done by 456 international and 810 Thai participants regarding the participants' intelligibility of Thai English (Chapter 5), the extent of the correct recognition of the meanings of the signs (Chapter 6) and participants' attitudes towards Thai English mistakes on signs (Chapter 7).

Chapter 8 presents the implications of the research, limitations of the research and suggestions for further research while Chapter 9 gives a summary and a conclusion of the whole research.

In response to the research questions and hypotheses, this section summarises all the main findings as follows:

First, the main characteristics of English used by Thai people on signs in Thai tourist domains were classified based on the preceding literature into English as a lingua franca (ELF) and World Englishes (WE). The results showed both common characteristics of Thai English and other varieties of Englishes and also unique features of Thai English contributing to the areas of English as a lingua franca and World Englishes. The features of English used by Thai users in Thailand are divided into grammatical features and lexico-semantic features with the total of nine subcategories. For grammatical features, there are five subcategories, namely 1) misspelling, 2) parts of speech (conversion), 3) inflection, 4) punctuation marks, spacing and capitalization and 5) ellipsis. For lexico-semantic features, there are four subcategories, namely 1) translation, 2) transliteration, 3) Thainess and 4) word choices and creativity. In addition, the research has found some unique features of Thai signs in terms of orthography, the use of colours, pictures and symbols intended to be meaningful, the influence of American English and the influence of the main religion, Buddhism

Second, in general, Thai English was fairly intelligible to non-Thai speakers. In addition, international participants could understand Thai English better than Thai participants expected. Furthermore, based on the interviews with international respondents, Thai English items with grammatical features could be more easily understood than the items with lexico-semantic features.

Third, when Thai English messages on signs contained no errors and minor errors, native speakers of English could understand Thai English better than non-native speakers,

and they also had better correct recognition scores than non-native speakers, too. In addition, they also considered Thai English mistakes on signs less serious than non-native speakers. The study found that native speakers of English could negotiate the meanings of Thai English better than non-native speakers and were more tolerant towards Thai English mistakes of signs than non-native speakers. In addition, native speakers also expected to see some non-Standard English on signs in Thailand as part of English as a lingua franca worldwide.

Fourth, despite seeing grammatical mistakes or lexico-semantic mistakes on signs, as long as international participants, especially native speakers could still understand the gist of the messages, they would not consider the items problematic. However, if the messages were ambiguous and could mislead them, participants would consider these items problematic. They would try to guess the intended meanings by considering contexts, such as pictures and locations of signs into account. In addition, if possible, they would also ask local people for further clarification to ensure that they got the messages right.

Fifth, international participants considered Thai English mistakes serious when they could not understand the messages on the signs while Thai participants considered the mistakes on signs serious when they contained grammatical mistakes, especially misspelling. Therefore, the international participants tended to view the word serious as serious impediment to comprehension while the Thai participants took a mistake on signs as an embarrassing display.

Sixth, using translation software to translate messages from Thai into English did not help to convey intended meanings to the audience. On the contrary, it could mislead the audience due to literal translation or selection of the wrong word choices.

Finally, among the varieties, native and non-native English background as well as English proficiency played a key role in participants' Thai English intelligibly, the extent of participants' correct recognition of the meanings of the signs, and participants' attitudes towards Thai English messages on signs. Native English speakers and participants with high English proficiency could understand Thai English better, get higher scores of correct recognition and consider Thai English mistakes on signs less serious than the participants with low English proficiency. Other factors like gender, age,

trip to Thailand and geographic origin also sometimes played a role but mainly with a small effect.

9.2 Conclusion

The research has concluded that international participants mainly based the intelligibility score with the meanings of the signs. In addition, Thai participants tended to be pedantic about grammatical forms more-so than overseas participants. Thai English signs with grammatical errors could be more easily understood and were considered less serious than those with lexicio-semantic features. Moreover, the results have also reflected that native speakers of English had more flexibility with erroneous messages, especially those with spelling mistakes, than non-native speakers and Thai speakers. The studies have concluded that Asian participants could not understand Thai English better and did not consider mistakes in Thai English messages less serious than European participants. Instead, they appeared to be more pedantic and focused more on the forms of the erroneous messages rather than the meanings like Thai participants did. Both native and non-native speakers found it difficult to understand Thai English messages with major errors, especially those translated by translation software. Finally, the studies have revealed that Thai participants as well as presumably sign makers were unaware that it would be fairly difficult for non-Thai participants to understand English used in Thai contexts. They were also unaware that poor translations could lead to misunderstanding and the lack of proofreading could embarrass them and the country. Thai participants accepted that the research into Thai English helped to raise their awareness of using English in Thai contexts on signs and in their everyday life while international participants revealed that this research helped to make them understand the use of English as a lingua franca in Thailand better.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Background Information: Summary of Interviews with Shop Assistants, Sign Makers, and Government Officers

Appendix 1 provides background information regarding Thai English on signs based on the interviews with 1) shop assistants and shop owners, 2) sign makers, and 3) government officers in August 2014. The key information from each group is summarized below.

1. Shop Assistants and Shop Owners

It is expected that interviewing shop assistants and shop owners should be able to elicit the information about the importance of having signs in English (or other foreign languages).

To know the chief reason why English was chosen to be on the signs, the interviews with three shop assistants and two shop owners at Platinum Shopping Mall were conducted. Many signs at the time of data collection were non-permanent or handwritten. Most of the shop assistants are able to use English (in their own way) for communication – just to sell their products and handle price negotiation.

During the conversations, the interviewees were asked the following questions:

- 1) Who made the sign(s)?
- 2) What are the factors of choosing the language(s) to be used?
- 3) Is the presence of English on the sign aimed at international visitors or not?

In the case of Thai English signs, the interviewees were also asked 4) whether they realised that the sign displaying non-Standard English or not. The summary of the answers from the questions can be found below:

1) Who made the sign?

According to the interviews, in terms of permanent signs, usually the shops paid for a sign maker to do it. However, it was the shop owner who decided what to be displayed on the signs first. Then, they went to a sign maker, which could be found around the country. It usually took 2-3 days for the sign to be done

depending on the material of the sign, such as, wood, plastic, iron. Nevertheless, in terms of the non-permanent signs, the shop owner/ assistant made their own signs to save money.

2) *What are the factors of choosing the language(s) to be used?*

English was chosen because it could reach wider groups of customers. Furthermore, to have a shop name in English made it easier for customers of remember the name of the shop rather than to have a name in Thai or another language.

However, at Platinum Mall, the majority of shop assistants did not pay attention to the form. They viewed that as long as it could make their communication effective, no correction was needed, as their main customers were not English native speakers.

3) *Is the presence of English on the sign aimed at international visitors or not?*

The answer was ‘mainly yes but not always’. Sometimes English messages were also used for a decorative purpose.

2. A Sign Maker

The interviewees were asked about 1) the process of signs making, 2) the English translation on the signs, 3) spelling mistakes, 4) the proportion of English signs, Thai signs and signs in other languages.

According to the interview, when the company/ shop got an order from a customer, they would ask the customer to send them what they wanted to be displayed on the sign and how they wanted the sign to be like. If the customer wanted the company/the shop to design the sign for them, an extra charge would be applied.

The artwork department dealt with all the colours, fonts and messages on the sign. After the artwork department finished the draft, the draft would be sent to the customer for confirmation or correction. The sign would not be printed or made until the customer confirms that everything was exactly what the customers wanted. Generally, it took about 2-3 days for a sign to be finished. However, for

some printed signs, such as posters, it might take less than a day. For the case of the signs made by irons or aluminium, it might take from three days up to a week, as the maker has to make the iron into different shapes to create words.

The manager revealed that at his company, the proofreading must have been done to make sure that everything was correct or as the customer wanted before the work was sent to the art department. However, it was the manager who did the proofreading. He admitted that his English level might not be advanced, as he got a degree in Business from China. However, as having been working in the field for 5 years, he found some similar patterns of the messages on the signs. If he found any English word with a spelling mistake or the word that was not familiar to him, he would contact the customer to ensure that the presence of the word was intended, or it was just a spelling mistake.

Based on the interview data, it can be assumed that the English level of proof-readers might not be adequate to detect the use of non-Standard English. Hence, this can result in the presence of non-Standard English on signs.

Regarding the proportion of languages on the signs, it was revealed that Thai and English appeared to be the first two frequent languages to be printed, made and displayed on signs. Chinese was the third popular language to be printed.

3. Government Officers

As most of the government signs are permanent, the existence of English used in Thai contexts may last for decades or at least a few years.

The interview with two officers of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand in the department that is responsible for sign making in tourist places around the country were conducted. The questions used for the interviews are as follows:

- 1) Do the translator(s) of signs in tourist attractions in Thailand have to have a linguistic degree or a degree in English?
- 2) What is the story of a sign from the beginning until it is placed in a tourist attraction?

- 3) What are the factors relating to the presence of languages on the signs?
- 4) As Thailand has only one official language, why English is chosen to be used on signs along with Thai? Apart from English, is there any other foreign language?

Based on the interview, it was not necessary that a translator had to hold a degree in English or linguistics, but they should have good knowledge of English.

In terms of the story of a sign, there were five main processes.

1) Firstly, it was a duty of a surveying team to go around the country and report which routes, roads, and places needed to have signs and for how many.

2) Secondly, it was the process of sign designing. Generally, all signs along the roads in Thailand were followed the standards and regulations of the Department of Highways. The regulations state about the sizes of the signs, the colours and the letter font sizes. Therefore, if there was any new sign present, it should go under the same standards and regulations.

3) Then, the third step was to contact the authorities for permission before the sign could be placed. For example, if the sign needed to be placed along the main road, the permission from the Department of Highways was needed.

4) Fourthly, to ensure that the sign made follows the regulations and the message was right. Finally, the last step was to put the sign on the place.

For the factors about the presence of languages on the signs, generally there were only Thai and English. However, in some attractions, there might be tourists from particular countries, such as, China, Japan, and Russia. Therefore, another foreign language might be added to make it more convenient for those foreign visitors who cannot fully understand English.

The reason why English was chosen to be on the signs along with Thai was because English is the international language, so it can reach wider groups of visitors than other languages. Besides, Chinese and Japanese were also considered to be the third and the fourth languages to be on the signs, as recently, the numbers of tourists from these countries highly increase.

Appendix 2 TOEFL vs. IELTS Score Comparison Chart

IELTS Band	TOEFL- iBT
0–4	0–31
4.5	32–34
5.0	35–45
5.5	46–59
6.0	60–78
6.5	79–93
7.0	94–101
7.5	102–109
8.0	110–114
8.5	115–117
9.0	118–120

Source: Educational Testing Service (ETS) web page

(Educational Testing Service, 2013)

Appendix 3 English Proficiency: The Common European Framework Levels: Global Scale

C2 Proficiency (or Proficient as used in this research)	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
C1 Advanced	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/ herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
B2 Upper intermediate	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
B1 Intermediate	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
A2 Beginner	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
A1 Elementary	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

Source: Council of Europe (2013: 24)

Appendix 4 Nationalities of Participants

No.	Nationality	Number of participants	Percent	No.	Nationality	Number of participants	Percent
1	American	62	13.6	31	Lithuanian	1	.2
2	Argentinian	1	.2	32	Luxemburgish	1	.2
3	Australian	8	1.8	33	Malaysian	12	2.6
4	Belgium	1	.2	34	Myanmar	2	.4
5	Bhutanese	1	.2	35	New	3	.7
6	Brazilian	4	.9	36	Nigerian	2	.4
7	British	109	23.9	37	Norwegian	2	.4
8	Canadian	10	2.2	38	Peruvian	1	.2
9	Chinese	42	9.2	39	Polish	6	1.3
10	Colombian	2	.4	40	Portuguese	4	.9
11	Dominican	1	.2	41	Romanian	3	.7
12	Dutch	11	2.4	42	Russian	5	1.1
13	El Salvador	1	.2	43	Saudi	4	.9
14	Filipino	2	.4	44	Serbian	1	.2
15	French	8	1.8	45	Singaporean	3	.7
16	German	22	4.8	46	South African	2	.4
17	Greek	3	.7	47	South Korean	6	1.3
18	Hong Kong	3	.7	48	Spanish	2	.4
19	Hungarian	1	.2	49	Sudanese	1	.2
20	India	10	2.2	50	Swedish	1	.2
21	Indonesian	2	.4	51	Swiss	3	.7
22	Iranian	11	2.4	52	Syrian	1	.2
23	Iraqi	4	.9	53	Taiwanese	9	2.0
24	Irish	4	.9	54	Trinidadian	1	.2
25	Italian	5	1.1	55	Uzbek	1	.2
26	Japanese	14	3.1	56	Vietnamese	7	1.5
27	Kazakh	3	.7	57	Czech	2	.4
28	Kuwaiti	1	.2	58	Austrian	1	.2
29	Laotian	1	.2	59	Mexican	1	.2
30	Libyan	1	.2		Missing	20	4.4
				Total			
				456			
				100.0			

Appendix 5 Online Questionnaire

The Use of English on Signs in Tourist Domains in Thailand

I. Information sheet

7%

First of all, I would like to thank you for your time to participate in this survey. The purposes of this study are to find out about 1) your understanding and 2) your attitude toward English used in Thailand.

This survey is part of a PhD research project titled 'English as a Lingua Franca: A Case Study of English Used on Signs in Tourist Domains in Thailand' under School of English, The University of Nottingham (UK).

There are 30 items in the questionnaire. It should take about 10 minutes of your time to complete the survey. Please answer 'all' the questions if possible. All data collected in this survey will be held anonymously and securely. No personal data is asked for or retained. Cookies, personal data stored by this Web browser, are not used in this survey.

In order to participate in this study, you need to be at least 18 years old. If you are under 18, please do not continue to the next page.

If you have any queries regarding the study, please do not hesitate to email Wipapan (Jib) Ngampramuan at aexwn@nottingham.ac.uk before starting doing the survey.

Next

Powered by **SurveyMonkey**
Check out our [sample surveys](#) and create your own now!

II. Consent form

14%

Please read and tick "all" the boxes if you have agreed to do the survey.

☐ I confirm that the purpose of the study has been explained and that I have understood it.

☐ I have had the opportunity to ask questions and they have been successfully answered.

☐ I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a reason and without consequence.


☐ I understand that all data are anonymous and that there will not be any connection between the personal information provided and the data.

☐ I understand that there are no known risks or hazards associated with participating in this study.

☐ I confirm that I have read and understood the above information and that I agree to participate in this study.

Prev Next

1. You see this sign at an airline counter at the airport.



1.1 How well do you understand the English message on the sign?

1 incomprehensible 2 3 4 5 6 comprehensible

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

1.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the English version?

☐ Yes

☐ No

1.3 If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?

1 not serious at all 2 3 4 5 6 very serious

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

2. You see this sign near the market.



2.1 How well do you understand the English message (highlighted in red) on the sign?

1 incomprehensible 2 3 4 5 6 comprehensible

2.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the English version?

☐ Yes
☐ No

2.3 If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?

1 not serious at all 2 3 4 5 6 very serious

3. You see this sign at a cashier counter in a boutique.



3.1 How well do you understand the English message on the sign?

1 incomprehensible 2 3 4 5 6 comprehensible

3.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the English version?

☐ Yes
☐ No

3.3 If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?

1 not serious at all 2 3 4 5 6 very serious

4. You see this sign in front of the market called Ayothaya.



4.1 How well do you understand the underlined English message on the sign?

1 incomprehensible 2 3 4 5 6 comprehensible

4.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the underlined message?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

4.3 If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?

1 not serious at all 2 3 4 5 6 very serious

5. You see this sign at a cashier counter in a shop.



5.1 How well do you understand the English message on the sign?

1 incomprehensible 2 3 4 5 6 comprehensible

5.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the English version?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

5.3 If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?

1 not serious at all 2 3 4 5 6 very serious

6. You see this notebook in a souvenir shop.



6.1 How well do you understand the English message in the photo?

1 incomprehensible 2 3 4 5 6 comprehensible

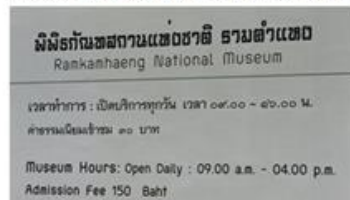
6.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the English version?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

6.3 If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?

1 not serious at all 2 3 4 5 6 very serious

7. You see this sign in front of a museum called Ramkamhaeng.



7.1 How well do you understand the English message on the sign?

1 incomprehensible 2 3 4 5 6 comprehensible

7.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the English version?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

7.3 If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?

1 not serious at all 2 3 4 5 6 very serious

8. You see this sign at a cafeteria in a shopping complex.



8.1 How well do you understand the English message on the sign?

1 incomprehensible 2 3 4 5 6 comprehensible

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

8.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the message?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

8.3 If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?

1 not serious at all 2 3 4 5 6 very serious

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

9. You see the sign 'Please Take Off Your Shoes' in front of a toilet/ a restroom.



9.1 How well do you understand the English messages on the signs?

1 incomprehensible 2 3 4 5 6 comprehensible

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

9.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the English version?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

9.3 If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?

1 not serious at all 2 3 4 5 6 very serious

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

10. You see this sign along a pedestrian bridge.



10.1 How well do you understand the English message on the sign?

1 incomprehensible 2 3 4 5 6 comprehensible

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

10.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the English version?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

10.3 If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?

1 not serious at all 2 3 4 5 6 very serious

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

11. You see this sign in front of a restaurant.



11.1 How well do you understand the English message (highlighted in red) on the sign?

1 incomprehensible 2 3 4 5 6 comprehensible

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

11.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the message highlighted?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

11.3 If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?

1 not serious at all 2 3 4 5 6 very serious

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

12. You see this sign near the exit of an elevated train station.



12.1 How well do you understand the English message on the sign?

1 incomprehensible 2 3 4 5 6 comprehensible

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

12.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the English version?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

12.3 If there is a problem with the English message, how serious do you think it is?

1 not serious at all 2 3 4 5 6 very serious

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

13. You see this sign at a food counter in a supermarket.



13.1 How well do you understand the English message on the sign?

1 incomprehensible 2 3 4 5 6 comprehensible

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

13.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the English version?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

13.3 If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?

1 not serious at all 2 3 4 5 6 very serious

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

14. You see this sign at a souvenir shop in the market.



14.1 How well do you understand the English message (highlighted in red) on the sign?

1 incomprehensible 2 3 4 5 6 comprehensible

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

14.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the message highlighted?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

14.3 If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?

1 not serious at all 2 3 4 5 6 very serious

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

15. You see this sign near a bell at the entrance of a toilet/ a restroom.



15.1 How well do you understand the English message on the sign?

1 incomprehensible 2 3 4 5 6 comprehensible

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

15.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the English version?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

15.3 If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?

1 not serious at all 2 3 4 5 6 very serious

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

16. You see this sign at a parking lot/ a car park.



16.1 How well do you understand the English message on the sign?

1 incomprehensible 2 3 4 5 6 comprehensible

16.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the English version?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

16.3 If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?

1 not serious at all 2 3 4 5 6 very serious

17. You see this sign near a departure gate at the airport.



17.1 How well do you understand the English message on the sign?

1 incomprehensible 2 3 4 5 6 comprehensible

17.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the message?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

17.3 If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?

1 not serious at all 2 3 4 5 6 very serious

18. You see this sign at the airport.



18.1 How well do you understand the English message on the sign?

1 incomprehensible 2 3 4 5 6 comprehensible

18.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the message?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

18.3 If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?

1 not serious at all 2 3 4 5 6 very serious

19. You see this sign in a bakery.



19.1 How well do you understand the English message on the sign?

1 incomprehensible 2 3 4 5 6 comprehensible

19.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the English version?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

19.3 If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?

1 not serious at all 2 3 4 5 6 very serious

20. You see this sign at a fashion accessory shop in a wholesale shopping complex.



20.1 How well do you understand the English message on the sign?

1 incomprehensible 2 3 4 5 6 comprehensible

20.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the English version?

☐ Yes
☐ No

20.3 If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?

1 not serious at all 2 3 4 5 6 very serious

21. You see this sign at a petrol station/ a gas station.



21.1 How well do you understand the English message on the sign?

1 incomprehensible 2 3 4 5 6 comprehensible

21.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the English version?

☐ Yes
☐ No

21.3 If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?

1 not serious at all 2 3 4 5 6 very serious

22. You see this sign in an open-air museum.



22.1 How well do you understand the English message (highlighted in red) on the sign?

1 incomprehensible 2 3 4 5 6 comprehensible

22.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the message highlighted?

☐ Yes
☐ No

22.3 If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?

1 not serious at all 2 3 4 5 6 very serious

23. You see this sign in an apartment building.



23.1 How well do you understand the English message (highlighted in red) on the sign?

1 incomprehensible 2 3 4 5 6 comprehensible

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

23.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the message highlighted?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

23.3 If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?

1 not serious at all 2 3 4 5 6 very serious

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

24. You see this sign at a construction site.



24.1 How well do you understand the English message on the sign?

1 incomprehensible 2 3 4 5 6 comprehensible

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

24.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the English version?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

24.3 If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?

1 not serious at all 2 3 4 5 6 very serious

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

25. You see this sign at the airport.



25.1 How well do you understand the English message on the sign?

1 incomprehensible 2 3 4 5 6 comprehensible

25.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the English message?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

25.3 If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?

1 not serious at all 2 3 4 5 6 very serious

26. You see this sign at a clothing store.



26.1 How well do you understand the English message on the sign?

1 incomprehensible 2 3 4 5 6 comprehensible

26.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the English message?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

26.3 If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?

1 not serious at all 2 3 4 5 6 very serious

27. You see this sign on the way to the Grand Palace (one of the main tourist attractions in Bangkok).



27.1 How well do you understand that Wat Phra 'Kaeo' and Wat Phra 'Kaew' refer to the same place?

1 incomprehensible 2 3 4 5 6 comprehensible

27.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the English message?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

27.3 If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?

1 not serious at all 2 3 4 5 6 very serious

28. You see this sign in a shopping complex.



28.1 How well do you understand the English message on the sign?

1 incomprehensible 2 3 4 5 6 comprehensible

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

28.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the English version?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

28.3 If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?

1 not serious at all 2 3 4 5 6 very serious

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

29. You see this sign in a cafe.



29.1 How well do you understand the English message (highlighted in red) on the sign?

1 incomprehensible 2 3 4 5 6 comprehensible

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

29.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the English version?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

29.3 If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?

1 not serious at all 2 3 4 5 6 very serious

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

30. You see this sign at the head office of a commercial bank.



30.1 How well do you understand the English message on the sign?

1 incomprehensible 2 3 4 5 6 comprehensible

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

30.2 Do you think that there is a problem in the English version?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

30.3 If there is a problem, how serious do you think it is?

1 not serious at all 2 3 4 5 6 very serious

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

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IV. Participant's information



1. What is your gender?

- ☐ Female
☐ Male

2. What is your age?

- ☐ 18-24
☐ 25-34
☐ 35-44
☐ 45-54
☐ 55-64
☐ 65 and over

3. Have you ever visited Thailand before?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

4. In which continent, do you consider your home is?

- ☐ Asia
☐ Europe
☐ The Americas
☐ Australia and Oceania
☐ Other (please specify)

5. What is your nationality?

6. Are you currently living in the UK?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

7. How do you use English? Please choose all the items that apply to you.

- ☐ I use English in my everyday life, as English is my native language.
☐ I use English in my everyday life, but English is NOT my native language.
☐ I use English as the main language at school/ at university/ at work.
☐ I use English in my everyday life but also use another language when talking to family members/friends.
☐ English is one of the official languages in my country.
☐ I do not have many chances to use English except in English classes.

8. Please select 'one' statement that can best describe your English proficiency.

- ☐ I am a native speaker of English.
☐ I can express myself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in the most complex situations.
☐ I can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes and can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects.
☐ I can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options but not in a very complex way.
☐ I can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
☐ I can describe in simple terms aspects of my background, something about myself and some general issues arising in everyday life.
☐ I can interact in a simple way if the other person talks slowly and clearly.

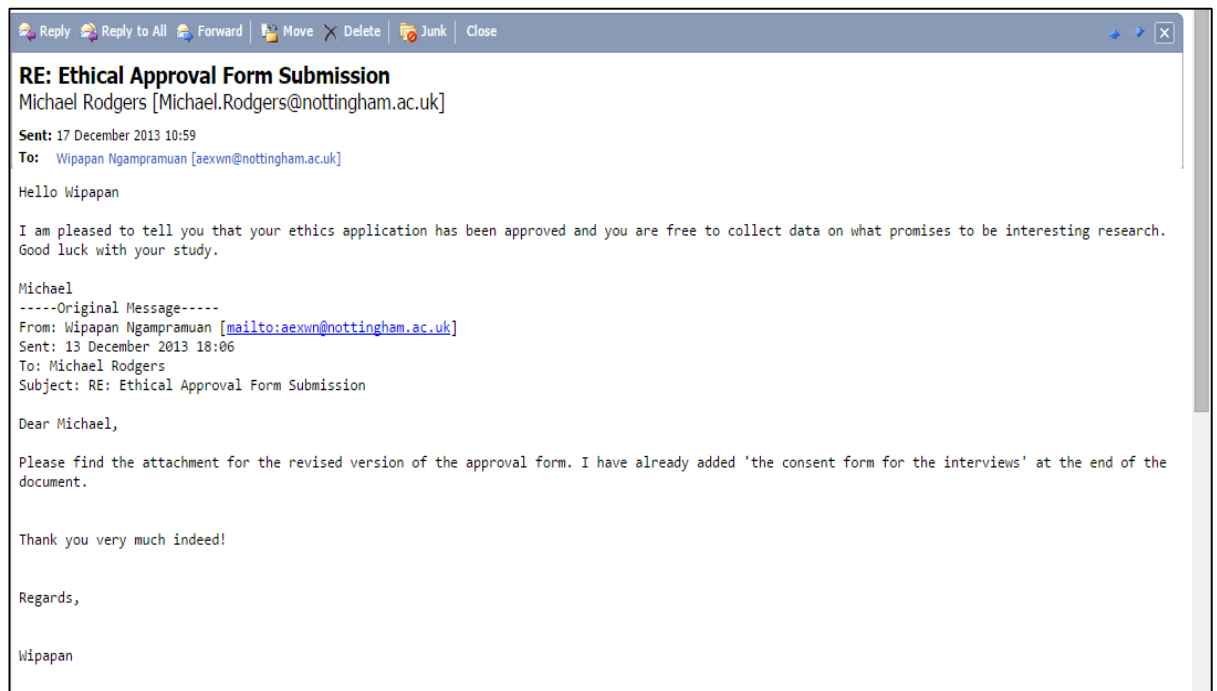
9. If you would like to know about the results & the findings from the study, please enter your email in the box below.

10. Finally, I am also looking for participants for a follow-up interview about this topic. It can be a face-to-face interview or a Skype interview depending on your convenience. If you are happy to participate, please give me your email address, and I will email you more information.

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Appendix 6 Ethical Approval



Appendix 7 Consent Form for the Online Questionnaire

The Use of English in Tourist Domains in Thailand

II. Consent form

14%

Please read and tick 'all' the boxes if you have agreed to do the survey.

☐ I confirm that the purpose of the study has been explained and that I have understood it.

☐ I have had the opportunity to ask questions and they have been successfully answered.

☐ I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a reason and without consequence.

☐ I understand that all data are anonymous and that there will not be any connection between the personal information provided and the data.


☐ I understand that there are no known risks or hazards associated with participating in this study.

☐ I confirm that I have read and understood the above information and that I agree to participate in this study.

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 **SurveyMonkey®**

See how easy it is to [create a survey](#).

Appendix 8 Informed Consent Form for Interviews

Informed Consent Form

Project title: *English as a Lingua Franca: A Case Study of English Used on Signs in Tourist Domains in Thailand*

Purpose of study: This research project aims to find out about 1) the attitudes of international visitors vs. Thai people toward the English used by Thais in tourist domains in Thailand 2) how well international visitors understand Thai English vs. to what extent Thai people think international visitors can understand Thai English.

Data protection: Your interviewing data will remain anonymous and will be kept securely and confidentially. In order to be a participant in this study, you must be over 18 years old.

If you have agreed to participate in this study, please read the all the statements below and tick ☒ all the 'Yes' boxes.

- YES ☐ NO ☐ I confirm that the purpose of the study has been explained and that I have understood it.
- YES ☐ NO ☐ I have had the opportunity to ask questions and they have been successfully answered.
- YES ☐ NO ☐ I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a reason and without consequence.
- YES ☐ NO ☐ I understand that all data are anonymous and that there will not be any connection between the personal information provided and the data.
- YES ☐ NO ☐ I understand that there are no known risks or hazards associated with participating in this study.
- YES ☐ NO ☐ I confirm that I have read and understood the above information and that I agree to participate in this study.
- YES ☐ NO ☐ I consent to my data being transcribed and wish to be referred to anonymously.
- YES ☐ NO ☐ I consent to an audio file of my participation to be used, but would like identifying factors (e.g. my name to be removed) from any presentation of my data.
- YES ☐ NO ☐ I consent to a video file of my participation to be used, but would like identifying factors (e.g. face covered and name removed) from any presentation of my data.
- YES ☐ NO ☐ I consent to an audio/video file of my participation to be used with any available identifying factors.

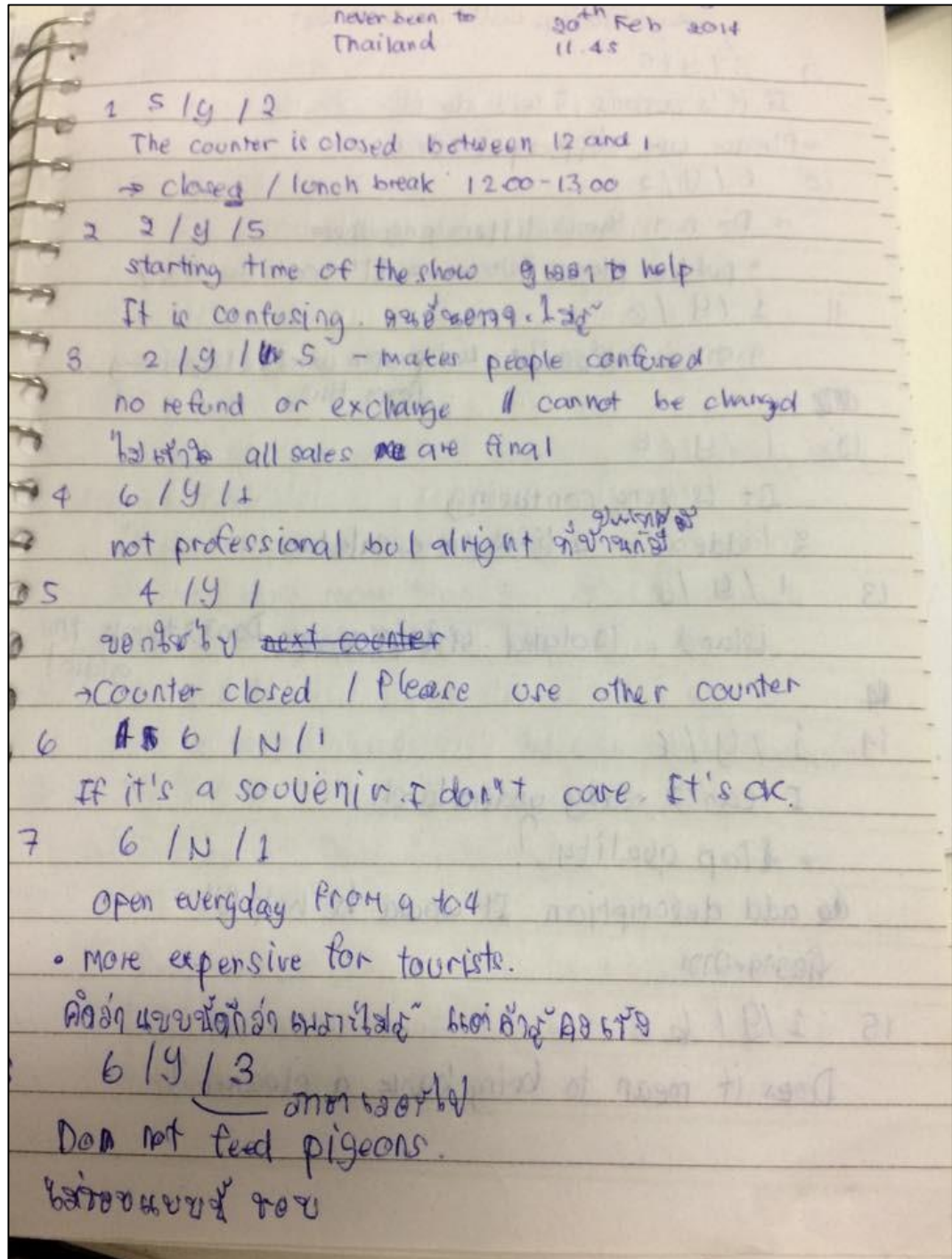
Participant's Name AND Signature _____

Researcher's Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix 9 Examples of Fieldnotes Taking during the Interviews

An example from an interview with an international participant



An example from an interview with a Thai participant

- 7 4 / 5 / 6 เข้าใจได้ส่วนมาก น่าสนใจมาก
 Museum hours มีเวลาเปิด → Opening Hours
 มีเวลาเปิดให้เข้าชม น่าสนใจ for Thai, for foreigner
 เปิดให้เข้าชมกี่โมงกี่โมง
 มีเวลาพัก 1 ชั่วโมง 15 นาที local 1 ชั่วโมง
 1 ชั่วโมง 15 นาที 1 ชั่วโมง 15 นาที 1 ชั่วโมง 15 นาที
- 8 N / 1 / 6
 เข้าใจได้ส่วนมาก ไม่ค่อยไปใช้เข้าชมในห้างสรรพสินค้า
 ไม่ค่อยไปใช้เข้าชมในห้างสรรพสินค้า ไม่ค่อยไปใช้เข้าชมในห้างสรรพสินค้า
- 9 N / 1 / 4
 เข้าใจได้ส่วนมาก ไม่ค่อยไปใช้เข้าชมในห้างสรรพสินค้า
 ไม่ค่อยไปใช้เข้าชมในห้างสรรพสินค้า ไม่ค่อยไปใช้เข้าชมในห้างสรรพสินค้า
- 10 4 / 5 / 3 เข้าใจได้ส่วนมาก น่าสนใจมาก
 น่าสนใจมาก น่าสนใจมาก น่าสนใจมาก
 น่าสนใจมาก น่าสนใจมาก น่าสนใจมาก
- 11 4 / 4 / 3 - น่าสนใจมาก น่าสนใจมาก
 น่าสนใจมาก น่าสนใจมาก น่าสนใจมาก
 น่าสนใจมาก น่าสนใจมาก น่าสนใจมาก
 food order ไม่ค่อยไปใช้เข้าชมในห้างสรรพสินค้า
 food made to order
 category ไม่ค่อยไปใช้เข้าชมในห้างสรรพสินค้า

Appendix 10 Thai English Facebook Page

Thai English

English as a lingua franca (ELF) in Thailand

English as a lingua franca = the use of English as a means for wider communication between interlocutors who have different native languages :)

หอนิทรรศการ-พิพิธภัณฑ์ธนาคาร
一展览厅
Museum Exhibition Hall

Thai English Community

Create Call to Action

Liked

Message

Timeline

About

Photos

Likes

More

3,071 likes +10 this week

Somboon Pajprasat and 207 other friends

22 post reach this week

Invite friends to like this Page

Promote Your Page

Status

Photo/Video

Offer, Event+

Write something...

Thai English

9 October at 20:51

See Your Ad Here

Thi

<http://www.facebook.com/ELFonsigns>

Appendix 11 Paper Presentations

Some sections of the studies in this research were orally presented at the following conferences and symposiums:

English on Signs in Tourist Attractions in Thailand: Intra/ Inter Cultural Communication? Faces of English: Theory, Practice and Pedagogy, Hong Kong University, Hong Kong, 13 June 2015

Wel come to Thailand but forbidden Island Glass, 3rd Thai Student Academic Conference (TSAC), Toulouse, France, 27 April 2014

Features of English as a lingua franca in Thailand: a case study of English used on signposts in tourist attractions, Changing English: Contacts and Variation, University of Helsinki (Helsinki, Finland), 11 June 2013

English of Thai people and its comprehensibility: a case study of English signs in tourist attractions in Thailand, 2nd Thai Student Academic Conference (TSAC-TSIS): Changes and Challenges for Young Academics, University of Göttingen (Göttingen, Germany), 30 March 2013

;
Sociolinguistics of English used in Thailand: a case study of signposts in tourist attractions, the American Association for Applied Linguistics 46th Annual Conference, Sheraton Dallas Hotel (Dallas, Texas, USA), 18 March 2013

World Englishes: a case study of comprehensibility of Thai English on signposts in tourist attractions in Thailand, 6th Samaggi Academic Conference: ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), University College London (London, UK), 25 January 2012

Sociolinguistics and multimodality of English used in Thailand: a case study of signs in tourist attractions, 2nd Interdisciplinary Linguistics Conference, Queen's University (Belfast, Northern Ireland), 9 November 2012

The use of sign posts as learning aids in language classes: a case study of English language classes in a university in Thailand, 9th ICED (Innovational Consortium for Educational Developments) Conference, Centara Grand Hotel (Bangkok, Thailand), 23 July 2012

World Englishes and linguistic landscape: a case study of English used on signs in tourist attractions in Thailand, TSAC 2012 (Thai Students Academic Conference in Europe), Hotel Volendam (Volendam, the Netherlands), 2 June 2012

World Englishes: a case study of English used on signs in tourist attractions in Thailand, PGR (Postgraduate) Work in Progress Symposium, School of English, The University of Nottingham (Nottingham, UK), 18 May 2012

Sociolinguistics of English as a lingua franca on signs in public transport hubs in Thailand, 4th ELF (English as a Lingua Franca) Conference, Hong Kong Institute of Education (Hong Kong), 26 May 2011

Linguistic landscape: a case study of English used on signs in tourist attractions in Thailand, PGR (Postgraduate) Work in Progress Symposium, School of English Studies, The University of Nottingham (Nottingham, UK), 11 May 2011