

English Language Needs of Thai Cruise Ship Crew Members: A Target Situation Analysis

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Abstract—Given that cruise tourism is a substantial global industry, it is imperative that a ship’s crew members possess a high level of English proficiency to effectively communicate with passengers from all around the world. Still, hardly any research has been carried out on the English-language competency of crew members of Thai cruise ships. The sparseness of literature indicates a lack of attention paid to participants in this discourse community, thus marginalizing their voices. However, research could provide a platform for a wider audience to hear these previously unheard voices. This study aimed to explore the English macro skills required for Thai cruise ship crew members in various targeted situations. Between June 2022 and March 2023, data was collected from a web-based survey administered to 420 Thai cruise ship crew members. These crew members found that they needed to enhance their speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills in that respective order. The qualitative section also indicated the need to enhance listening and reading skills and better align them with speaking abilities. Nevertheless, writing proficiency was the most challenging aspect that required improvement. Moreover, crew members believed that their most effective means of communication occurred when they knew who to communicate with in English. By contrast, their performance was the least satisfactory when English conversation occurred through mediated communication. This study provides a partial framework for the Thai government and private sectors to create English language programs specifically designed for cruise students to achieve a high level of English proficiency for global communication.

Index Terms—English language needs, cruise tourism, target situation analysis

I. INTRODUCTION

English is a global language that serves as a medium of communication for people in numerous industries, including the hospitality sector. Indeed, the global cruise tourism industry has experienced significant growth in the 21st century, and the process of globalizing digitization and automation has partially transformed the cruise industry in terms of the training procedures and job responsibilities of cruise ship crew members in the present era (The Maritime Executive, 2018). Moreover, the Thai government has responded to the growth in cruise tourism by announcing its 13th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2023–2027). This plan aims to enhance the cruise industry by improving the quality of infrastructure and manpower at Thailand’s ports-of-call, as well as the Thai workforce on international cruise lines (Thangthong & Khuanmuang, 2020). As a result, individuals working in today’s tourism industry must possess a high level of English proficiency (Crystal, 2003).

Being non-native English speakers, Thai nationals must undergo a standardized English proficiency exam specifically designed for mariners known as the Marlins Test. The examination evaluates the level of overall spoken communication in the English language and the specific vocabulary required for individuals working in offshore industries such as the crew members of a cruise ship (Thangthong, 2011). Maritime English, an aspect of English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) that falls under the broader category of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), is a term used to describe the English language used by seafarers, including maritime cadets, cargo ship workers, and deck officers, and it includes specific terms and expressions related to the maritime industry (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). However, because cruise ship crew members primarily provide services to cruise passengers, which has a significant impact on the quality of the passengers’ travel experiences (Kim et al., 2012), their focus is typically on hospitality English, which includes areas such as food and beverages, housekeeping, and recreational activities. As a result, Thai crew members must possess English communication skills that are tailored to service-related situations, thereby enabling them to engage in English conversations with passengers.

So far, only a limited number of studies on maritime English have been conducted, and even fewer studies have particularly examined the demands of seafarers in terms of maritime English. Ahmmed et al. (2020) conducted a requirements analysis to examine the English language abilities required by Bangladeshi seafarers prior to their employment on ships. Organizations that recruit maritime students and seafarers believe that speaking abilities are of the utmost importance, followed by listening, reading, and writing skills, respectively. Nevertheless, the cadets believed that all the macro abilities were necessary to proficiently carry out their duties. Akyuz et al. (2019) performed a comprehensive study of future skills requirements in the maritime industry by reviewing relevant research studies. It was found that seafarers in the shipping business need to possess a range of crucial qualities, including communication skills, interpersonal and social skills, and language proficiency, to excel in the age of digitalized communication technology. Fan et al. (2017) conducted a study examining communication obstacles among shipboard personnel. The findings

revealed that the results of maritime English education were excessively broad and thus inadequate, and several maritime accidents have occurred as a result. Their research aimed to advocate for a more specialized and elevated maritime English curriculum in China with the goal of enhancing seafarers' proficiency in English communication. However, the current level of English proficiency among Chinese seafarers has declined in comparison to previous decades. Therefore, it is imperative to revamp maritime English education in China by focusing on the curriculum and improving the quality of educators. However, none of these studies have examined the use of nautical English specifically for crew members of cruise ships who primarily focus on providing services to passengers on board cruise ships.

Although there have been many studies carried out on the behaviors and routines of individuals who take cruises and the growth and advancement of destinations visited by these cruises, there has still been a lack of research on cruise ship crew workers in Thailand. For instance, Thangthong (2011) examined the expenditure patterns of cruise passengers when they visited ports in Thailand. Moreover, in 2016, Thangthong also conducted a study that aimed to examine the luxury experience of cruise passengers at the Phuket port of call. Another study conducted by Thangthong in 2017 examined the behavioral tendencies of cruise passengers visiting the Samui Island Port of Call. Cheewatragoongit et al. (2018) proposed a model to establish a cruise home port to enhance cruise tourism in the Andaman tourism cluster of Thailand. Esichaikul et al. (2019) investigated the difficulties and obstacles involved in creating a home port for cruises in the Andaman tourism cluster. Back to Thangthong, who, along with his colleagues, conducted a study in 2019 to analyze the travel behaviors of international cruise passengers specifically at the Laem Chabang Port of Call. Thangthong also collaborated with Khuanmuang in a 2020 study on the distinctive and indelible encounters of foreign cruise ship passengers at Thailand's ports of call. In 2020, Khuanmuang examined the intercultural communicative competence of Thai cruise ship crew members on an international cruise ship using a self-reflection questionnaire. However, none of them analyzed the English language proficiency criteria for cruise ship crews in different situations on board. The sparse literature indicates a lack of attention to participants in this discourse community, thus marginalizing their voices. As a result, the present research could serve as a platform for these unheard voices to be heard by a wider audience. This study sought to fill a need in the current body of research by examining the English language skills necessary for Thai cruise employees to properly fulfill their service obligations to international cruise passengers in various scenarios. Being the foremost ambassadors of the organization, cruise ship crews engage in direct contact with cruise passengers. As a result, it is necessary to assess their English macro abilities required to fulfill their responsibilities in various situations. As a result, this study sought to investigate the English macro skills required of Thai cruise ship crew members in a variety of targeted situations.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

To determine the requirements for English macro skills among Thai cruise ship crew members in different situations, two frameworks must be integrated: Needs Analysis (NA) and Target Situation Analysis (TSA).

A. Needs Analysis

Individual needs are the main driving force for career progress in the constantly changing professional world. Ryan et al. (1996) classify these needs into two domains: objective requirements, including personal goals and aspirations, and knowledge acquisition requirements which focus on the actions needed to attain those goals. These concepts serve as the foundation for needs analysis to enhance the effectiveness of English language learning programs (Brown, 1995). By conducting inquiries about learners' ambitions and perceived skill inadequacies (Ostler, 1980), educators can customize curricula and syllabuses to meet their needs. Needs analysis extends beyond individual preferences. Additionally, it utilizes stakeholder viewpoints through surveys and other techniques (Lawrence et al., 1991) to determine the particular abilities and expertise that employers consider important.

An essential component of needs analysis involves closing the potential disparity between the needs of students and the expectations of employers (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Students may place a higher importance on developing overall language proficiency, whereas businesses typically value communication skills that are particular to their industry. By closing this gap, graduates will acquire the essential skills and knowledge needed to succeed in their professional careers. Additionally, through a meticulous needs analysis, educators may create focused programs that cater to the objectives of students and align with the requirements of the business. This refers to educational programs that are designed to match the goals and ambitions of students, focusing on areas where they feel they lack necessary skills and including industry-specific skills based on input from relevant parties. This complete strategy promotes higher student involvement, enhanced learning results, improved job prospects, and judicious allocation of resources to educational programs. Needs analysis is a fundamental aspect of creating successful learning experiences that enable students to attain their career objectives and adapt to the changing requirements of the job market.

B. Target Situation Analysis

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) introduced a valuable methodology known as Target Situation Analysis (TSA) to provide guidance when performing requirements analysis on English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses. This model begins by collecting data regarding the learners' requirements and their interactions with other individuals in English, such as superiors, clients, and colleagues. Subsequently, it explores the specific purpose for which they employ English, like professional endeavors, educational development, or personal growth. Subsequently, the model considers the various

channels of communication that will be utilized including face-to-face interactions, email, and phone calls. Lastly, it delves into precise communication content such as serving food and beverages, providing instructions, and making reservations for excursions, all of which are pertinent to their occupation. Through a systematic approach to analyzing these characteristics, ESP course design may be precisely customized to close the gap between the learner's objectives and the specific language skills needed for professional achievement.

To elaborate, TSA is an assessment that focuses on identifying language needs in a professional or educational environment. The TSA method is the oldest-used strategy for needs assessment (West, 1997). In the 1970s, the Council of Europe utilized it to determine the language learning preferences of students, including their desired language (English, German, French, etc.), specific language skills (reading, speaking, writing, etc.), and learning objectives related to practical situations (phone conversations, listening to lectures, etc.). TSA incorporates language elements, tasks, and activities that are relevant to the target context. Furthermore, TSA is understood as encompassing essential requirements, deficiencies, and desires (Mohammed & Nur, 2018). The TSA methodology involves soliciting inquiries regarding the goal scenario and gathering perspectives from many stakeholders, such as students, educators, scholars, and potential employers. The TSA typically consists of six primary inquiries, which can be further subdivided into various other inquiries. The primary inquiries revolve around the objectives for which and the specific type of language required, the way the language is utilized, the subject areas it encompasses, the individuals engaged in the communication process, the context in which the language will be employed, and the timeframe for its usage.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Participants

The study examined Thai crew members who were employed by international cruise ship companies through three licensed crew member recruiting companies in Thailand under a contractual agreement. To achieve a 95 percent reliability rate, Cochran's sample size formula (Cochran, 1977) suggests that the sample size for the cruise line service workers under contract to all agencies should be at least 400 respondents, as the precise population is unknown. Nevertheless, a total of 420 respondents participated in this survey as random respondents. The crew members consisted of individuals in various service-related roles, including servers (35.70%), porters (24.78%), stateroom attendants (19.04%), culinary staff members (12.61%), bartenders (4.76%), and dealers (3.57%).

B. Instrument

Upon conducting a thorough examination of the relevant literature, the researcher chose the target situation analysis (Hutchinson & Walters, 1987) as the framework to evaluate the English language skills requirements of Thai cruise ship crew members in various situations. Nevertheless, certain modifications were implemented to align with the specific circumstances of the Thai cruise ship crew members. The modifications to each questionnaire item were carried out by utilizing the empirical data obtained from pilot interviews with 10 Thai cruise ship crew members. Through this procedure, the researcher acquired valuable insights regarding the operational performance of cruise ship crew members on a cruise ship. This was done to assess the respondents' conscious utilization of macro abilities in the English language using an objective-based approach (Byram, 2020). Additionally, the researcher sought advice from a total of five esteemed professionals and scholars who specialize in the field of the cruise industry. Two individuals were active crew members on a Thai cruise, while two others held positions as hiring managers at cruise companies in Bangkok. Furthermore, one person was a department head specializing in cruise tourist management at a university in Bangkok.

The four domains of target situation analysis (Hutchinson & Walters, 1987) were organized in a table to evaluate the scale's dependability, as shown in Table 1. According to Ursachi, Horodnic, and Zait (2015), the questionnaire demonstrated a high level of dependability, exceeding 0.8. Therefore, the scale was deemed satisfactory.

TABLE 1
RELIABILITY OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Four Domains of Target Situation	Questionnaire Items	Cronbach's Alpha
a. Who to communicate with	1-12	0.943
b. Target of English language usage	13-20	0.976
c. English communication channel	21-31	0.928
d. English communication content	32-40	0.914

Once the modified version of the questionnaire was developed, each question was validated by five experts from the cruise line industry to ensure that the content was appropriate. The questionnaire was conducted in the Thai language to circumvent any potential language obstacles. To ensure comprehensibility and clarity, the questionnaire in Thai was reviewed by two experts in English-Thai translation.

The questionnaire consisted of three parts. The initial segment comprised the demographic information of the respondents. The second section had 40 items designed to assess the extent of their English language proficiency needs. The researcher utilized a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The interpretation ranged from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high).

The four domains of the target situation contained (a) who to communicate with (12 items: items 1-12), (b) target of English language usage (8 items: items 13-20), (c) English communication channel (11 items: items 21-31), and (d) English communication content (9 items: items 32-40). The macro skills included listening skills (10 items: items 1-3, 13-14, 21-22, 32-34), speaking skills (10 items: items 4-6, 15-16, 23-25, 35-36), reading skills (10 items: items 7-9, 17-18, 26-28, 37-38), and writing skills (10 items: items 10-12, 19-20, 29-30, 39-40). The final section consisted of an open-ended question where the participants were asked to further elaborate.

C. Data Collection

Data collection took place from June 2022 to March 2023 at three specific locations, namely three cruise crew member recruiting firms in Thailand. A digital questionnaire was disseminated to Thai crew members who fulfilled their contractual obligations while serving on cruise ships. The human resources staff members from the three cruise crew member agencies in Thailand collaborated to randomly distribute the survey link exclusively to their Thai employees who were responsible for delivering services on an international cruise ship.

D. Data Analysis

The data analysis was conducted in three stages, corresponding to the three portions of the survey. An analysis was conducted on the data from the initial part to collect demographic information and the respondents' self-assessment of their English language proficiency using frequencies and percentages. The data from the second half of the survey was examined to determine the means and standard deviations to investigate the respondents' English language ability requirements. The data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) application. The data was interpreted according to the criteria for English language ability levels using mean scores. A score between 1.00 and 1.80 was categorized as "very low". The result of subtracting 2.60 from 1.81 is "low". The range from 2.61 to 3.40 can be described as "moderate". The range from 3.41 to 4.20 is categorized as "high," while the range from 4.21 to 5.00 is classified as "very high".

The data from the third portion comprised the replies obtained from the open-ended inquiry. Given that the documents were provided in both Thai and English, the process of translation began. Thematic analysis was employed to examine the data from this section and identify codes and salient themes. It served as qualitative data to supplement the quantitative data obtained from the initial two sections. Following the researcher's interpretation, the researcher sought the input of two reviewers: one scholar specializes in English Language Teaching (ELT), while the other specializes in tourism and hospitality. Their task was to analyze the data in terms of coding and identifying themes. The purpose of this was to prevent possible biases and promote triangulation of data interpretation. The methodological approach is illustrated below.

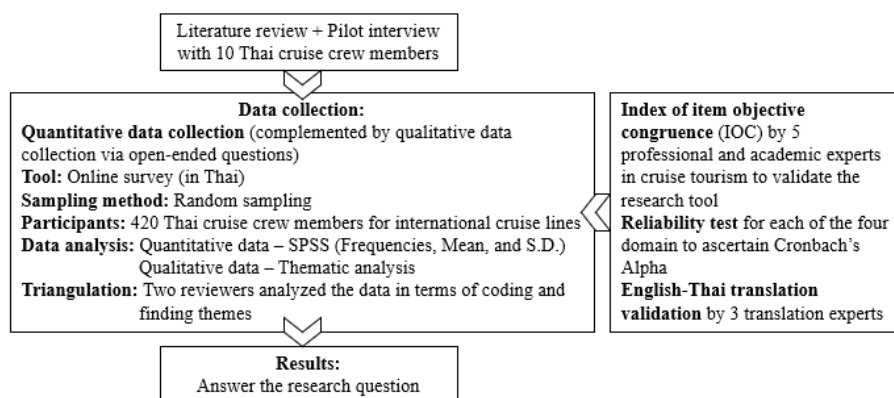


Figure 1. The Methodological Approach of the Study

IV. RESULTS

The first part of the online survey collected the demographic information provided by the respondents. The survey found that there were 232 (55.24%) male participants and 188 (44.76%) female participants. The age range of the participants varied from 20 to 59 years old. Out of the total, 220 participants (52.38%) fell into the 40 to 49 age range, 150 participants (35.71%) were aged between 30 and 39, 28 participants (6.66%) were between 20 and 29, and 22 participants (5.24%) were aged between 50 and 59.

Out of the total responses, 220 participants (52.38%) had a tenure of seven to nine years with the organization. Out of the total respondents, 200 participants (47.62%) reported having worked as cruise ship crew members for a period ranging from 1 to 3 years. A noteworthy aspect of the data was that the majority, specifically 350 respondents (83.33%), did not graduate from either language or tourism and hospitality backgrounds. Only 70 participants, which accounts for 16.66% of the total, have a degree or diploma in disciplines that are directly relevant. All 420 (100%) participants had prior job

experience in the hospitality industry, specifically in hotels and restaurants, before joining the cruise crew. Regarding the macro skills in English, all 420 participants (100%) reported that they excelled the most in speaking skills.

The second portion of the online survey assessed participants' perceptions of their proficiency in English macro abilities across four distinct target situation domains: (a) who to communicate with; (b) target of English language usage; (c) English communication channel; and (d) English communication content. Within each domain, there were distinct sections dedicated to each of the four major English macro abilities. Each macro skill encompasses three typical situations that participants often encounter while on duty. The results are presented below.

TABLE 2
PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH MACRO SKILLS ACROSS DIFFERENT TARGET SITUATIONS

Target Situation	Means	SD	Interpretation
a. Who to communicate with in English	3.60	0.99	High
b. Target of English language usage	3.45	0.89	High
c. English communication channel	3.38	0.90	Moderate
d. English communication content	3.59	0.90	High
English Macro Skills	Means	SD	Interpretation
1. Listening skills	3.71	0.92	High
2. Speaking skills	4.03	0.90	High
3. Reading skills	3.51	0.94	High
4. Writing skills	2.80	0.95	Moderate

Table 2 illustrates that Thai cruise ship crew members generally perceive their English proficiency as high in most target situations. They scored highest in (a) determining who to communicate with in English; (b) English communication content; and (c) the target of English language usage. However, the English communication channel achieved only a moderate score. Regarding English macro skills, the findings revealed that speaking skills obtained the highest score, followed by listening skills, then reading skills in that order. While these three skills achieved a high level of proficiency, writing skills were rated the lowest at a moderate level.

The data shown below in Tables 3 through 6 illustrates the perception of Thai cruise ship crew members regarding their English macro skills in various target situations. These situations were designed using an objective-based approach (Byram, 2020) to match the common tasks performed by Thai cruise ship crew members.

TABLE 3
WHO TO COMMUNICATE WITH IN ENGLISH AND ENGLISH MACRO SKILLS

A. Who to Communicate With in English	Means	SD	Interpretation
a) <i>Listening Skills</i>			
1. The verbal instructions from my superiors are clear to me.	3.35	1.05	Moderate
2. I understand when I listen to the questions from my passengers.	4.15	0.87	High
3. I feel confident when I listen to what my coworkers have to say.	3.40	0.92	Moderate
b) <i>Speaking Skills</i>			
4. I find it simple to discuss the outcomes of my work with my superiors.	4.15	0.78	High
5. I can converse with passengers and answer their questions with ease.	4.18	0.88	High
6. When my coworkers talk to me, I am able to answer them verbally.	4.10	0.96	High
c) <i>Reading Skills</i>			
7. I easily read the daily duty instructions from my supervisors.	4.16	1.10	High
8. After reading the notes of the passengers, I know what to do.	4.12	0.97	High
9. Reading notes from coworkers feels natural to me.	3.40	0.92	Moderate
d) <i>Writing Skills</i>			
10. I feel comfortable writing to passengers.	2.85	1.01	Moderate
11. It is a pleasure to write to superiors.	2.65	1.21	Moderate
12. My colleagues clearly understand my writing.	2.74	1.25	Moderate
Overall	3.60	0.99	High

Table 3 reveals that Thai cruise ship crew members generally possess a high level of English communication proficiency with an overall mean score of 3.60 when it comes to who they use English to communicate with. Speaking skills received the highest score, indicating that they were confident conversing with superiors, colleagues, and passengers. Writing skills, on the other hand, received the lowest rank at the moderate level. The lowest mean score was 2.65, indicating that it was deemed unpleasant to write superiors. Compared to other English skills, writing to coworkers also obtained a low mean score of 2.74, and writing to passengers obtained a mean score of 2.85. Listening to passengers obtained the highest mean score of 4.15 compared to other target situations of listening to supervisors' instructions (mean score of 3.35) and listening to their peers (mean score of 0.92). Reading skills were generally perceived as high when reading daily instructions from supervisors (mean score of 4.16) and reading notes from passengers (mean score of 4.12). However, reading notes from colleagues was deemed moderate, with a mean score of 3.40.

TABLE 4
TARGET OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE USAGE AND ENGLISH MACRO SKILLS

B. Target of English Language Usage	Means	SD	Interpretation
<i>a) Listening Skills</i>			
13. Public announcements are something I can listen to with ease.	4.03	0.98	High
14. When I listen to safety training sessions in person, I know what needs to be done.	4.14	0.87	High
<i>b) Speaking Skills</i>			
15. One of my favorite things to do is greet new passengers.	4.10	0.79	High
16. I feel confident in my ability to advise passengers about safety.	3.85	0.87	High
<i>c) Reading Skills</i>			
17. I have no trouble understanding when I read for personal development.	2.62	0.94	Moderate
18. I like to read to help me solve problems.	2.61	0.84	Moderate
<i>d) Writing Skills</i>			
19. Filling out immigration forms is not difficult for me.	2.96	0.88	Moderate
20. I can sum up job orders' outcomes with ease.	3.30	0.97	Moderate
Overall	3.45	0.89	High

The findings in Table 4 showcase Thai cruise ship crew members' English communication concerning the target of English language usage. It was found that, in general, they viewed their English proficiency as high, with an overall mean score of 3.45. They felt confident listening to safety training sessions in person the most, with a mean score of 4.14. Their speaking abilities were also perceived as high, notably when it came to greeting new passengers, with a mean score of 4.10. However, they assessed their writing and reading skills as moderate. Reading on their own to solve problems received the lowest mean score at 2.61, and reading for personal development obtained a slightly higher mean score of 2.62. The mean score for filling out immigration forms was 2.96, indicating perceived difficulty. Summarizing job orders' outcomes received a mean score of 3.30.

TABLE 5
ENGLISH COMMUNICATION CHANNEL AND ENGLISH MACRO SKILLS

C. English Communication Channel	Means	SD	Interpretation
<i>a) Listening Skills</i>			
21. I have no trouble listening to phone requests.	2.86	0.92	Moderate
22. I have no trouble using the intranet to listen to self-training sessions.	3.44	0.88	High
<i>b) Speaking Skills</i>			
23. Answering phone calls is one of my favorite tasks.	3.35	0.89	Moderate
24. One of my favorite things to do is speak with people face-to-face.	4.15	0.91	High
25. I converse with people on video calls with ease.	4.08	0.94	High
<i>c) Reading Skills</i>			
26. I have no trouble reading notice boards and signs.	3.87	0.93	High
27. I understand when I read safety instruction manuals.	3.25	1.12	Moderate
28. I know what to do when I read job description manuals.	4.00	0.78	High
<i>d) Writing Skills</i>			
29. I am confident when I write reports to my supervisors.	2.78	0.89	Moderate
30. I can write complaints about my work and general well-being with ease.	2.64	0.78	Moderate
31. I feel at ease writing notes for other passengers.	2.75	0.91	Moderate
Overall	3.38	0.90	Moderate

Table 5 shows that Thai cruise ship crew members demonstrated a moderate level of English proficiency across various communication channels. Speaking skills received the highest mean score, notably when talking to passengers in person (mean score of 4.15). Conversely, communication, such as answering phone calls, obtained a moderate mean score of 3.35. Moreover, they perceived their writing skills as moderate, achieving the lowest mean score of 2.64 when they were required to write complaints about their work and general well-being. Listening to phone requests received a moderate mean score of 2.86, whereas listening to self-training sessions via the intranet received a high mean score of 3.44. Reading safety instruction manuals received a moderate mean score of 3.25, while reading notice boards and signs as well as reading job description manuals obtained a high mean score of 3.87 and 4.00, respectively.

TABLE 6
ENGLISH COMMUNICATION CONTENT AND ENGLISH MACRO SKILLS

D. English Communication Content	Means	SD	Interpretation
<i>a) Listening Skills</i>			
32. I easily follow oral instructions from bosses or other passengers.	4.05	0.94	High
33. Upon listening to the safety authorities, I fully understood their demands.	3.60	0.88	High
34. I can listen to casual conversations among coworkers without discomfort.	4.10	0.92	High
<i>b) Speaking Skills</i>			
35. I can easily give passengers information about cruise products.	4.18	0.99	High
36. I am confident when convincing passengers to buy cruise products.	4.15	1.01	High
<i>c) Reading Skills</i>			
37. When I read the daily ship regulations, I know exactly what to do.	3.45	0.93	High
38. When I read a ship's daily news, I can comprehend the main points.	3.60	0.86	High
<i>d) Writing Skills</i>			
39. I have no trouble writing reports on out-of-order items.	2.66	0.84	Moderate
40. I can write a succinct paragraph about training programs with ease.	2.58	0.77	Low
Overall	3.59	0.90	High

Table 6 displays Thai cruise ship crew members' level of English proficiency in terms of communication content. The overall mean score of 3.59 indicates that they generally felt confident. Speaking skills received the highest mean score, with giving passengers information about cruise products (mean score of 4.18) and convincing passengers to buy cruise products (mean score of 4.15) scoring the highest. Conversely, when asked to write a short paragraph about the training program, their writing skills received a low mean score of 2.58, while writing reports on inoperative items earned a moderate mean score of 2.66. Listening and reading skills received high mean scores overall. Listening to casual conversations among colleagues received a mean score of 4.10, while reading a ship's daily news received a mean score of 3.60.

The third part of the online questionnaire was an open-ended question for respondents to provide any additional information. There were 255 (60.71%) respondents who provided additional information. These responses were coded and categorized into two salient themes, as follows:

TABLE 7
SALIENT THEME: IMPORTANCE OF UTILIZING ENGLISH MACRO SKILLS

Vignette 1	<i>Understanding what passengers and coworkers say is important because it allows me to respond to questions correctly and appropriately. At first, I believed being able to communicate and express myself was the most crucial, but after years of working here, I've realized that being a service provider is more about being a good listener. As a result, I must have good listening skills to grasp what my passengers and colleagues require or complain about.</i>
Vignette 2	<i>Speaking skills appear to be the most necessary, as I am always communicating with passengers and coworkers. At first, I was overly concerned with grammar, but I eventually focused on English conversation. As a result, I felt more liberated and secure when communicating with people.</i>
Vignette 3	<i>Reading safety instructions is essential since it helps me understand what to do in an emergency. Crew members who work on a cruise ship must be familiar with safety measures. Furthermore, many passengers inquire about safety issues, and I am required to provide accurate and clear directions. Thus, reading ability is required to survive aboard a cruise ship.</i>
Vignette 4	<i>Because my writing abilities are rarely used as a cruise crew member, I tend to avoid writing in English. However, writing abilities are a prerequisite for promotion. If I want to enhance my job, I need to improve my English writing skills. This is because being a supervisor requires you to write on a variety of topics and summarize multiple meetings. As a result, those who want to advance in this industry must be proficient writers.</i>

The Thai cruise ship crew members recognized the importance of having proficient English language skills at a macro level. To flourish in their career, individuals must possess not only a deep understanding of the subject matter but also exceptional proficiency in the English language. Proficiency in speaking was crucial since it necessitated direct communication with passengers and colleagues from around the globe. Emphasizing fluency over accuracy, they prioritized communicative English rather than focusing on grammar precision. Effective communication is achieved when the intended message is conveyed in a polite and appropriate manner, considering the context. The Thai cruise ship crew members acknowledged the significance of possessing effective listening skills as they comprehended their responsibility as service providers. Instead of engaging in mere conversation, they exhibited a propensity for active listening as a means of demonstrating respect and acquiring further knowledge about passengers and colleagues. Proficiency in reading was also deemed crucial, especially in relation to safety. Cruise ship personnel are required to undergo a range of safety training conducted in the English language. A significant number of participants encountered challenges in comprehending safety-related content due to the presence of several specialized terms and jargon. Nevertheless, they acknowledged the importance of ensuring safety on board and hence saw the need to improve their reading abilities. The competency of writing skills was rated the lowest among the four skills, indicating that they were considered the least helpful. This is because most of their duties did not require a substantial amount of writing. However, Thai cruise ship crew members who aspired to advance in their jobs acknowledged the importance of enhancing their writing abilities.

TABLE 8
SALIENT THEME: CHALLENGES TO APPLYING ENGLISH MACRO SKILLS

Vignette 5	<i>Listening skills are vital because I need to understand what other people are saying to respond appropriately. I frequently find myself unable to understand what others are saying owing to their accent and dialect. Working on a cruise requires me to train my ears to recognize different dialects because my passengers and coworkers come from all over the world.</i>
Vignette 6	<i>When I first started speaking English, I tried to lose my Thai accent. I thought people would understand and respect me more if I spoke English with an American accent. After nearly a decade of working here, I understand that accents don't matter. Passengers and coworkers have complimented me on my Thai accent, which sounds natural and unique. I'm now proud of my Thai accent when speaking English.</i>
Vignette 7	<i>Reading skills are becoming increasingly vital as I read instruction manuals and attend self-development training programs. I frequently encounter technical terms and jargon that I am unfamiliar with; thus, I need to improve my reading abilities to pass the tests. Crew members are now required to complete online courses to be certified to perform their duties. So, reading abilities are essential for me to better understand what is being taught.</i>
Vignette 8	<i>When I write in English, I am overly concerned with grammar accuracy. This makes me uneasy when I write. I frequently use dictionaries and translation apps to help me write in English. I don't want to lose face when people notice my terrible English writing. Writing to my superiors also makes me uneasy since I don't want to be criticized if they don't understand what I write or find flaws in my writing.</i>

Thai cruise ship crew members encountered difficulties when attempting to employ their English macro skills in their professional endeavors. The most challenging aspect was the writing skills since they appeared to excessively prioritize grammatical accuracy. This impacted their confidence and caused anxiety when writing in English. This occurrence appears to have taken place when they were required to communicate with their superiors who hold a higher rank or position. Furthermore, they expressed their reluctance to face criticism for their inadequate English writing skills. They attributed the difficulty of reading skills to the presence of technical phrases and jargon encountered during training and ongoing self-development courses mandated by the company. Recognizing the necessity of passing the test to continue their duties, they acknowledged the importance of fostering their reading abilities. While the Thai cruise ship crew members showed confidence in their speaking skills and communicative approach that prioritizes meaning over grammar, they appeared uncertain about their English accent. A significant number of them, particularly young people, held the belief that speaking English with an American accent was more desirable. Nevertheless, those with extensive experience in the field appeared to exalt their Thai accent while conversing in English. They had acquired the ability to take pride in their cultural background and appreciate the distinctiveness of others. Passengers and colleagues from different parts of the world spoke with a diverse accent in English, making listening skills difficult. Consequently, they recognized the necessity of familiarizing their ears with different English accents.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results indicated that a significant number of Thai cruise ship crew members realized the importance of English macro skills in various target situations. Thai cruise ship crew members found that they needed to enhance their speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills, respectively. Although they exhibited a high level of confidence in their speaking skills, they encountered difficulties when it came to writing. This is due to the daily necessity of engaging in face-to-face communication with both passengers and coworkers. Nevertheless, there was no obligation for them to write frequently. As a result, they extensively developed their speaking abilities, leading to increased proficiency. Conversely, there were few opportunities to practice writing, resulting in inadequate English proficiency. Nonetheless, a significant number of them recognized the necessity of enhancing their proficiency in written English to progress in their professional endeavors. They regarded listening abilities as equally significant as speaking skills. They are responsible for direct passenger interaction as the company's frontline. Proficiency in both spoken communication and auditory comprehension is required. Without comprehending the desires or intentions of others, it becomes challenging to provide suitable and accurate spoken responses. Proficiency in reading is also crucial, particularly when it comes to training. As cruise ship crew members, they are required to undertake multiple training sessions in English. Various obstacles emerged when trying to understand the material due to the presence of technical terminology and jargon. Recognizing the necessity of passing the examinations to be eligible to continue their duties and ensure their safety on board, they acknowledged the need to enhance their reading skills.

Regarding the target situation needs, Thai cruise ship crew members believed that they performed satisfactorily in the majority of the four areas: (a) who to communicate with; (b) the target of English language usage; (c) the English communication channel; and (d) the English communication content. They demonstrated exceptional proficiency in the first domain due to their knowledge of the appropriate English communication recipients. Consequently, they were able to strategically place themselves during face-to-face conversations with their counterparts. However, they appeared hesitant to engage in communication with their bosses. This may be attributed to the influence of the hierarchical culture prevalent in Thailand. Consequently, they developed anxiety when engaging with their superiors. Additionally, it appears that many of them encountered difficulties when it came to interacting with their colleagues. This could be attributed to the diverse linguistic backgrounds of the coworkers, who hail from various parts of the world. Recognizing the possible limitations, many Thai cruise ship crew members agreed to enhance their English proficiency, particularly their listening skills, to effectively interact with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Interestingly, while they demonstrated proficiency in direct communication, they displayed reluctance to engage in mediated communication, such as phone

calls, as indicated in the third domain. This may be due to their inability to perceive non-verbal cues, such as facial expressions and gestures. This indicates that they appeared to depend on nonverbal communication cues. Due to the absence of the ability to perceive nonverbal cues in specific instances of medicated interaction, they had increased challenges in their communication.

Additionally, a significant number of Thai cruise ship crew members faced challenges in effectively interacting with their superiors and colleagues. Nevertheless, they had a sense of ease when interacting with passengers. One possible explanation for this is that they were aware of their role as service providers who have direct engagement with passengers. What's more, a significant number of passengers were from North America, where English is the first language. Therefore, the Thai cruise ship crew members were well-acquainted with the American accent due to their previous exposure during their education and through popular media. Conversely, the Thai cultural belief in hierarchy may impede communication with supervisors. Beliefs from one's originating culture might be conveyed while interacting with individuals of greater status in different cultures. Furthermore, cultural differences may hinder effective communication with colleagues. Although most passengers were from English-speaking countries, most colleagues were from countries where English is not the first language. Consequently, Thai cruise ship crew members appeared to struggle with comprehending accents of English that deviate from the mainstream.

Furthermore, the Thai cruise ship crew members found the English communication channel to be the most difficult aspect. They appeared to have no difficulty engaging in direct communication, possibly because they had the chance to examine non-verbal cues such as facial expressions and gestures. Nevertheless, in the context of medicated communication, such as phone calls, only verbal communication and paralanguage cues are available for observation, which can create obstacles to understanding the intended message. Thai cruise ship crew members exhibited a preference for medicated communication, specifically video calls and over-the-phone contacts. This is likely due to their ability to perceive facial expressions, gestures, verbal communication, and paralanguage. It is evident that they substantially depend on non-verbal cues to improve their understanding. This is a common occurrence in communication since real-life communication involves multiple modes. It encompasses several forms of communication, extending beyond verbal language. Recognizing this limitation, they acknowledged the necessity of enhancing their listening skills due to the unavoidable nature of phone conversations in their work environment.

Surprisingly, the Thai cruise ship crew members expressed the highest level of discomfort when it came to composing a concise paragraph regarding the training program they were required to complete. The inherent difficulty of comprehending technical content and the additional challenge of producing a written summary may be the cause of this discomfort. Additionally, cruise ship crew members do not engage in regular activities that involve summarizing skills. However, they found writing about discrepancies to be less difficult. This could be attributed to the need to perform the task more frequently. This illustrates that consistent exposure to something can enhance their performance. Recognizing this challenge and desiring the chance for career advancement, many Thai cruise ship crew members aimed to enhance their writing skills, specifically in summarizing. This is likely because proficient writing skills are critical for managerial positions. Those aspiring to advance in their professional endeavors appear to be eager to enhance their writing skills.

Suggestions and Implications

There are multiple recommendations for future research. First, while the quantitative research design of this study allows for generalization of the results, employing a qualitative strategy that utilizes interviews and observations to collect data may produce more intriguing findings. Furthermore, future research should focus on those with less work experience, such as trainees or students specializing in cruise service operations, as the current study mostly included respondents who had worked as cruise ship crew members for several years. Given that these newcomers are either about to or intend to enter the cruise service business, it is important to assess their proficiency in English. Additionally, the target situations presented for each question in this study were just some of several potential situations that can arise in the Thai cruise ship crew members setting. Subsequent research endeavors may modify these situations to determine if the findings might vary. Furthermore, the survey was conducted without incorporating the perspectives of cruise passengers and stakeholders. Subsequent investigations may incorporate these into their research. Moreover, it was discovered that in addition to proficiency in English macro skills, future research should also consider the concepts of hierarchy, intercultural communication, and politeness.

Given the lack of research on the English macro skills of Thai cruise ship crew members in Thailand, the results of this study have important academic implications by addressing this gap in the existing literature. Regarding pedagogical implications, an academic program that includes cruise tourism in its curriculum can utilize the results of this study to modify English language instruction in relation to the overall language skills and commonly seen scenarios by cruise staff. Moreover, this study has professional ramifications for present and future Thai cruise ship crew members to contemplate and equip themselves for this global professional setting where English serves as the lingua franca. Ultimately, this study can function as a guideline for cruise line recruitment agencies, educators, and stakeholders in Thailand to develop impactful training programs.

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