

# Journal of Liberal Arts

Prince of Songkla University



**Volume 14, Issue 1**

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# Journal of Liberal Arts

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# **Journal of Liberal Arts Prince of Songkla University**

## **Publisher**

Faculty of Liberal Arts, Prince of Songkla University

## **Focus and scope**

The Journal of Liberal Arts, Prince of Songkla University publishes original manuscripts on current research and issues in language and language education, cultural studies, as well as social sciences.

The journal welcomes contributions especially in the following areas:

## **Language and language education**

1. First and second language acquisition
2. Language professional development
3. Language teaching and learning
4. Literature, linguistics, and discourse analysis

## **Cultural studies**

1. Cultural wisdom
2. Cultural identity
3. Creative culture
4. Cultural tourism

## **Social sciences**

1. Sociology
2. Psychology
3. Sociocultural anthropology
4. Tourism and hospitality management
5. Education

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มหาวิทยาลัยสงขลานครินทร์

ประเทศไทย

## ผู้พิสูจน์อักษร

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มหาวิทยาลัยสงขลานครินทร์

## ผู้ช่วยเลขานุการวารสาร

นางสาวสุชาดา กองสวัสดิ์

งานวิจัยและวารสาร คณะศิลปศาสตร์

มหาวิทยาลัยสงขลานครินทร์

## พิมพ์ที่

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บทความในวารสารฉบับนี้เป็นของผู้เขียนไม่ถือเป็นความรับผิดชอบของ  
กองบรรณาธิการ

## Editorial Note

We are pleased to present the latest issue of the Journal of Liberal Arts, published by the Faculty of Liberal Arts at Prince of Songkla University. The journal is now in its 14<sup>th</sup> year of publication, and this is also the second issue which is being published entirely in English.

This issue comprises ten research articles, with the first six articles exploring a range of topics related to English linguistics and foreign (Chinese & English) language acquisition, and the further four articles covering cultural studies, tourism & hospitality management, and education.

The first two articles are concerned with linguistic aspects of English. The journal opens with **“An Analysis of Repetition in Barack Obama’s Eulogies,”** an article which examines the use and effect of rhetorical devices in eulogies given by former US President Obama, who is widely acknowledged as a gifted orator. The second article, **“Pragmatic Interpretations of Raised Arguments in English Novels,”** analyzes the use of raised argument constructions in the novel genre and discusses how such an analysis can benefit EFL/ESL learners in writing fiction.

The third article reports the findings of a quantitative study of Chinese language interactions at hotel receptions, providing a frequency analysis of question types used, and thereby rich data for the design of future Chinese for Hospitality language courses: **“The Analysis of Types and Functions of Chinese Interrogative Sentences Used between Hotel Guests and Front Desk Staff in China.”**

Articles four and five return the journal focus to the English language and a topic particularly relevant to Thai EFL learners – the issue of pronunciation anxiety. Both studies combine experimental

design with other instruments. The article **“Reducing Thai EFL Students’ Pronunciation Anxiety through a CAPT-Based Reading Progress Application”** demonstrates the efficacy of computer-assisted pronunciation training (CAPT) in reducing learners’ pronunciation anxiety while also improving their pronunciation skills. Computer-assisted learning was also part of the next study which investigated the extent to which a blended learning English pronunciation course can address students’ perceived needs and improve their pronunciation ability: **“An Investigation of the Needs, Abilities, Opinions, and Anxiety Levels of English Teaching Major Students Studying an English Pronunciation Course in a Blended Learning Environment.”** The findings in this study show that the blended learning design improved pronunciation ability and reduced learners’ pronunciation anxiety.

The sixth article in this volume, **“A Development of English and Thai Product Labels for Curry Paste of “Sam Tambon” Community Enterprise Group in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province: Stakeholders’ Satisfaction and Attitudes”** provides a transition from the linguistic to the socio-cultural part of this issue. This study reports on the development of English language labels for local OTOP products with an aim to add value and improve marketing opportunities.

The remaining four research articles cover socio-cultural topics, starting with **“The Invented Traditions of Phra Buddha Sihing – Phra Singh in Contemporary Thai Society.”** This multi-sited study found a total of 14 traditions pertaining to Phra Buddha Sihing being practiced in five locations in Thailand and, using Eric Hobsbawm’s concept of invented traditions, identified and analyzed three of the 14 traditions as ‘invented.’



The eighth article, **“The Barrier of Relationships: Dynamics of Social Interaction and Interethnic Political Relation of People in Na Ngam Subdistrict of Pattani under Violent Situations in the Three Southern Border Provinces,”** is based on participant observation and interviews with Thai Buddhist village volunteers in the southern Thai province of Pattani, showing how prolonged conflict in the area has transformed long-standing inter-religious social relations into political relations.

**“Factors Predicting the Organizational Loyalty Among Private School Teachers in Hat Yai District, Songkhla Province,”** the ninth article in this issue, is a questionnaire-based study. Its findings show that social factors such as ‘happiness at work’ or ‘relationship with colleagues’ were positively related to private school teachers’ workplace loyalty, but that – perhaps surprisingly – financial compensation or benefits showed no relationship to organizational loyalty. The tenth and final article, **“Local Tourism Management: Occupational Standard and Professional Qualifications for Elevating People in Tourism to an International Standard,”** surveyed tourism-related stakeholders to identify professional competencies and develop a professional qualifications framework aligned to international tourism trends.

The ‘Reviews’ section contains two articles: **“Examining Contradictions within the Term ‘Sustainable Development’, Including the Case of the ‘Thai Sufficiency Economy’,”** which reflects on the competing aims inherent to the term and suggests local cultural definitions as an alternative, and **“The Spiritual Buddhist Arts and the Ashtamangala of Tibet”** – a description of the influence of ancient Tibetan Buddhist art on Tibetan culture through the prism of the Ashtamangala symbols.

This issue is rounded off by a book review of Angela Duckworth's 2016 book ***Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance***, highlighting its relevance in the field of education and especially to teachers.

We are very grateful to all those who are contributing to and supporting our transition to an English-only publication, particularly our Thai authors who are engaging with the challenge of writing in English, but also our reviewers, section editors, copy-editors and proofreaders. We believe that by publishing in the de facto academic lingua franca, the research findings published in JLA will gradually find a larger, global, audience.

We therefore continue to welcome English language manuscripts that fall within the scope of our journal (see the journal website for further details).

The Editorial Team





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Louie Giray

# An Analysis of Repetition in Barack Obama's Eulogies

การศึกษาเชิงวิเคราะห์การซ้ำคำในคำไว้อาลัย  
ของบารัค โอบามา

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## Abstract

This research aims at studying the use of rhetorical devices as a significant component in Barack Obama's successful public speeches. From various rhetorical devices, this study explores the types, functions, and purposes of repetition in Obama's eulogies for Ted Kennedy, Robert Byrd, and Beau Biden III. The study deals with five types of repetition in words, phrases, and clauses: anadiplosis, anaphora, epanalepsis, epistrophe, and polyptoton. Repetition is classified as having four objectives: to create emphasis, to call attention, to appeal to

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นักศึกษาลัทธิสุตรปริญญาโท สาขาภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อวิชาชีพ วิทยาลัยศิลปศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยรังสิต ประเทศไทย

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ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์ ดร. ประจักษ์ลัทธิสุตรปริญญาโท สาขาภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อวิชาชีพ วิทยาลัยศิลปศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยรังสิต ประเทศไทย

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emotion, and to add rhythm. Moreover, to interpret the speaker's purpose, the five types of illocutionary acts based on John R. Searle (1979) are employed: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives. The results show that from sixty-three samples, anaphora is the most frequently applied to create emphasis. Assertive is the main purpose of the anaphora in selected eulogies. Obama uses anaphora to emphasize a subject, an event, a point, and as a tool to alter the audience's mood. Therefore, the use of anaphora in Obama's eulogies demonstrates the effect of this rhetorical device on the audience's emotion and reveals his intention.

**Keywords:** repetition, illocutionary act, rhetorical devices, Barack Obama, eulogy

## บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษามีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อวิเคราะห์การใช้กลวิธีทางวาทศิลป์เป็นองค์ประกอบสำคัญในสุนทรพจน์ที่ถือว่าประสบความสำเร็จของประธานาธิบดีบารัค โอบามา โดยข้อมูลคำไว้อาลัยที่กล่าวในพิธีศพของเท็ด เคเนดี โรเบิร์ต เบิร์ด และโบ ไบเดนที่ 3 เน้นศึกษาประเภท หน้าที่ และวัตถุประสงค์การซ้ำคำ 5 รูปแบบ ในระดับคำ วลี และอนุประโยค ได้แก่ การทวนคำ ซ้ำคำในส่วนต้นของข้อความ ซ้ำคำในส่วนต้นและท้ายข้อความ ซ้ำคำในส่วนท้ายข้อความ และซ้ำความหมายโดยคำต่างประเภท ซึ่งการใช้คำซ้ำมีวัตถุประสงค์ 4 ข้อ เพื่อเน้นย้ำ เพื่อเรียกความสนใจ เพื่อดึงดูดอารมณ์ และเพื่อเพิ่มจังหวะ อนึ่งการศึกษายังใช้ทฤษฎีวิจ্ঞานกรรมปฏิบัติ 5 กลุ่ม ของเชิร์ล (1979) ร่วมวิเคราะห์เพื่อตีความวัตถุประสงค์ของผู้พูด ได้แก่ กลุ่มบอกกล่าว กลุ่มชี้แนะ กลุ่มผูกมัด กลุ่มแสดง



ความรู้สึก และกลุ่มแถลงการณ์ ผลวิจัยแสดงให้เห็นว่าจาก 63 ตัวอย่าง การซ้ำคำในส่วนต้นของข้อความถูกนำมาใช้มากที่สุดเพื่อเน้นย้ำ มีวัตถุประสงค์หลักคือการบอกกล่าว โอบามาใช้การซ้ำคำในส่วนต้นของข้อความเพื่อเน้นเรื่องเหตุการณ์ ความคิดเห็น และเป็นเครื่องมือในการเปลี่ยนความรู้สึกผู้ฟัง การซ้ำคำในส่วนต้นของข้อความทำให้ข้อความมีพลังเชิงวาทศิลป์และสะท้อนให้เห็นถึงเจตนาของผู้พูดที่มีต่อผู้ฟังได้อย่างชัดเจน

**คำสำคัญ:** การซ้ำคำ วัจนกรรมปฏิบัติ กลวิธีทางวาทศิลป์  
บารัค โอบามา คำไว้อาลัย

## Introduction

Throughout history, the speech (e.g., oration, sermon, eulogy, etc.) has been used for appealing, changing, moving, and provoking people in society. Each speech is delivered in different situations and for various purposes. One of the prevailing speeches is the oratories or eulogies. The origin of the word “eulogy” is from the Greek word “eulogia,” which means praise or blessing (Lanham, 1991). According to Merriam Webster’s Dictionary, a eulogy is commonly defined as a speech or writing in praise of someone or something often delivered during funerals and memorial services. This genre of speech is, however, not only for the deceased and the funerals, but the living person and other occasions, such as retirement parties and anniversary celebrations. There are no formal structures for a eulogy, but rather it is based on the traditional speech writing structure. When delivering a eulogy, the purpose is to praise, honor, or commemorate the subject of the speech. As a speech

given at funerals or memorial services, a eulogy aims to give honor and pay tribute to the deceased in addition to console the mourners.

In public speaking, a clear understanding of rhetoric is the key to becoming a successful orator. The origin of rhetoric can be traced back to the fifth century B.C. in ancient Greece. One of the greatest ancient Greek philosophers, Aristotle, defines rhetoric as the art of persuasion that is an effective and powerful tool for convincing people (Fortenbaugh, 2007). Aristotle's rhetoric consists of three modes: logos, pathos, and ethos. Logos is an appeal to logic, pathos is an appeal to emotion, and ethos is an appeal to credibility (Ghosal & Murphy, 2014). Kennedy (1994) explains that "Rhêtorikê in Greek specifically denotes the civic art of public speaking as it developed in deliberative assemblies, law courts, and other formal occasions under a constitutional government in the Greek cities, especially the Athenian democracy." Therefore, as the primary purpose of public speaking is to persuade people, a proper preparation of speechwriting seems necessary in developing its capacity to attract the audience's attention.

To create a compelling and powerful speech, these traditional rhetorical modes are combined with various rhetorical devices. Thus, the use of rhetorical devices is an essential element of speech composition. Rhetorical devices are applied to evoke emotions among the audience as well as to reflect the speaker's style and ability (Corbett, 1965; Kennedy, 1994). Rhetorical devices are of various types and can appear at all levels, from words, phrases and sentences to paragraphs. Among numerous devices, repetition is commonly found in a

speech. Repetition may be a simple technique, but it effectively creates a rhetorical effect. Repetition has different structures, and each structure can affect the audience in a certain way (Cuddon, 2013). Farnsworth (2011) describes that repetition adds emphasis to a message and strengthens a point, helping to convey ideas and ideologies. Repetition calls the audience's attention and makes messages memorable. It also serves as a tool to appeal to audience's emotion. Moreover, repetition can build rhythm in a speech. For example, in Martin Luther King Jr's "I Have A Dream", the eponymous repetition performs a leading role in articulating the rhetorical power in his speech. Thus, repetition is an interesting device which is worthy of further analysis.

To clarify functions and effects of repetition, several studies show the importance of the device. Ihsan (2018), aiming to understand the concept of repetition in "I Have A Dream", focuses on anaphora, epistrophe, and epizeuzis. The findings show that King's repetition is used for conveying ideas, appealing to the listener, and reflecting facts. Repetition in words, clauses, and phrases helps the speaker make his message memorable and convey a deeper meaning. Finally, Ihsan's study presents reasons why using a repetition technique has a strong effect on the receiver. Al-Saeedi (2017) studies the purpose of repetition in Trump's inaugural address from a discourse analysis viewpoint, using a theoretical framework for political discourse. The study focuses on the function of pronominal, phrasal, and clausal repetition. The results of the study show that Trump uses different devices and techniques and there are at least five purposes to his use of repetition. These include the

delivery of ideas and ideologies, emphasis on the importance of something, making his message memorable to the audience, creating an emotional impact, and producing rhythm. Therefore, from Al-Saeedi's study, the effects of repetition are clarified. Taping et al. (2017) investigate rhetorical devices and their functions in Hillary Clinton's concession speech delivered on November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016 and points out several functions of repetition in a speech. Using a theoretical framework based on Robert A. Harris's theory, the study focuses on three rhetorical functions: emphasis, association, and decoration. This study indicates that Clinton uses thirteen rhetorical devices, and emphasis resulted from repetition technique is most frequently found in her speech. She uses this technique to emphasize ideas, draw audience's attention, and make her message memorable.

To understand the speaker's intention for repetition usage, speech acts provide a theoretical background for deeper understanding of an action via utterance. Yule (1996) states that when people say something, it does not only contain grammatical structures and words, but performs actions, such as apology, complaint, invitation, promise, or request. According to Austin (1962), speech acts are classified into locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts. An illocutionary act corresponds with the speaker's purpose, either explicitly or implicitly (Huang, 2007). Austin's illocutionary acts are verdictives, exercitives, commissives, expositives, and behabitives. However, John R. Searle (1979) further developed more specific classifications of illocutionary acts from Austin's taxonomy into five types: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives. Searle's classification then helps

us to understand the expressions, what the speaker intends to perform in the utterance, and to reveal what thoughts and feelings that the speaker tries to communicate to the audience.

Drawing on the concept of illocutionary acts, there are a few relevant studies that provide useful model for analysis. First, Alreza et al. (2019) examine an illocutionary act based on Searle's classification of speech acts focusing on Obama's speech "Yes, We Can." This study focuses on the dominant type, function, and purpose of an illocutionary act. According to the results, four types of illocutionary acts are found in Obama's speech, namely representatives, directives, commissives, and expressives. Representatives are the dominant type and used in convincing the audience. It also provides a model for analyzing illocutionary acts in a political speech. Next, Hashim (2015) analyzes speech acts in two political speeches: John Kerry's speech in the 2004 presidential campaign and George Bush's 2001 inaugural address and provides a useful guideline for analyzing the illocutionary act in political speeches. The study focuses on locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts and uses Searle's speech act theory as a framework. From twenty selected sentences, the results show that Kerry frequently uses commissives in the speech, whereas Bush mostly uses assertives. Moreover, the overall frequency presents that commissives are the dominant type of illocutionary act in both political speeches. Therefore, the two speakers use commissives to challenge and to make promises to their audience.

This present study will illustrate the use and purpose of repetition in Obama's speech as he is often praised as one of the

most skilled and powerful speakers of the twenty-first century. Obama usually applies several rhetorical techniques and strategies in his speeches to persuade his audience. Most studies on Obama's speeches focus on his political speeches; therefore, the researcher would like to study his other types of speeches. It has been demonstrated in the previous studies that Obama frequently employs repetition in his speech for a specific purpose. His preference for repetition, thus, provides this study with a foundation for further analysis. As to the illocutionary acts, there are also prior studies leading to an effective way to interpret the speaker's intention as previously mentioned. Finally, it is hoped that this study will broaden the knowledge of repetition and the power of rhetorical devices, and the implication of illocutionary acts. The study will benefit scholars and students in the linguistics field for future work in pragmatics. In addition, apart from academic circles, this study may help improve knowledge and understanding in public speaking and the art of persuasion.

## **Objectives**

This study aims to examine characteristics, functions, and purposes of repetition of words, phrases, and clauses, as well as the illocutionary acts used in Obama's eulogies for Ted Kennedy, Robert Byrd, and Beau Biden III. This study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. What are the types of repetition of words, phrases, and clauses found in Obama's eulogies?

2. What are the functions of repetition in Obama's eulogies?
3. What are the types of illocutionary acts found in Obama's repetition usage in eulogies?
4. What are the purposes of illocutionary acts in Obama's eulogies?

## **Methodology**

The study is conducted using qualitative and quantitative methods. While the quantitative method is applied to discover the significant frequencies for interpreting the results, the qualitative method is employed to analyze the data to determine the characteristics of repetition and illocutionary acts in Obama's eulogies. In addition, a descriptive method is used in describing the eulogies as the speaker delivered them.

The subject of this study is Obama's eulogies for three individuals given while he was serving in office as the 44<sup>th</sup> president of the United States. The eulogies can be found online on the website [www.americanrhetoric.com](http://www.americanrhetoric.com) under the section dedicated for Obama's Speeches. Out of the nine eulogies, three are chosen for the analysis, including the eulogies for Ted Kennedy, Robert Byrd, and Beau Biden III because of Obama's close relationships with these individuals. Kennedy and Byrd are Obama's friends and colleagues. On the side of Biden, his father, Joe Biden, has a strong relationship with Obama, being like a brother. Moreover, they have worked side by side for a long time. Joe Biden was Obama's running mate since the latter's first presidential election. The other six eulogies are for national figures and foreign leaders.

In order to analyze the repetition in words, phrases, and clauses, five types of repetition (Corbett, 1965; Farnsworth, 2011; Leech, 1980), namely anadiplosis, anaphora, epanalepsis, epistrophe, and polyptoton their definitions (see Appendix) are selected as the research's framework. Another theoretical framework adopted for analyzing the speeches is Searle's illocutionary acts theory. Five types of illocutionary acts include assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives (see Appendix) to determine the functions and purposes of repetition in the selected eulogies. The data analysis comprises of five steps. First, the transcripts of Obama's eulogies are closely read. Second, the researchers extract sentences containing repetition in words, phrases, and clauses. Third, the repetition is then classified into different types of illocutionary acts. Fourth, the collected data is statistically analyzed to determine degrees of frequency. Finally, the findings of the study are discussed.

## Findings

The results of the investigation show the total number of frequencies for repetition in the three eulogies is 63 samples. It can be seen from Table 1 that there are four types of repetition: anadiplosis, anaphora, epistrophe, and polyptoton. A significant result found in this study is that the majority of repetition is anaphora (74.60%), followed by epistrophe (12.70%), polyptoton (9.52%), and anadiplosis (3.18%). The finding confirms that anaphora is the most popular type of repetition among orators such as politicians.

As for the results of the illocutionary act analysis, assertives are the most common type, while commissives are the least common one in the selected eulogies. Assertives are found in anaphora (70.21%),



epistrophe (14.89%), polyptoton (10.64%), and anadiplosis (4.26%). Both epistrophe and polyptoton also contain expressives, whereas anadiplosis contains only assertives. From the data, anaphora appears in all four types of illocutionary acts.

**Table 1**  
Frequency of Repetition and Illocutionary Act in the Selected Eulogies

Types of Repetition	Types of Illocutionary Act											Total	
	Assertives		Directives		Commissives		Expressives		Declaratives				
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Anadiplosis	2	4.26	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3.18	
Anaphora	33	70.21	5	100	1	100	8	80	-	-	47	74.60	
Epanalepsis	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Epistrophe	7	14.89	-	-	-	-	1	10	-	-	8	12.70	
Polyptoton	5	10.64	-	-	-	-	1	10	-	-	6	9.52	
Total	47	100	5	100	1	100	10	100	-	-	63	100	

Table 2 illustrates the four types and functions of the four categories of repetition. From 63 samples, the most prominent function of repetition is to create emphasis (87.30%). It is apparent that the least frequent functions is to appeal to

emotion (9.52%) and to call attention (3.18%) and there is not any use of repetition to create rhythm. Moreover, the results, as shown in Table 2, indicate that anaphora is also used to appeal to emotion and to call attention.

**Table 2**

Function of Repetition in Three Eulogies

Functions of Repetition	Types of Repetition									
	Anadiplosis		Anaphora		Epistrophe		Polypoton		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
To create emphasis	2	100	39	82.98	8	100	6	100	55	87.30
To appeal to emotion	-	-	6	12.77	-	-	-	-	6	9.52
To call attention	-	-	2	4.25	-	-	-	-	2	3.18
To add rhythm	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	2	100	47	100	8	100	6	100	63	100

The following are examples representing all types of repetition and illocutionary acts, functions, and purposes found in the selected eulogies:

- a. To create emphasis

## 1. Anadiplosis

“...At last he is with them once more, leaving those of us who grieve his passing with the memories he gave, the good he did, the dream he kept alive, and a single, enduring *image* -- the *image* of a man on a boat; white mane tousled; smiling broadly as he sails into the wind, ready for what storms may come, carrying on toward some new and wondrous place just beyond the horizon...” (Part 20, eulogy for Ted Kennedy, 2009)

Purpose: Emphasizing the subject

Illocutionary act: Assertives

The word “image” is used to emphasize the character of Ted Kennedy, who had a strong heart and was fearless. Obama recounts Kennedy’s strong character, stirring up Kennedy’s image as a ship captain who boldly commands his vessel. He depicts his memories of Kennedy by applying visual imagery and then evokes the audience with a repetition device. The pragmatic purpose of this utterance as an illocutionary act is describing.

## 2. Anaphora

“To Natalie and Hunter -- there aren’t words big enough to describe how much your dad loved you, how much he loved your mom. But I will tell you what, Michelle and I and Sasha and Malia, we’ve become part of the Biden clan. We’re honorary members now. And the Biden family rule applies.

*We're always* here for you, *we always* will be -- my word as a Biden.” (Part 25, eulogy for Beau Biden III, 2015)

Purpose: Emphasizing an action

Illocutionary act: Commissives

Obama repeats “We always” to emphasize his actions toward the Biden family. He promises them that he will be by their side because he is part of the family as Joe Biden’s brother. When Obama gives a promise, his utterance is considered as a commissive illocutionary act.

### 3. Epistrophe

“... We don’t have kings or queens or lords. We don’t have to be born into money to have an impact. We don’t have to step on one another to be successful. We have this remarkable privilege of being able to earn what we get out of life, with the knowledge that we are no higher than anybody else, or lower than anybody else We know this not just because it is in our founding documents, but because families like the Bidens *have made it so*, because people like Beau *have made it so*.” (Part 21, eulogy for Beau Biden III, 2015)

Purpose: Emphasizing an action

Illocutionary act: Assertives

Obama emphasizes the virtue of equality as indiscriminating by giving the Bidens as an example of success

story in his repeating of the phrase “have made it so.” Here epistrophe is used to emphasize subject’s action.

#### 4. Polypoton

1) “Not only did the Kennedy family *make* it because of Ted’s love -- he *made* it because of theirs; and especially because of the love and the life he found in Vicki.” (Part 15, eulogy for Ted Kennedy, 2009)

Function: To create emphasis

Illocutionary act: Assertives

The repetition of “make” in a different form stresses the feelings of love between Ted Kennedy and the Kennedy family members. He devotes himself to them because of love. The family members also do the same because they love him too. Polypoton, here, is used to describe past and present actions that always occur. In this quotation, Obama would like to describe the relationship within the Kennedy family.

2) “...A prosecutor who *defended* the *defenseless*. The *rare* politician who collected more fans than foes, and the *rarer* public figure who prioritized his private life above all else.” (Part 12, eulogy for Beau Biden III, 2015)

Function: To create emphasis

Illocutionary act: Expressives

In this quotation, Obama uses the same roots of two words (defend and rare) and modified their suffixes to emphasize and praises the virtue of Beau Biden. Therefore, this is an expressive illocutionary act.

b. To appeal to emotion

Anaphora

1) “What we can do is to live out our lives as best we can with purpose, and love, and joy. **We can** use each day to show those who are closest to us how much we care about them and treat others with the kindness and respect that we wish for ourselves. **We can** learn from our mistakes and grow from our failures. And **we can** strive at all costs to make a better world, so that someday, if we are blessed with the chance to look back on our time here, **we can** know that we spent it well; that we made a difference; that our fleeting presence had a lasting impact on the lives of other human beings.” (Part 17, eulogy for Ted Kennedy, 2009)

Purpose: Persuading the audience

Illocutionary act: Directives

Obama repeats, “We can” to persuade the audience to do good deeds. He tells his audience how to spend the rest of their life with purpose, love, and joy because they will not regret when they leave the world since they have done good deeds. This is directive illocutionary act because the speaker would like to suggest something to the audience.

2) “*We do not know* how long we’ve got here. *We don’t know* when fate will intervene. We cannot discern God’s plan. What we do know is that with every minute that we’ve got, we can live our lives in a way that takes nothing for granted...” (Part 23, eulogy for Beau Biden III, 2015)

Purpose: Convincing the audience

Illocutionary act: Assertives

The repetition of “We do not know” is used to convince the audience. Obama shows his belief that everything in life depends on God. Therefore, the purpose of this utterance is an assertive act.

c. To call attention

Anaphora

“*May* God bless Robert C. Byrd. *May* he be welcomed kindly by the righteous Judge. And *may* his spirit soar forever like a Catskill eagle, high above the Heavens.” (Part 18, eulogy for Robert Byrd, 2010)

Function: To call attention

Illocutionary act: Directives

To close the eulogy, Obama uses the repetition of “May.” He expresses his wish by pray to God for Byrd’s peaceful afterlife. Moreover, Obama also prays for the soul of Byrd to soar to the Heavens like a Catskill eagle, a bird believed

to be able to fly higher than any other birds as written in Byrd's favorite novel, *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville. Thus, this is a directive illocutionary act.

## Conclusion and Discussion

After analyzing Obama's three eulogies using the theoretical frameworks for repetition and illocutionary act, this study found that four types of repetition: anadiplosis, anaphora, epistrophe, and polyptoton. The dominant type is anaphora, followed by epistrophe, polyptoton, and anadiplosis. From these four types of repetition, assertives appear most frequently and are used to emphasize a subject, an event, or a point. This demonstrates Obama's intentions of using anaphora as a form of assertiveness in giving an explanation, reinforcing an idea, and creating an appeal to the audience.

As explained in the introduction, the best rhetorical methods for persuading people are, as described by Aristotle's modes of persuasion: logos, pathos, and ethos. Although a speaker can appeal to an audience using one's own character, arguments, and reasons, emotional appeal may further reinforce the effectiveness of the speech. By using pathos, the speaker might be able to lead the audience to think in a certain way or to be roused for an action. Obama's eulogies indicate that pathos is employed most frequently to impact or modify the mood of the audience, as well as revealing his intention.

In this study, the selected eulogies are speeches delivered at funerals or memorial services and consist of anecdotes of the deceased and shared memories. The primary purpose of a eulogy is not only to praise the deceased but also to



console the mourners. In his eulogies, Obama comforts the mourners by stirring up their spirits with pathos. Pathos might begin with recognizing the audience's emotions. Then it aims to alter their mood following the speaker's purpose. To move the mourners through the stages of grief and loss, Obama uses a rhetorical device to change their feelings. He transforms loss to hope, using the rhetorical power harnessed by the use of repetition.

Repetition is an effective and powerful device to move or manipulate thoughts that helps create specific effects in speeches. Obama, like a skillful puppeteer, uses variations of repetition in his eulogies, especially anaphora, to manipulate the audience's emotions. He creates an emphasis on certain words and phrases with anaphora to call attention to an idea or feeling, which results in the desired emotional response. The following examples demonstrate the use of anaphora as an emotional appeal:

1) “But if you're strong enough, it can also make you ask God for broader shoulders; *shoulders broad enough to* bear not only your own burdens, but the burdens of others; *shoulders broad enough to* shield those who need shelter the most.” (part 4, eulogy for Beau Biden III, 2015)

Obama draws the audience's attention by creating an emphasis with anaphora. As a result, this quotation vividly portrays Beau Biden's physical and moral characteristic and links one to the another as sharing the same degree of strength.

2) “Beau figured that out so early in life. **What** an inheritance Beau left us. **What** an example he set.” (part 31, eulogy for Beau Biden III, 2015)

Obama repeats the word “What” and leads the audience to reflect on Beau Biden’s legacy and to see him as a role model.

For speech acts, in Obama’s three eulogies, the use of anaphora frequently contains an assertive illocutionary act. Assertive is an act that shows a belief of the speaker; therefore, anaphora is good for asserting ideas, goals, and direction. By performing through assertive act, anaphora can remind the audience of an objective and encourage them to pursue it. This device also can direct them to recognize the speaker’s intention. Thus, Obama uses anaphora as an emotional appeal to enhance his remarks and communicate his purpose. Examples of anaphora in producing an assertion are as follows:

“And as I reflect on the full sweep of his 92 years, it seems to me that his life bent towards justice. *Like* the Constitution he tucked in his pocket, *like* our nation itself, Robert Byrd possessed that quintessential American quality, and that is **a capacity to** change, **a capacity to** learn, **a capacity to** listen, **a capacity to** be made more perfect.” (Part 13, eulogy for Robert Byrd, 2010)

To state his belief, Obama asserts that Byrd’s life is “like” the United States because the two share the same quality. Byrd worked in a parliament for six decades and wrote books about the Senate’s historical record. He was highly esteemed as

an expert on laws and parliamentary procedures. The repetition of “a capacity to” reflects Obama’s ideals of the quintessential American quality within Byrd and his idea of what is the perfect representative of America.

In conclusion, Obama employs pathos through anaphora in the selected eulogies to modify the audience’s emotions. The repetition of certain words and phrases can cause the audience to not just respond emotionally, but also to be moved toward the goal of the speaker. This study reveals that using rhetorical devices such as pathos with anaphora repetition can be an effective tool in modifying or changing the audience’s mood.

The understanding gained from this study may help enhance the knowledge of repetition in many linguistic levels and of illocutionary acts in a speech, particularly their functions and purposes. Furthermore, it also expands comprehension of intentions through the utterance. Although this study is rather limited in scope, the findings can provide a basis for future studies. For additional insight into the association between rhetorical devices and speech acts, future studies could examine similar rhetorical manipulation in other speech genres.

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## Appendix

### 1. Types of repetition in words, phrases, and clauses

Five types of repetition in words, phrases, and clauses adopted from Corbett (1965), Leech (1980), and Farnsworth (2011) are as follows:

1.1 Anadiplosis (a-na-di-plo-sis) is the repetition of the last word of a sentence or clause near the beginning or at the beginning of the text. To illustrate, an example of anadiplosis is below:

“But if you’re strong enough, it can also make you ask God for broader *shoulders*; *shoulders* broad enough to bear not only your own burdens, but the burdens of others; shoulders

broad enough to shield those who need shelter the most.” (part 4, eulogy for Beau Biden III, 2015)

1.2 Anaphora (a-na-pho-ra) is the repetition of the same word or group of words at the beginning of successive phrases, clauses, or sentences. The following is an example of anaphora:

“**He was** a Senate icon. **He was** a Party leader. **He was** an elder statesman. And *he was* my friend. That’s how I’ll remember him.” (part 6, eulogy for Robert Byrd, 2010)

1.3 Epanalepsis (ep-an-a-lep-sis) is the repetition of the beginning word or phrase of a clause or sentence at the end of a sentence or paragraph. An example of epanalepsis is as follows:

“The *minority* gives way not because it is convinced that it is wrong, but because it is convinced that it is a *minority*.” (Stephen, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, 1873, as cited in Farnsworth, 2011)

1.4 Epistrophe (e-pis-tro-pee) is the repetition of the same word, groups of words, or phrases at the ends of successive clauses, sentences, or lines. Epistrophe is presented below:

“To Joe and Jill - - just like everybody else here, Michelle and I thank God you are in *our lives*. Taking this ride with you is one of the great pleasures of *our lives*. Joe, you are my brother. And I’m grateful every day that you’ve got such a big heart, and a big soul, and those broad shoulders. I couldn’t admire you more.” (part 26, eulogy for Beau Biden III, 2015)

1.5 Polypoton (po-lip-toe-ton) is the repetition of words derived from the same root or varying grammatical inflections. Examples of polypoton are illustrated as follows:

“It’s a *life* that immeasurably improved the *lives* of West Virginians...” (part 12, eulogy for Robert Byrd, 2010)

“But if you’re strong enough, it can also make you ask God for *broad*er shoulders; shoulders *broad* enough to bear not only your own burdens, but the burdens of others; shoulders broad enough to shield those who need shelter the most.” (part 4, eulogy for Beau Biden III, 2015)

## 2. Searle’s illocutionary act

Searle (1979) classifies an illocutionary act into the following five types of illocutionary act:

2.1 Assertives commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition. The expressed psychological state is belief. This type of illocutionary act states what the speaker believes to be the case or not, such as asserting, claiming, concluding, describing, predicting, reporting, and stating.

2.2 Directives represent the speaker’s attempt to give a direction to the audience, to compel them to do something. They express the speaker’s wants, wishes, or desires for the audience to do something.

2.3 Commissives are applied when the speaker uses to commit one’s self to some future course of action. These acts are performed through the speaker’s utterance that can be interpreted as acts of promising, offering, betting, refusing, threatening, vowing, or volunteering.

2.4 Expressives state the speaker’s attitude or feeling toward something. They express the psychological state of the speaker, such as pleasure, pain, likes, dislikes, joy, or sorrow.

This type of illocutionary act can be seen as an act of apologizing, blaming, congratulating, praising, or thanking.

2.5 Declaratives are found when the speaker's words and expressions aim at changing the world. The performative acts of this type of illocutionary act include christening, declaring, endorsing, excommunicating, or resigning.



# Pragmatic Interpretations of Raised Arguments in English Novels

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ของการย้ายประธานในนิยายภาษาอังกฤษ

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## Abstract

This study investigates pragmatic interpretations of the raised arguments in English novels. The investigation of the raised arguments in this study covers four constructions in English. There are tough constructions (i.e., *Peter is difficult to please*), passive constructions (i.e., *The book was sold by him*), raising constructions (i.e., *The book seems to sell well*) and middle constructions (*The book sells well*). The previous studies in this field paid attention to the study of pragmatic interpretations of the raised argument in newspapers and academic prose. This study contributes to field by investigating the use of raised argument in English novels. The data collection in this study selected the best-seller novels (amazon.com), which are *The Portrait of a Lady: The Turn of the Screw Washington*

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*Square* written by James (2021), *Pride and Prejudice* written by Austen (2018) and *The Hobbit* written by Tolkien (2020). The contents in these novels is suitable for everyone to read. A corpus of 150,000 words contains 30 tokens. The framework used to investigate the raised argument follows Mair (1987) and Vicentini (2003). In order to gain the reliability and accuracy of data analysis, three English instructors were asked to validate the data analysis. The findings and discussion show that the raised arguments follow the pragmatic discourse of given and new information. Accordingly, this study will be useful for learners of EFL and ESL to develop pragmatic competence in writing novels and short stories.

**Keywords:** pragmatic interpretations, the raised subject English novels, pragmatic discourse of given and new information

### บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้ศึกษาการตีความด้านวจนปฏิบัติศาสตร์ของการย้ายประธานไป ที่ส่วนต้นประโยคในนิยายภาษาอังกฤษ การศึกษาครอบคลุมสี่โครงสร้างการย้าย ประธานไปที่ต้นประโยคในภาษาอังกฤษได้แก่ *Tough Constructions* (i.e., *Peter is difficult to please*), *Passive Constructions* (i.e., *The book was sold by him*), *Raising Constructions* (i.e., *The book seems to sell well*) และ *Middle Constructions* (*The book sells well*) งานวิจัยก่อนหน้านี้ให้ความสำคัญกับตัวบท หนังสือพิมพ์และเอกสารวิชาการ การศึกษานี้เลือกตัวบทนิยายภาษาอังกฤษ คลังข้อมูลเก็บรวบรวมมาจากนิยายขายดีสามเรื่อง (amazon.com) ได้แก่ *The Portrait of a Lady: The Turn of the Screw* Washington Square ประพันธ์ โดย James (2021) *Pride and Prejudice* ประพันธ์โดย Austen (2018) และ

*The Hobbit* ประพันธ์โดย Tolkien (2020) เนื้อหาในนิยายเล่มนี้เหมาะสำหรับผู้อ่านทุกคน คลังข้อมูลจำนวน 150,000 คำประกอบไปด้วย 30 ตัวอย่าง การศึกษาโครงสร้างการย้ายประธานไปที่ส่วนต้นประโยคนี้ดำเนินการตามกรอบแนวคิดของ Mair (1987) และ Vicentini (2003) เพื่อให้การตีความด้านวจนปฏิบัติศาสตร์การย้ายประธานเป็นไปอย่างน่าเชื่อถือและถูกต้อง อาจารย์สอนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นจำนวนสามท่านทำการตรวจสอบผลการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูล ผลการศึกษาแสดงให้เห็นว่าการย้ายประธานไปที่ต้นประโยคเป็นผลมาจากการทำตามกรอบแนวคิดตามหลักการข้อมูลเก่าและข้อมูลใหม่ ดังนั้นการศึกษานี้จะเป็นประโยชน์ต่อผู้เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศและผู้เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาที่สองในเชิงการพัฒนาทักษะด้านวจนปฏิบัติศาสตร์ที่เกี่ยวกับการเขียนนิยายและเรื่องสั้น

**คำสำคัญ:** การตีความด้านวจนปฏิบัติศาสตร์ การย้ายประธานในนิยาย  
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## Introduction

Today, English is considered an international language of the world. Knowing English does not only create better opportunities for higher international education, but it also provides better job opportunities and worldwide connection with other people around the globe. Studying English language is, therefore, viewed as the road to accomplishment in one's life.

The English language consists of different skills, such as speaking, reading and writing. Numerous people claim that writing is the most challenging skill to develop. This is especially because writing in English requires the knowledge of English grammar.

To know the English language, it is crucial to know grammar of the English language (Radford, 2009). *Grammatical*

*competence* is the ability to use language correctly and fluently (Radford, 2009). In addition to that, it also encourages our *creativity* or the ability to form various types of sentences.

It is commonly known that English is an S+V+O language and the subject in English is crucial. Although missing a subject is possible in the certain structures of imperative, such as *look*, doing this with other constructions in English leads to ungrammaticality as in *\*enjoy singing*. Therefore, the subject in the English language is required in all clauses (Radford, 2009).

English language users can apply their creativity to create different structures, as in (1b).

(1)

(a) He sells *the book* well.

(b) *The book* sells well.

In (1a), the structure is *canonical* or the regular structure of the English language, including the subject *he*, the verb *sells*, the object *the book* and the adjunct *well*. In (1b), *The book sells well* does not have the equivalent meaning with *He sells the book well*. With this canonical structure, *the book* syntactically functions as the object of the transitive verb *sell*. On the other hand, example (1b) is called *middle construction* where the object of the sentence *the book* is raised via the mechanic of A-movement.

Aside from the middle constructions in English, this similar conceptualization of movement is applicable to *passive constructions* where the object of the sentence is moved/ raised via the chain of A-movement to become the subject of the sentence (Radford, 2009), as in (2b).

(2)

(a) He sold *the book*.

(b) *The book* was sold by him.

With a similar analysis, (2a) is the canonical structure. *The book* is the object of the transitive verb *sold*. However, *the book* in (2b) is raised via the chain of A-movement into the position of the matrix subject.

In a similar case, there is another construction called *raising constructions* where the subject is raised from being the subject of the *to*- infinitive clause, which is known as an embedded clause, to become the subject in *the matrix clause*, referring to the main clause, as in (3).

(3)

(a) *The book* seems to sell well.

(b) *The book* seems <sub>*t*</sub> to sell well.

The symbol <sub>*t*</sub> represents the trace where the subject *the book* is originated as the subject of the embedded clause before being raised to be the subject of the matrix clause. Example (3b) shows the deep structure of (3a) in that the subject *the book* originally occurs as the subject of embedded clause *to sell well*. It is subsequently raised to become the subject of the matrix clause (Radford, 2009).

In regard to the tough construction, the argument at the end of the sentence as in *It is difficult to please John* is moved to the position of the subject as in *John is difficult to please*.

Syntactically, it could be explained that the raised argument in the abovementioned constructions is found to fulfill the *Extended Projection Principle*, known as an *EPP feature* (Radford, 2009). This means that all clauses in the English language require a subject; otherwise, they will result in ungrammaticality, as in (4).

(4)

(a) \**sells the book* well.

(b) \**was sold by him*.

(c) \*seem to sell *the book* well.

Although this movement is syntactically required, we have little notion about the pragmatic interpretations in regard to this movement. So, this study intends to provide reasons as to why the argument has to move to the matrix clause.

This study focuses on pragmatic interpretations of the raised arguments in English novels because this would help promote the benefits and outcomes for learners of EFL and ESL to build their pragmatic competence in their writing. As indicated by Gaily (2014), pragmatic competence can be taught; however, it is usually ignored in English classrooms. This is important for English language learners in that it can help them build their cohesion and coherence in writing short stories. This information leads to the following research question.

### **Research Question**

What are the pragmatic interpretations of raised subjects in passive constructions and raising constructions in English novels?

### **Objective**

To examine the pragmatic interpretations of raised subjects in passive constructions and raising constructions in English novels.

### **Literature Review**

This section reviews the constructions where the subject is raised to the *Spec T position*, or the position of subject in generative grammar. It is called argument in this study because the subject binds to

the landing site-subject position (Spec T). Before the movement, the argument is not the subject until it lands at the Spec T position. This includes tough constructions, passive constructions, raising constructions and middle constructions in English.

### 1. Tough Constructions

*Tough construction* is one of the constructions in English where the subject is raised to the Spec T position (Gluckma, 2021), as in (5).

(5)

(a) It is difficult PRO to please Peter.

(b) Peter is difficult to please <sub>t</sub>.

The structures (5a) and (5b) are different in that example (5a) represents control constructions where PRO refers to the subject of the *to*- infinitive clause. This means that *it is difficult for everyone to please Peter*. The same interpretation applies to example (5b) where *Peter* is raised via the mechanic of A-movement to the Spec T position, which is the position of the subject as in (6).

(6) Peter is difficult <sub>t</sub> PRO to please <sub>t</sub>.

*Peter* is originated as the complement of *please*. After that, it is raised to be the subject of the matrix clause (Keine & Poole, 2017).

Tough constructions are limited by their use of adjectives. Mair (1987) studied the adjectives used with tough constructions in British English and found that *difficult*, *hard* and *impossible* are those common adjective phrases used with tough constructions, as in (7).

(7) A lot of these people are *impossible* to deal with.

(Mair, 1987, p. 61)

*A lot of these people* is originated as the complement of the prepositional phrase *with* before raising to be the subject in the matrix clause (Mair, 1987).

## 2. Passive Constructions

In addition to tough constructions, passive constructions in generative grammar are complex constructions. They are also analyzed via the movement theory together with its active counterpart (Radford, 2009). The movement analysis of passive constructions in (8) is explained as follows:

(8)

(a) Joe bought *the violin*.

(b) *The violin* was bought by Joe.

The object, *the violin*, in the active counterpart, as in (8a) is moved into the Spec T or the subject position. *Joe*, as the active subject, has become the complement of the *by*- phrase agent. In other words, *the violin* as the raised DP becomes a sentential subject, while the subject *Joe* in its active counterpart is demoted to be *an adjunct*, or optional information (Stojan & Mijić, 2017).

To explain passive constructions in generative grammar, four linguistic aspects are considered. Firstly, it is the movement of an active object *the violin* into the passive subject. Secondly, it is compulsory to have the auxiliary *be*. Thirdly, the finite verb, such as *bought*, is transformed into the past participle as in *bought*. Fourthly, the *by*- phrase agent is optional (Radford, 2016). Example (9) presents the internal movement of passive constructions.

(9)

(a) There was found *no evidence of any corruption*.

(b) *No evidence of any corruption* was found.



(Radford, 2009, p. 211)

Passive construction as in (9b) is analyzed at a clause level. The whole QP *no evidence of any corruption* as the complement of the transitive verb *found* is moved to the Spec T position, becoming the subject (Radford, 2009). With the VP level as in *was found*, the verb phrase *found* was merged with the auxiliary *be*, becoming *was found* to form a TP node.

### 3. Raising Constructions

Raising construction is another construction in English where the subject is raised to the position of Spec T (Radford, 2009), as in (10).

(10) Peter seemed to be happy.

Example (10) shows the patterns of raising constructions in English where its syntactic derivation in (11) is explained as follows:

(11) Peter seemed  $t$  to be happy.

The symbol  $t$  represents the trace where the subject *Peter* is originated as the subject of the embedded clause before being raised to be the subject of the matrix clause. Raising constructions are also allowed in small clauses or adjectival phrases, as in (12).

(12) Peter seemed happy.

Basilica (2003) considered *happy* as an adjectival small clause. In addition to that, in Becker's (2004) study, the subject of raising constructions normally appears as an inanimate subject as in *The hay seems to be on the ground*.

In investigating the raised subject of the raising constructions, we will normally look at the verb, such as the examples (13)-(15) of raising verbs including *seem*, *appear* and *happen* (Becker, 2006). Raising constructions can be checked by the replacement of expletive *it*, (Sheikh, 2013) as in (13b), (14b) and (15b).

(13)

(a) John seemed to leave.

(b) It seemed that John left.

(14)

(a) John appears to be good at mathematics.

(b) It appears that John is good at mathematics.

(15)

(a) Mary happens to be sick.

(b) It happened that Mary was sick.

Examples (13)-(15) show the dominant quality of raising verbs in that they can be paraphrased by the construction of expletive *it*.

#### 4. Middle Constructions

The middle construction is used as active voice. It has the mechanic of A-movement where the object of the sentence is moved to become the subject of the matrix clause (Ackema & Schoorlemmer, 1994), as in (16).

(16)

(a) He sells *the book* well.

(b) *The book* sells well.

In (16a), *the book* as the object of the transitive verb *sell* has moved to become the subject of the sentence in the spec T position, while the agent of the sentence *he* is removed.

It is important to note here that stative verbs cannot be used with middle construction, such as (17a). However, the middle construction usually appears with activity verbs and accomplishment verbs (Park, 2009; Klingvall, 2013), as in (17b) and (17c).

(17)

(a) \*This chocolate cake likes easily.

- (b) This chocolate cake eats easily.
- (c) This jar does not break.

The verb *like* as in (17a) is stative and it is not allowed to be used with the middle construction in English. In contrast, the middle construction is always used with activity verbs, referring to ongoing events, such as *eat*, as in (17b) (Klingvall, 2013). Therefore, activity and accomplishment verbs are a criterion to determine middle constructions in English.

Middle constructions follow the same lines as *Affectedness Constraints*. This principle could be explained by example (18).

- (18) Peter photographs well.

In (18) the action of *photograph* is affected by the doer *Peter* (Park, 2009).

In addition to the principle of affectedness constraints, aspectual verbs constitute another criteria when interpreting middle constructions. The aspectual verbs include activity, accomplishment, stative and achievement as in (19).

- (19)
  - (a) Peter runs.
  - (b) Peter runs a mile.
  - (c) Peter likes it.
  - (d) Peter won the game.

In (19a), *run* as in *Peter runs* is an activity, referring to ongoing events. In (19b), *run a mile* as in *Peter runs a mile* is accomplishment as there is an accomplishment after finishing running for a mile. The verb *like* as in *Peter likes it* is a state. *Won* as in *Peter won the game* is an achievement.

## 5. Pragmatic Aspects of Raised Arguments

One of the pragmatic aspects to explain the phenomenon of raised arguments is the *pragmatic discourse of given and new information* or providing old information first and then new information will be given subsequently (Guerriero et al., 2006), as in (20).

- (20) I went to the bookstore to purchase *Harry Potter*. *The books* were sold well, so they were sold out since the first date launched.

In (20), the raised argument of the passive construction is used as given information that links to the discourse of the previous sentence. Since the writer wants to link old information with the previous discourse, the raised subject in the next discourse is therefore used.

Another pragmatic aspect of the raised arguments is to place emphasis on *the patient*, the one who receives the energy of the action, as in (21).

- (21) *The doctor* was sued due to his mistake in surgery.

In (21), instead of saying that someone sued the doctor due to his mistake in surgery, the one who received the consequence of the action was raised to become the subject of the sentence in order to place emphasis.

Similar to the concept above, the raised argument is the agent, the one who instigates an action (Radford, 2009).

- (22) *Nina* seems to run faster than her competitors.

In (22), the emphasis is placed on Nina who is the runner who runs faster than her competitors.

*End-weight principle* would be another method to serve the pragmatic aspect of raised arguments whereby the writer provides short information in the initial position of the sentence, whereas longer or heavier information is placed at the final position (Vicentini, 2003), such as (23).

- (23) This turkey was overcooked *which was really difficult to chew*.

The use of the raised subject could support *economy principle*, referring to the way language is used economically and minimally.

(24)

(a) The police caught the murderer.

(b) The murderer was caught.

In (24), not only is the sentence in (24a) longer, but the reader would already know that the one who can catch the murderer must be a police officer. So using the raised subject in passive constructions supports economy principle.

This principle is also applicable to the middle construction where example (25) can be explained as given below.

(25)

(a) The seller sells the book well.

(b) The book sells well.

Example (25a) is longer than (25b) which does not support economy principle in that we already know that a seller must be the one who sells things. According to Vicentini (2003), economy principle is one of the strategies of selecting the right grammatical forms in writing. This economy principle is related to *the principle of least effort*. Based upon Kul (2007), it can be interpreted that the use of language has a direct relation with users. Speakers and writers tend to apply the principle of least effort when they use language. This practice of creating a shortcut is intuitive. This could be applied with the raised argument where example (26) is explained as follows:

(26)

(a) *It* is difficult to please John.

(b) John is difficult to please <sub>t</sub>

Example (26b) represents a tough construction in English. In (26a), cutting the subject as in the expletive *it* makes the sentence become ungrammatical as in *\*is difficult to please John*. The writer needs to add the expletive *it*, which is meaningless, to support EPP feature. John is raised to be the subject position to place emphasis. In addition, the writer can reduce the effort of finding an extra subject to fill the spec T position.

This principle of least effort can be applicable to the use of passive constructions where example (27) is explained as follows:

(27)

(a) The doctor treated the patient very well.

(b) The patient was treated very well.

(27b) could be interpreted to comply with the language user's least effort as it can be assumed by the statement that the one who treated the patient is the doctor. Therefore, uttering or spelling out *the doctor* in this context is not necessary.

## 6. The Raised Arguments with Text Varieties

Previous studies selected newspapers and academic prose to study the raised arguments in English. One of the interesting studies was written by Wu and Chitrakara (2020). They studied agent and non-agent topic in passive constructions in the magazine called *National Geographic*.

(28)

(a) He was trapped inside the Grand Gallery.

(b) This photo was taken less than an hour ago.

The results in their study show that passive constructions are used without the *by*-phrase agent, as shown in

(28). Another study was written by Duboviciene and Skorupa (2017) who studied the passive construction in political news articles. They reported that the subject in this type of text is usually raised to the spec T position and the *by*- phrase agent did not frequently occur since the omitted *by*- phrase agent usually referred to the court officer.

## Research Methodology

This study focuses on English novels as they are the materials that everyone can read (Harris, 2004). Readers can select the stories that they enjoy reading themselves. Not only is reading novels entertaining, but it also allows readers to study form, meaning and use at the same time. There are three novels in this study. The selected novels are *The Portrait of a Lady: The Turn of the Screw Washing Square* (James, 2021), *Pride and Prejudice* written by (Austen, 2018), and *The Hobbit* written by (Tolkien, 2020) all of which are best seller novels (amazon.com). The content of the selected novels is regarded as having suitability to everyone. In a total of 150,000 words, there are 30 tokens of the raised subject. It is true that the data in this study is quite limited as only three novels were selected to be studied. However, the qualitative data were used to support the analysis. In addition, when collecting the data to make an analysis, the vicinity of one sentence to the left and one sentence to the right of the raised arguments were collected to be analyzed as one token.

This study follows Radford's (2009) syntactic framework.

**Table 1**

Constructions of Raised Subjects

(29)

Constructions of raised subjects	Examples
Tough Constructions	(a) <b>Peter</b> is difficult to please.
Passive Constructions	(b) <b>Madame Merle</b> took a sheet of music- <b>she</b> was seated at the piano and had abruptly wheeled about on the stool when she first spoke.
Raising Constructions	(c) <b>Dwarves</b> seemed to be busy removing the wall.
Middle Constructions	(d) <b>The book</b> reads easily.

Table 1 presents the raised argument that will be used to investigate the reason of their use in English novels. The raised argument exemplified in (29) are *Peter*, *Madame Merle*, *Dwarves* and *The book*. The copular *be* and linking verb *is* in tough and raising constructions link two sets of information together. On the other hand, the passive construction is the movement of the object to become the subject of the sentence. These four constructions are selected to be studied in order to support EFL learners in mastering their use of sentence structure. As a teacher who teaches language structures to students, many EFL learners confess that these structures with movement are difficult to be used as they are not the standard structure like S-V-O in English.

The analysis of pragmatic interpretations of raised arguments is presented in Table 2.



**Table 2**

Pragmatic Interpretations of Raised Arguments in English Novels

(30)

Pragmatic interpretations	Examples
Given and new information	(a) <b>Mrs Touchett</b> looked at the girl without resentment; <b>she</b> appeared to enjoy a bold retort and to be gracious.
Placing emphasis	(b) ‘I live in an old place in which <b>three people</b> have been murdered: <b>three</b> that were known and I don’t know how many more besides.’
Economy principle	(c) ‘ <b>The cleverest woman</b> I know, not excepting yourself,’ said Ralph. ‘I thought <b>she</b> seemed very pleasant’.

The raised argument *she* in example (30a) is pragmatically interpreted as old information of the previous discourse as in *Mrs. Touchett*. In (30b), the patient *three people* is raised from the object to become the subject of the sentence in order to place emphasis, since the actual subject of the sentence is unknown. The raising argument in (30c) is more economical as the raising is allowed to be used with the small clause *very pleasant* where the infinitive is not required to be spelt out.

### Data Validation

As mentioned earlier, three experts (English language instructors) were used to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the analysis as explained below.

**Table 3**

Data Validation

Analysis	Examples	1		2		3	
		A	D	A	D	A	D
Given and new information	(a) <b>Mrs Touchett</b> looked at the girl without resentment; <b>she</b> appeared to enjoy a bold retort and to be gracious.	✓		✓		✓	
Placing emphasis	(b) ‘I live in an old place in which <b>three people</b> have been murdered: <b>three</b> that were known and I don’t know how many more besides.’	✓		✓		✓	
Economy principle	(c) ‘ <b>The cleverest woman</b> I know, not excepting yourself,’ said Ralph. ‘I thought <b>she</b> seemed very pleasant’.	✓		✓		✓	

Three English instructors were asked to validate the data. They were asked to read and place a tick in either column A, representing agreement or column D, representing

disagreement. If two or three English instructors placed a tick in column A, the data gained validity. However, if only one or none placed a tick in column A the data were reanalyzed.

## Findings and Discussion

This section provides the results and discussion of the pragmatic interpretations of raised arguments in English novels.

### 1. Frequency and Percentage of Syntactic Constructions of the Raised Arguments in English Novels

This section discusses the frequency and percentage of different syntactic constructions of the raised subject in the selected English novels.

**Table 4**

The Raised Subjects in English Novels

<b>Constructions</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Passive Constructions	15	50
Raising Constructions	15	50
Tough Constructions	0	0
Middle Constructions	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4 represents the frequency and percentage of the raised subjects in the selected English novels. The frequency of raised subjects occurring with passive constructions is 50 percent. Similarly, the frequency of the raised subjects occurring with raising constructions is 50 percent. However, the use of tough constructions and middle constructions are not found in the selected English novels.

The lack of tough constructions in this study could be due to the fact that there is limitation in the use of adjectives with tough constructions in English, such as *difficult*, *hard*, and *impossible* (Mair, 1987). These adjectives are mostly found to have negative denotations. Therefore, tough construction is not a common structure in English novels. In addition to that, the lack of middle construction in this study could comply with Greenspon's (1996) interpretation in that it is the construction that is frequently used in advertising. However, the adjective phrases that appear with raising constructions in the selected English novels are *great* and *capable*.

Passive constructions are not commonly used in the novels. However, passive constructions are preferred in scientific texts, academic prose and newspapers. (McEnery & Xiao, 2005)

## 2. Pragmatic Discourse of Given and New Information in English Novels

As mentioned by Mair (1987), the subject position is the position where the old information occurs. For example, *Peter likes to drink hot coffee. It is his favorite drink.* The pronoun *it* is the old information of the previous sentence, referring to *hot coffee*. In this study, the majority of the raised subjects in the selected English novels are used in this way where examples (31)-(32) are explained below.

(31)

### Passive Constructions

(a) There was at the time; however, a want of fresh taste in her situation which the arrival of **an unexpected visitor** did much to correct. **The visitor** had not been announced.

(b) **Isabel** herself was upset, but **she** had not been affected as she would have imagined.

(c) **Madame Merle** took a sheet of music-**she** was seated at the piano and had abruptly wheeled about on the stool when she first spoke.

(32)

Raising Constructions

(a) Is that true, sir? asked the old man gravely. 'If it is, **your son** gave me no consolation. **He**'s a wretched fellow to talk to, a regular cynic. **He** doesn't seem to believe in anything.

(b) '**The cleverest woman** I know, not excepting yourself,' said Ralph. 'I thought **she** seemed very pleasant.'

Example (31) presents the raised argument as used in passive constructions. In (31a), *the visitor* in the subsequent sentence is the old information *the unexpected visitor* in the previous sentence. In (31b), the subject *she* is raised to correspond with the principle of old information referring to *Isabel* in the previous sentence. In a similar analysis, the pronoun *she* in example (31c) is coindexed with *Madame Merle* in the previous sentence.

Examples (32) show the raised arguments in the raising construction. In (32a), the raised subject *he* refers to the person in the previous sentence as in *your son*. Similarly, the raised subject *she* in (32b) has a co-indexation with *the cleverest woman*.

### 3. Placing Emphasis

As mentioned by Kul (2007), when the writer wants to place emphasis on the important information or empirical evidence, the information will be raised to the subject position. In this study, only three tokens are found where they are used for placing emphasis on the subject position.

(33)

- (a) I live in an old place in which **three people** have been murdered: three that were known and I don't know how many more besides.
- (b) [...] "but you must remember that **four evenings** have also been spent together-and four evenings may do a great deal."
- (c) **Five thousand pounds** was settled by marriage articles on Mrs. Bennet and the Children.

In (33), the information three people is not old information that the writer has mentioned before, it is a new piece of information. However, the writer wants to place an emphasis on this numerical evidence by raising it to become the subject of the sentence. Moreover, the reason that passive construction is not used in this context would be because the agent who performs the action of murdering is unknown. As mentioned earlier, passive voice is not semantically the same as active voice. It is true that *the cat bit me* and *I was bitten by the cat* are semantically the same. Nevertheless, Albrespit (2009) proposed that they are not equivalent pragmatically. The use of passive voice is formed by the idea of salience, interchangeably known as prominence. For example, when there are two participants in a situation, one is seen as more dominant than the other. The prominent will be placed with emphasis at the beginning of the sentence.

#### 4. Economy Principle

As mentioned by Vicentini (2003), with creativity, human beings are likely to use language as economically as possible as in example (34).

- (34) **Isabel** assented but at the same time enquired if she mightn't be trusted – if **she** appeared capable of a betrayal of confidence.

Example (34) is economical as the raising construction is allowed to be used with a small clause, as in *capable of* where *to be* is not required to be spelled out. This method of pragmatic interpretation is also applicable to (35a), where (35b) is a modified version.

(35)

(a) ‘**The cleverest woman** I know, not excepting yourself,’ said Ralph. ‘I thought **she** seemed very pleasant.’

(b) ‘**The cleverest woman** I know, not excepting yourself,’ said Ralph. ‘I thought **she is probable to be very pleasant.**’

Seem is interpreted as epistemic evidence where it can be replaced by the word *be probable*. Using the raising construction allows the user to practice using language in an economical way.

#### 5. Inanimate Subject

Becker (2004) indicated that the argument of raising construction usually appears as the inanimate subject. Although this method of analysis appears in (36), most subjects in the raising and passive constructions in this study are animate subjects, referring to human beings as in (37).

(36)

(a) “It has been a very agreeable day.” said Miss Bennet to Elizabeth. “**The party** seemed so well selected, so suitable one with the other. I hope we may often meet again”. Elizabeth smiled.

(b) The wind broke up the grey clouds, and **a wandering moon** appeared above the hills.

(37)

(a) Mrs. Gardiner was standing a little behind; and on her pausing, he asked her if she would do him the honor of introducing him to her friends. This is a stroke of civility for which **she** was quite unprepared.

(b) Mr. Darcy only entered the room. **He** seemed astonished too on finding her alone, and apologized for his intrusion by letting her know that he had understood all the ladies were to be within.

In (36), the argument of the raising construction is the party, which is interpreted as an inanimate subject. On the other hand, the subject of passive constructions (37a) and (37b) shows human beings.

## 6. Pedagogical Implication

As mentioned earlier, the current study will be useful for those learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and those learners of English as a Second Language (ESL). Learning grammar from English novels is considered to be implicit grammar learning where the learners can learn form, meaning and use at the same time. This is regarded as an advantage and an opportunity for learners to practice language outside the classroom.

In addition, using novels as a tool to learn English would avoid learner's boredom of learning grammar. Most of the time, learners learn language from their teachers inside the classroom. This is an opportunity for learners to be independent as English language learners. However, novels may not be an appropriate material to teach middle construction and tough construction as they appear to be rarely found in this text variety.



## Conclusion

The current study investigated the pragmatic interpretations of the raised subjects in the selected English novels in order to answer the following research question.

“What are the pragmatic interpretations of raised subjects in passive constructions and raising constructions in English novels?”

Middle constructions not being found in this study could be because the middle construction is only used productively in certain genres, such as advertising. Similarly, the non-occurrence of tough constructions is due to its limitation of adjective use. As mentioned by Mair (1987), adjective use with tough constructions is limited, such as *difficult*, *hard*, and *impossible*. While previous studies that investigated the raised subject in other text varieties found that the raised subjects usually appear to be inanimate (Becker, 2004), this study found the raised subject in the selected English novels is used with the concept of animacy, such as *he* and *she*. In addition, the majority of the raised subjects comply with the principle of pragmatic discourse of old and new information. The raised subject is recognized as relating to the old information of the previous sentence and the subject position is the position of the old information. This is a reason why the writer moves the subject by taking advantage of using the syntactic structures of passive constructions and raising constructions in English. Aside from that, the raised subject is the position where numerical data and empirical evidence is placed in order to place emphasis, such as *five thousand pounds*, *three people*, and *four evenings*. The results of this study are only limited to the raised subjects in the selected English novels. Generalizing the result of raised subject in this study to other text varieties, such as academic texts and newspapers may not be applicable to the optimum level. For future research, it is recommended to study the raised argument in different varieties of English, such as American English and British English. It is also recommended that selecting other

texts such as advertising to study the raised subject would contribute something new to the field.

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# The Analysis of Types and Functions of Chinese Interrogative Sentences Used between Hotel Guests and Front Desk Staff in China

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ลูกค้าและพนักงานต้อนรับโรงแรมในประเทศจีน

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## Abstract

The objectives of this research were to 1) study the types of Chinese interrogative sentences used in conversations between hotel staff and guests, 2) study the purposes of the questions asked in conversations between hotel staff and guests and 3) adapt the results to design the content of a Chinese for hospitality course. Data for this quantitative research study were collected by recording conversations between hotel staff and guests in various situations. The conversations were then transcribed to analyze the usage frequency of different types of interrogative sentences and the

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purposes of each question. Thirty-five audio recordings of a total of 20,285-word conversations were transcribed and analyzed.

Results showed that the most common interrogative sentence demanded a true or false answer, followed by a specific question. Less frequent types of interrogative sentences were choice questions. There were 16 different purposes of the questions including seeking/requesting information, seeking advice, giving information, seeking confirmation, requesting nonverbal action and reminding. It was recommended that the design of a Chinese for hospitality course content focus on grammar, culture and language functions and also on the different types of interrogative sentences, while the purposes of different questions should be assimilated into each unit or lesson. The instructor should also encourage students to understand the different types of interrogative sentences and the purposes of the questions.

**Keywords:** interrogative sentences, language functions, conversation, hotel staff, guests

### บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อ 1) ศึกษาประเภทรูปประโยคคำถามภาษาจีนที่ปรากฏในบทสนทนาระหว่างพนักงานโรงแรมและลูกค้า 2) ศึกษาวัตถุประสงค์ของประโยคคำถามภาษาจีนที่ปรากฏในบทสนทนาระหว่างพนักงานโรงแรม และลูกค้า และ 3) นำผลการศึกษาไปประยุกต์ใช้ในการออกแบบการเรียนการสอนวิชาภาษาจีนเพื่องานโรงแรม การวิจัยใช้วิธีการศึกษาเชิงปริมาณ เก็บข้อมูลจากการอัดเสียงการสนทนาในสถานการณ์ต่าง ๆ ระหว่างแขกกับพนักงานโรงแรม นำไฟล์เสียงที่เก็บได้มาถอดเป็นตัวหนังสือเพื่อวิเคราะห์หาความถี่ของประเภทคำถาม และความถี่ของวัตถุประสงค์การใช้คำถาม โดยทำการถอดเสียงและวิเคราะห์บันทึกเสียง 35 บทสนทนา ความยาว 20,285 คำ

ผลวิจัยพบว่า ประเภทรูปประโยคคำถามที่พบมากที่สุด คือ คำถาม ถูกผิด รองลงมา คือ คำถามชี้เฉพาะ สุดท้าย คือ คำถามแบบให้เลือก ประโยคคำถามที่ใช้มี 16 วัตถุประสงค์ ประกอบด้วย การขอข้อมูล การขอ คำแนะนำ การให้ข้อมูล การขอความเห็นชอบ การขอให้กระทำการบางอย่างที่ไม่ใช่จากตอบ การเตือน เป็นต้น จากการศึกษาค้นคว้าทำให้ทราบว่า การออกแบบ ตำราหรือ เนื้อหาวิชาภาษาจีนเพื่องานโรงแรมควรให้ความสำคัญกับไวยากรณ์ วัฒนธรรม และสมรรถนะทางภาษา โดยนำรูปแบบประโยคคำถาม และ วัตถุประสงค์ของ ประโยคคำถามสอดแทรกในการเรียนรู้แต่ละหน่วยการเรียนรู้ หรือบทเรียน และ ผู้สอนควรกระตุ้นให้ผู้เรียนมีความเข้าใจวัตถุประสงค์การถามที่สอดคล้องกับ รูปแบบของประโยคคำถาม

**คำสำคัญ:** ประโยคคำถาม สมรรถนะทางภาษา บทสนทนา พนักงานโรงแรม ลูกค้

## Introduction

Chinese language for tourism and hotel service is one of the most popular subjects among Thai students. As a result, many academic institutions have designed and developed hospitality Chinese-related curricula. However, textbooks and other learning materials for this subject are not appropriate for Thai native speakers. During field research for his Ph.D. dissertation, Chun (2019) discovered that most practical Chinese language study textbooks were compiled by Thai teachers in different schools with content based on personal experience. To allow students to acquire a comprehensive knowledge of the Chinese language used in the hotel service industry, some teachers used books written in English. These bilingual English-Chinese textbooks were designed for Chinese native speakers who wished to learn hospitality English and

were not suitable material for students from other counties pursuing the Mandarin language. The demand for Chinese speaking staff in the Thai hospitality industry is growing, but few certified Chinese study textbooks are available in related professional fields. Existing publications also have sketchy content and do not meet the needs of users. Writing course books by applying real conversations transcribed from dialogs between staff and guests introducing practical Chinese characters collected from hotels will greatly benefit instruction in Chinese hospitality classes.

Most applied linguistic research examining communication in hotel service industry has focused on the English language. Harun (1998, as cited in Blue & Harun, 2003, pp. 73-91) collected authentic information from four-star hotels and transcribed the audio files into texts before analysis, while Harun (1998) analyzed 40 sample conversations related to the functional activities of hotel reception encounters including information requests and queries, miscellaneous requests, check-in and check-out and complaints and criticisms. The analysis of real conversations allowed the researchers to identify functions of communicative activities and the specific language used. Ting (2008) analyzed spoken discourse using material collected as original recordings from three-star hotel call centers. Twenty-five hotel telephone service encounters between one hotel front desk receptionist and twenty-five customers were recorded and transcribed for analysis. Results revealed that discourse structure, regardless of the varied communicative purposes, was generically confined to a typical sequential staging such as greeting followed by service initiation, service request, service compliance and service closure. The hotel front desk receptionist used speech functions to offer and comply, while the customers used different speech functions to accept and request.



Aspects of questioning, answering, checking, confirming, acknowledging, probing and agreeing were speech roles shared between the receptionist and the customers.

Most of the studies applying discourse analysis to explore hotel service communication mainly originated from regions outside mainland China. To study hospitality English in China, Wang and Li (2014, pp. 80-81) built a corpus by collecting real English conversations from over 300 domestic hotels. They analyzed the characteristics of the collected language recordings from five-star hotel websites with the help of a software called WordSmith. It was found that the language used on the websites for hotel publicity was quite direct, correct and purposeful. While introducing the hotels' facilities and services, the language also focused on the outstanding quality and modernity of the hotels. It was discovered that to achieve these purposes nouns were used more often than adjectives with the ratio of 6:1. However, previous studies focusing on Chinese hospitality are still limited. Zhong and Zhou (2010, pp. 116-117) recorded conversations from major hotels in Guilin City, China. They collected and analyzed the data from the aspect of the "principle of cooperation" and highlighted the importance of cooperation between guests and hotel staff, while collaborations among hotel employees should also be valued.

More detailed research in this field can assist teachers in presenting Chinese hospitality lectures through a better understanding of the Chinese language characteristics frequently used in hotel service. Authentic corpora of real conversational environments in the service sector can trigger learning interest and motivate student language progression. Students taking a Chinese hospitality course must have strong practical skills, and relevant teaching content and textbook selection should be synchronized with service conversations occurring in the real world.

## Literature Review

Discourse analysis is a research method that explored the language applied in social contexts by focusing on communications among people (Stubbs, 1997). Li and Fan (2007) summarized three aspects of discourse analysis as showing human behavior in a multicultural context, exploring the relationship between discourse and society, and studying the important role of discourse in the acquisition and use of knowledge. Many linguists used discourse analysis as theoretical support to observe human behavior through communication as conversations. Conversation analysis has developed into one of the most popular subordinated theories of discourse analysis and can be used to analyze ongoing conversations. Hutchby and Wooffitt (2011) defined conversation analysis as the study of naturally occurring turn-taking in talk-in-interaction. As cited by Sujaritlak (2014, p. 33), Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) mentioned that conversation analysis includes studies of turn-taking, adjacency pairs, repair, topic and switch of topics from conversation opening and closing.

The fundamental theoretical roots for this paper involved conversation analysis focusing on the form (structure) and functions (meanings) of languages as form-function analysis (Gee, 2011). To study conversation analysis in Chinese, scholars must first learn about relevant research conducted in China. Chinese conversations include many interrogative sentences. Questioning is essential, especially for staff with specific occupations. Research about interrogative sentences in Chinese conversation involves professional fields such as question analysis in court conversations, questions and the power of speech from Chinese family daily conversations, and questions and answers in communication between doctors and patients.

Many types of questions are applicable in diverse contexts. In conversational communication, different types of interrogative sentences have distinct communicative purposes and functions. Therefore, differentiating the types of questions and understanding the characteristics of the chosen answers are effective procedures to master conversational communication. In Chinese, there are three types of interrogative sentences including specific questions, choice questions and *yes or no* questions, which can also be divided into affixed questions, repeated questions and tag questions (Zhang, 1994). These are detailed as follows:

1) Shao (2007) described a specific question as one in which the pronoun conveys the interrogative information and becomes the key, hoping that the other party will provide an answer about the questioned objects. 2) Choice questions normally put forward two or more opinions and hope that the listener will choose one as an answer. The conjunction mostly used in these questions is “是.....还是” (this one...or). 3) The *yes or no* question asks the respondent to give a positive or negative answer to objects stated in the question. The structure is the same as a narrative sentence. Using a rising tone or an interrogative final particle turns a narrative sentence into an interrogative sentence. 4) An affixed question is a brief question attached to a narration or an imperative sentence. Affixed questions are often applied when the questioner wishes the other party to confirm or agree on one thing. When attached to an imperative sentence, they mostly ask for the other party's opinion. 5) Tag questions are similar to *yes or no* questions and require the respondent to give a positive or negative answer. The feature of a tag question is the use of tag phrases like “did or did not”, “have or have not”, and “remember or not”. Shao (2007) clarified the features and standards by distinguishing interrogative sentences from other types and sorting questions into different categories.

However, practically, the use of interrogative sentences is more complicated. For example, the structure of an interrogative sentence has the characteristics of a question but is often simply used to make a request instead of making an inquiry, while some interrogative questions do not expect an answer. Factors such as job type, social status and working area also influence the necessity for speaking and communication. Therefore, grammar and structure as well as the theory of speech acts are important when analyzing interrogative sentences. The speech act theory proposed by Austin (1962) interprets linguistic communication from the angle of behavior. Sentences can be grouped into four categories as statements, questions, commands and exclamations. The same speech act can be expressed in different types of sentences. The speech act of interrogative sentences is more complicated. It can implement the direct act of “question” and also indirect acts such as making statements and imperatives and expressing exclamations. Therefore, one speech act could also conduct compound speech acts (Tan, 2007). In terms of contextual functions, Martel (1989, as cited in Tan, 2007, p. 38-39), classified interrogative sentences into 18 categories.

Previous studies and lectures have suggested that the most effective method for language application is to analyze communication techniques. Discourse analysis methodology involves observing human behavior through real life conversations in their social context, attempting to identify the relationship between participants and language structures. Scrutinizing the interrogative sentences within conversations between hotel staff and guests with conversation analysis methodology will allow scholars to identify special features of different types of questions and analyze their functions and

meanings from a linguistic aspect. These analytical methods can promote more practical and effective revision of hospitality Chinese textbooks.

## **Objectives**

1. To determine the types of questions commonly asked in Chinese between guests and hotel front desk staff
2. To determine the functions of each type of interrogative sentence
3. To offer suggestions to improve textbook contents for Chinese hospitality teaching

## **Research Methodology**

This study employed a mixed-method research design as a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches to collect and analyze data using the specific procedures demonstrated below:

First, previous literature about hotel service that applied the conversation analysis (CA) theory was examined.

Second, data were collected as conversations between hotel reception staff and foreigners who studied in China and were able to communicate in Mandarin.

Authentic corpora recorded in Chinese budget hotels were collected and transcribed. Budget hotel chains comprise the majority of the Chinese accommodation market. Field trips during this study used mobile phones and digital devices to record real conversations. Most recordings were made without the knowledge of the hotel staff. The conversations recorded were in the form of participatory surveys, whereby the recorder

acted as a visitor or a check- in guest at the hotel. Other recordings were made during the booking or check- in process. The audio file transcription procedure followed Zhang (2007) by transliterating symbols as a primary reference.

For all conversations, female staff were coded “S”, male staff “NS”, female guests “G” and male guests “NG”. For multiple conversations, numerical order was added as “S1”, “NS1”, “G1” and “NG1”. During the transcriptions, sentence segmentation was determined by pauses in the original conversations.

### Findings

#### 1. Results

In total, 35 conversational audio files were transcribed comprising 1,452 linguistic terms, 20,285 words and 472 questions as 293 (62 %) from hotel staff, with guests asking the remaining 179 (38 %) questions (Table 1).

**Table 1**  
Interrogative Sentences Used in Conversation Between Front Desk Staff and Hotel Guests

Questions between hotel staff and guests					
Turn	Interrogative sentence	Staff		Guest	
		Interrogative sentence	Percent	Interrogative sentence	Percent
1452	472	293	62	179	38

Seven scenarios were involved during the collection and investigation of the 35 conversations These included inquiry, booking, check-in procedures, phone calls, check-out procedures and assisting guests.

## 2. Questions Asked in Conversations

Markers or symbols to distinguish types of interrogative sentences in Chinese usually comprise five types as follows: 1) modal particles "吗 (ma)" at the end-of-sentence, 2) predicate structure of "V/A 不 V/A" (did or did not), 3) interrogative words (phrases), like "what or how", 4) conjunctions, like "still" and 5) intonation or tones. However, this paper categorized the recorded questions into three types following Zhang (1994) as specific indicated questions, alternative questions and yes or no questions. The yes or no question was further subcategorized into "affirmative-negative questions (A not A questions)". Results showed that among the 472 interrogative sentences, affirmative-negative questions were the most common at 364 or 77%, followed by specific interrogative sentences at 94 or 20%. The twelve selective questions only accounted for 3% of the total. The use of words "贵姓 (your name)" occurred twice among all the collected conversations when staff asked guests their names. Thus, this was counted in the category of "others".

The verbal function of questioning in the Chinese language system is usually realized through interrogative tones. The questioning tone is expressed by a change of the syntactic form or by using interrogative particles and intonations. Discourses between hotel staff and guests are institutional communications and differ from general conversations. The collected data showed that the use rate of the interrogative tone was very high at 87% or 315 times in total. Results also indicated that the interrogative particles listed in Table 2 were all from yes or no questions including "吧 (ba)、吗 (ma)、啊 (a)、啦 (la)、哦 (ou)、呀 (ya)、哈 (ha)". Intonation was also used to convey different interrogative information.

**Table 2**

Modals Applied in Staff-Guest Conversations at Hotel Front Desks

Particles	Interrogative particles							
	吧 ba	吗 ma	啊 a	啦 la	哦 o	呀 ya	哈 ha	Tone A-not-A question
<b>Frequency</b>	150	148	11	1	3	1	1	39
<b>%</b>	41	40.3	3	0.3	0.8	0.3	0.3	11

Special words are used to distinguish interrogative sentences, while interrogative pronouns contain the inquired information as a specific question. Specific questions expect an answer relating to that referenced by the interrogative pronoun (Shao, 2007). The basic sentence pattern of a specific question is "Intonation + interrogative pronoun + modal particle". A specific question uses interrogative pronouns as breakthrough points to obtain information about people, events, time, place, methods and reasons. Specific questions have exploratory purposes as an effective way to ask for unknown information (Luo, 2015). This paper recorded 94 specific interrogative sentences, accounting for 20% of all the questions asked. Pronouns used in specific questions included "什么 (what) ", "哪 (where) ", "几 (how many) ", "多少 (how many) ", "怎么 (how) " and "谁 (who) ", while the abbreviated format of specific questions included "NP+ 呢 (ne) " and "VP+ 呢 (ne)



**Table 3**

Interrogative Pronouns Used in Staff-Guest Conversations at Hotel Front Desks

Fre- quency	Interrogative pronoun								
	什么 what	哪 where	几 how many	多少 how many	怎么 how	呢 NP+	呢 VP+	谁 who	
	30	16	23	13	3	5	3	1	94
%	32	17	25	14	3	5	3	1	

3. Interrogative Sentences Collected between Dialogists at Hotel Front Desks

The speech act theory, first proposed by Austin (1962), regards language as a kind of act. Searle (2001, as cited in Tan, 2007) supported this theory and stated that whenever people speak they are actually performing various types of speech acts, ruled by the language components in their words. The smallest unit of conversational communication is not a sentence but a speech act.

Therefore, the communication process actually constitutes one speech act unit after another. Each speech act unit reflects the speaker's specific intentions. Every sentence contains a specific speech act in an exact context. Conversely, every speech act must be carried out through a certain type of sentence.

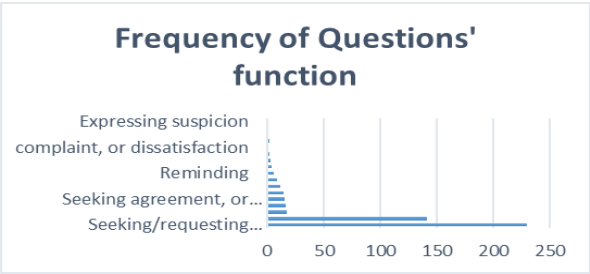
Subcategories of interrogative sentences include inquiry, examination, interrogation, follow-up questions and cross-examination. The functions and properties of these subtypes are similar and they are not discussed individually in this research.

Interrogative sentences contain simple and direct speech acts of "question", and can also be widely used to

implement compound and indirect speech acts. An interrogative sentence may convey both single and plural numbers of indirect speech acts. Indirect speech acts or behavior through the language of interrogative sentences can be observed in situations of instruction, determination, entertainment, blocking, rebuttal or defense, blaming, urging, reminding and exclaiming.

The concept of functions of questions must be explained before demonstrating the research findings. A question can be considered as a request for information. A questioner seeks information that he or she does not yet understand. Li and Fan (2007) suggested that questions can be divided into four categories as the function of seeking information, the function of advertising entertainment programs, the function of checking and confirming information and the function of applied linguistics. To collect and analyze the function of interrogative sentences in a comprehensive and profound way, we filtered the questions into 16 relevant functional types following Farih and Maher (2008, pp. 144-164). Statistical results are shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**  
Frequency and Percentage of Functions



Analysis of the conversation recordings shows that the most frequent function of interrogative sentences was seeking/requesting information as commonly assumed, while seeking confirmation

was the second most frequent function, representing 30%. In the context of hospitality, questions regarding accommodation information are mostly asked by hotel staff and answered by guests to ensure that the reservation, check-in and check-out processes are completed without misunderstandings. However, in the context of hotel booking services, guests are the party that asks most of the questions, as they seek more information about the hotel.

## **Discussion**

This research aimed to understand the use of language between hotel receptionists and guests by analyzing real conversations. Findings can be used as a reference to improve the quality of textbooks and other teaching materials related to Chinese hospitality courses. Three objectives were determined before conducting this research, and the findings discussed below relate to each objective.

The first research objective was to determine the types of questions commonly asked during conversations between Chinese guests and hotel front desk staff.

Students should be aware of the most frequently asked questions at the hotel reception desk and how these interrogative sentences can be sorted into different types. By understanding the different categories, the students will be able to discern the various features and characteristics of the questions and correctly apply answers under real circumstances. Recordings of real conversations showed that the hotel staff provided services to guests and fulfilled their requests by asking questions. Questions asked by the guests accounted for 62% of all the collected conversations. The interrogative sentence forms

a vital part of conversational communication in the hospitality industry and a Teaching Chinese for Hotel Service course should include relevant lectures on this topic.

The statistic above illustrates that the affirmative-negative or 'Yes or No' question was the most commonly asked at 77%, followed by specific interrogative sentences accounting for 20% and selective questions at 3%. The research findings were derived from the analysis of real language characteristics. This information can only be collected by staff working in the hotels. A professional Chinese language teacher has no opportunity to experience the real operational processes in the hospitality industry and may overlook key points of the Chinese language when selecting teaching content. Therefore, providing real-life content allows students to directly experience the actual contexts of asking questions in the hotel service industry.

The key points of interrogative sentences for Chinese hospitality are summarized below.

The textbook or teaching content should first introduce affirmative-negative or 'Yes or No' questions to help students to understand that this kind of question normally includes interrogative particles. Except for the frequently used "吧 ba", "吗 ma" and "啊 a" in real conversations, the staff also often use "啦 la", "呀 ya", "哈 ha" and "哦 oh" to ask questions. Intonation is also important when asking a question. This requires students to master raising the tone of their voice and distinguishing tones of different questions. By doing this they will understand the tones and choose the correct tone when facing similar situations in real workplaces.

The next section teaches students about the interrogative questions used mainly to inquire about specific information. Guests apply interrogative pronouns to clearly

address the information they need to know. The abbreviated specific interrogative sentence is also introduced in the same chapter. Research results showed two structures including "NP+呢 (ne)" and "VP+呢 (ne)" that are usually used by hotel guests when inquiring about room types and prices. For example, "What if we do not want breakfast?", implies that the guest wants to know how much the room is per night without breakfast. In another example, one staff member asks "Where is the other one?", meaning "where is the other guest who needs to register at the front desk".

Therefore, teachers should explain these aspects in detail to ensure that students understand the characteristics and the complete meaning of the abbreviated forms of specific questions.

The second research objective was to determine the functions of each type of interrogative sentence.

The process of sorting the questions into different categories is followed by understanding their functions. Fareh and Maher (2008, pp. 144- 164) claimed that interrogative sentences have different discourse functions. Questions can be divided into typical and non-typical functions as direct and indirect functions of a speech act. A direct function of an utterance is indicated by the literal meaning of its grammar and vocabulary (Fareh & Maher, 2008, pp. 146- 164). By understanding interrogative sentence functions, students will be able to use the Chinese language to ask the correct and proper questions in given hotel service contexts. Questions are used as inquiries and also to express demands and provide instructions. Most importantly, questions indicate the appropriateness and decency of the language or the courtesy of speakers. In the Chinese hotel service scenario, the function "seeking/requesting

information” occupied 49% as almost half of the collected data. To provide professional hotel service, staff generally seek or request certain information from guests. Questions are inevitable in these kinds of occasions. The following transcribed recordings are good examples.

NS: 你好，有预订吗？ (Hi, do you have a reservation?)

NG:有，有，给。 (Yes, here you are.)

NS: 您在哪个网站订的呀？ (Which website you used for this booking?)

NG: 艺龙。 (Yi Long.)

NS: 艺龙是吧？ (Yi Long, right? )

NG: 对。 (Correct.)

NS: 您的手机是---? (And your phone number is\_\_\_?)

NG: 幺三幺二幺七。 (One-three-one-two-one-seven.)

To recognize the source of this booking, hotel staff asked about the booking channel and mobile phone number of the guest. Then, they checked online to confirm the information. The importance of questions is obvious and students must have sufficient knowledge of different questions and be able to use them correctly to obtain the desired information.

After acknowledging the guest’s details, the hotel receptionists need to reconfirm the information. This is achieved by repeating the information plus interrogative particles "吧 (ba)" or "吗 (ma)". In some situations, the staff also resort to interrogative sentences by simply adding the particle "吗 (ma)" at the end. The example below demonstrates one of these situations.

NS: 您预订姓名可以告诉我一下。  
 (Please tell me the reservation name.)  
 NG: 呃---春丽娟。(Hmm---Chun Lijuan.)  
 NS: 春丽娟是吗? (Chun Lijuan, right?)  
 NG: 对(Yes.)

This following conversation shows the purpose of reconfirmation by using particle "吧(ba)" and a rising tone.

NG: 可以寄存行李吗? (Could we deposit our baggage here?)  
 S: 欸, 好。行李寄存一下是吧? (Oh, okay, luggage deposit, right?)  
 NG: 对。(Right.)  
 S: 好咧! ..... 是过一会儿来取吗?  
 (No problem, will you take it later?)  
 NG: 是的, 大概一点半。(Yes, about 1:30pm)  
 S: 一点半是吧? (1:30 pm, right?)  
 NG: 对。(Yes.)  
 S: 一件哦? (One bag?)  
 NG: 两件。(Two)  
 S: 两件? (Two?)  
 NG: 嗯, 两件。 . ..... (Yes, two bags.....)

Seeking and confirming information were the main functions of interrogative sentences during the recorded hotel check- ins. The duty of hotel front desk staff is to check information and confirm whether the booking records of guests are correct. Students who understand the purpose of the questions are more likely to communicate with guests smoothly and display higher efficiency in the future.

Here, 17 interrogative sentences were identified that showed the functions of seeking advice in the recorded conversations, accounting for 4% of the total. They were used when the guests were unclear about some details and required further guidance or assistance from the desk staff, such as the dialog below:

- NG: 问一下如果.....问就是如果我我要自己办卡  
那 一个会员卡的话用那个 APP 的那个下载是要用  
手机下载 APP 是吧? 那要交多少钱呢? (May I  
know if.... that is, if I need to apply the membership  
card, it need me to download the app and proceed  
there, is it?)
- NS: 你看, 您办什么卡? (Please take a look. What kind  
of card you want to apply)?

The second example is shown below.

- NG: 那钱是什么时候给的呀? (When I need to pay for it?)
- NS: 钱你是在网上订的时候就给了。 (You already paid  
online during the booking procedure.)
- NG: 嗯, 我我只付了最低那个三百 (Yeah, I only paid  
the minimum one which is about 300 yuan.)
- NS: 哦对, 你就付了三百六十九。 (Oh right, you only  
paid three hundred and sixty-nine)
- NS2: 明天再过来交就行。 (You could come to pay  
tomorrow.)

In this conversation, the guest wanted to know when to pay the remaining room fee. As well as asking for information, questions can also provide the required details. However, in the collected conversations, this function only occupied 3%, mainly indicated through yes or no questions, as seen in the example below.



S: 一个订单是两天的。(One booking is for 2 days.)  
 NG: 对。..... (Yes. ....)  
 S: 帮您看一下。啊, 对, 十二还有一个。(Let me check for you. Oh, right, there is another one on 12th)  
 NG: 对吧---? (Is it correct...?)  
 S: 十号十二号在一个..... (The one on 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> is on.....)  
 NG: 然后八号到十号对吧? (And 8th to 10th, right? )

During this conversation, the guest informs the staff about the booking date through questions, gives information that the staff do not know and asks for their confirmation.

In some scenarios, both guests and staff may ask questions seeking agreement or approval, especially when they have special requirements. The following dialog shows one scene where guests hope to gain approval from the staff.

NG: 唉, 我有照片了。(Hi, I got a photo.)  
 NS: 呃, 照片不行, 我得复印出来。(Hmm, the photo is not allowed here, we need a copy.)  
 NG: 呃---是吗? 早上您说让家里人发传真是吧? 不是发。(Oh, is it? This morning you mentioned that you will let your family fax it over, right? Not sending..... )  
 NS: 传真是发那个单子, 直接发那个单子。我们需要复印出来, 跟那个 ..... (The faxed file is a bill. Please send that bill directly. I need to copy it with another one. . )  
 NG: 可以补吗? 就是明天或者后天。(Could I send it later? By tomorrow or the after tomorrow.)  
 NS: 呃, 不行。因为明天 (Well, cannot. Because tomorrow.....)

NG: 因为我们还在这里四天呢。(Because we will still be here for four days.)

NS: 不是, 您主要您过来入住公安局就会查, 您懂吗?  
(It's not like that. As long as you checked in, the police will come to inspect. Do you understand that?)

This dialog took place when guests presented incorrect documents for the check-in procedure. The hotel receptionist was unable to find the date of entry at the airport. The guest said that this information could be supplied in the next two days. She said "Could I send it later?" to ask for approval from the hotel desk staff. They replied, "Do you understand that?", hoping that the guest could cooperate.

The conversations detailed above show the functions of questions in real life. Fareh and Maher (2008, pp. 144-164) suggested that authentic materials should be included in new Chinese hospitality textbooks to help second language learners comprehend real situations where these questions and answers are applicable. Chinese teaching contents generally focus on grammar, culture and function of the language. These authentic and suitable conversations retrieved from real communications between hotel staff and guests should not be neglected as good examples.

The third research objective was to summarize these findings and offer suggestions to improve textbooks for Chinese hospitality teaching.

Foreign hotel staff use Mandarin to discourse with native speaking guests. Their duties require procuring copious information from guests such as names on the booking reservation date, booking channels, payment methods, special

requirements, room types and arrival time. Questions are asked relating to all these situations. To maximize communication efficacy, Chinese hospitality students need to understand the different types of interrogative sentences and their functions relating to everyday hotel service requirements. All these facets will offer helpful educational advice for both instructors and students in hotel service Chinese-related courses.

To put the advice into practice, the course textbook should list interrogative sentences as key learning points in different situations. Some students may be more language experienced than others. Chinese for hospitality course teachers should explain the three previously mentioned categories of interrogative sentences. The students should be encouraged to ask questions and practice using all the different types of questions among themselves to address each purpose correctly. The main goal is to ensure that the students understand the importance of questions in daily hotel operations. This will help students to overcome their worries and fears about asking guests for essential information.

Students should not recite sentences by rote without understanding their proper usage contexts. Basic knowledge of the various forms of Chinese interrogative sentences will allow the students to quickly adapt to ask the correct questions in fast-changing scenarios. A solid comprehension of the functions of different interrogative sentences will also assist future hotel staff to gain a better understanding of what the guests may say or require.

This paper also collected and analyzed questions and conversations by considering aspects of Chinese culture, and combined the findings with the latest Chinese news and changing tourism policies.

Language is an important aspect of culture. Through analyzing conversations between Chinese guests and hotel staff, we learned how Chinese culture impacted communication and social manners and also reflected the current situation in China. For instance, foreign visitors to China are only permitted to stay in hotels that are registered as qualified to accommodate overseas guests. The check-in policy for foreign tourists can be complicated. Passport and visa information must be registered on the hotel system and be available for Chinese police to inspect. The current domestic situation in China would be difficult to assess without our detailed conversation analysis that provided information about special characteristics of Chinese hotels for both foreign tourists and students. Under certain contexts, students will have a better understanding of how budget chain hotels operate in China. For example, many hotels in China list unusual rooms, such as big bedrooms with no windows that are rare in Thailand. Students will assimilate this information efficaciously through analyzing the conversations. All this information should be included in Hospitality Chinese teaching designs or as teaching material supplements as a practical learning method to understand Chinese culture.

An awareness of the domestic situation in China and Chinese customs and culture would assist Thai hotel staff to serve Chinese tourists as the largest national group. During the last decade, China has become a huge market for promoting Thai tourism. Statistics collected by the Economic Bureau of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand showed that in 2019 over 4 million Chinese tourists traveled to Thailand, generating 200 billion baht of foreign exchange income. Therefore, welcoming guests from China by speaking fluent and proper Chinese and understanding their habits and culture are essential

skills to improve hotel service efficiency. Results from a survey of Chinese tourists to Thailand (Chinese International Travel Monitor: CITM) conducted by Hotels.com™ found that Chinese tourists chose Thailand as the number one travel destination. However, they mentioned five aspects that they considered the Thai hospitality industry should improve. These included the provision of sufficient Mandarin-speaking hotel staff, restaurant waiters and tour guides with good speaking skills to supplement their hotel stay enjoyment. The Thai hospitality industry should respond to these requests and increase hotel staff requirements in Chinese language proficiency to improve communication efficiency with Chinese tourists.

## **Conclusion**

This research examined real conversations from the front desks of budget hotels in Mainland China. The results were used to provide suggestions on textbook contents and curriculum design of Chinese language courses relevant to the hospitality industry in Thailand. The main focus was placed on interrogative sentences during conversations between hotel staff and guests. Using the theory of conversation analysis, this study examined the form and function of the questions asked.

In total, 35 conversations between hotel staff and guests were recorded and transcribed into text files as 20,285 words containing 1,452 linguistic terms, with 62% of the questions asked by hotel staff. Discourse analysis determined that affirmative-negative questions were most commonly asked between Chinese speaking hotel staff and guests, accounting for 77% of the total.

Affirmative-negative questions are used to check or confirm information, and these comprise the majority of communicative situations in hotel service operations. For example, the staff used yes or no questions for information confirmation during the check-in processes. These sentences usually have modal particles like "吧 (ba) " and "吗 (ma)" to end the question. Guests used yes or no questions mainly to repeat the answers or information provided by the other speakers.

Affirmation-negative or yes or no questions are also useful when seeking or requesting information, with a similar function as a specific interrogative sentence. In the hotel context, the information required mainly concerns the identity of guests or instructions relating to hotel accommodation. These are vital details that require special attention from students. Besides seeking confirmation and requiring information, other functions of questions involve seeking advice, providing information, seeking agreement or approval, requesting non-verbal action, making an offer and asking for permission. Future hotel workers would benefit by knowing more about the type and function of commonly used questions in hospitality Chinese.

Due to the insufficiency of manpower, resources and time, the number of hotels, hotel types and authentic recordings collected in this paper were limited. Future studies should expand the number and types of hotels chosen for recordings. The duration of recording and real hotel scenarios involved should also be increased accordingly. Using a comprehensive database of audio files concerning real hotel conversations, future relevant studies will be able to analyze and draw

conclusions that are more representative and universal. Future research should also explore the diverse vocabularies used in hotel service feedback to compare them with word lists in the hospitality Chinese teaching syllabus.

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# Reducing Thai EFL Students' Pronunciation Anxiety through a CAPT-Based Reading Progress Application

การลดความวิตกกังวลในการออกเสียงของนักเรียนไทยที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างชาติด้วยแอปพลิเคชัน Reading Progress ในการฝึกออกเสียงโดยใช้คอมพิวเตอร์ช่วย

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## Abstract

This research investigated the effects of implementing a Reading Progress (RP) application and an Immersive Reader (IR) tool as a computer-assisted pronunciation training (CAPT). It was utilized with the goal of 1) lessening the students' pronunciation anxiety, 2) assessing their pronunciation skills, and 3) exploring their degree of satisfaction with the utilization of the pronunciation application. A pre-experimental (one-group

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pretest posttest) research design was conducted with thirty students from two state universities, who were selected by simple random sampling. The pronunciation performance test, pronunciation anxiety scale, and a questionnaire focusing on the levels of satisfaction for the utilization of the application were obtained. The data was collected using the recordings of the pre-tests, 12 reading practices, and the post-tests, which were held over 4 weeks of intervention on Microsoft Teams. The pronunciation performance tests were evaluated by three raters. Meanwhile, the descriptive statistics and t-test were analyzed using SPSS version 20. The findings indicated that there was a statistically significant effect of CAPT on pronunciation skills and the reduction of pronunciation anxiety. In conclusion, the students' pronunciation anxiety lessened, and their pronunciation improved significantly ( $p < 0.01$ ). Additionally, their satisfaction regarding the utilization of the application was significant.

**Keywords:** pronunciation, pronunciation anxiety, application, computer-assisted pronunciation trainin (CAPT), automatic speech recognition (ASR)

## บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้ศึกษาการนำแอปพลิเคชัน Reading Progress และเครื่องมือ Immersive Reader ไปใช้ในการฝึกการออกเสียงโดยใช้คอมพิวเตอร์ช่วยของนักศึกษา มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อ 1) ลดความวิตกกังวลในการออกเสียง 2) ศึกษาความสามารถในการออกเสียง และ 3) ศึกษาความพึงพอใจต่อการใช้แอปพลิเคชันในการฝึกการออกเสียง การวิจัยนี้เป็นการวิจัยก่อนการทดลอง (แบบแผนการทดลองกลุ่มเดียวทดสอบก่อนหลัง) โดยกลุ่มตัวอย่างเป็นนักศึกษาจาก

มหาวิทยาลัยของรัฐสองแห่ง โดยใช้เทคนิคการสุ่มตัวอย่างแบบง่าย จำนวน 30 คน เครื่องมือวิจัย ได้แก่ แบบทดสอบประสิทธิภาพการออกเสียง แบบวัดความวิตกกังวลในการออกเสียง และแบบสอบถามวัดความพึงพอใจต่อการใช้แอปพลิเคชันในการฝึกการออกเสียง เก็บข้อมูลจากการทดสอบก่อนการฝึกแบบฝึกการอ่าน 12 ครั้ง และการทดสอบหลังการฝึก รวม 4 สัปดาห์ของการทดลองบน Microsoft Teams ซึ่งการทดสอบประสิทธิภาพการออกเสียงให้คะแนนโดยผู้ประเมินสามคน โดยใช้ค่าเฉลี่ย ส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน และสถิติทดสอบที ด้วยโปรแกรมสำเร็จรูปทางสถิติ ผลการวิจัยพบว่า หลังการใช้แอปพลิเคชัน นักศึกษามีความวิตกกังวลในการออกเสียงลดลง มีความสามารถในการออกเสียงเพิ่มขึ้นอย่างมีระดับนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ 0.01 และมีความพึงพอใจต่อการใช้แอปพลิเคชันในการฝึกออกเสียงภาพรวมในระดับมาก

**คำสำคัญ:** การออกเสียง ความวิตกกังวลในการออกเสียง แอปพลิเคชัน การฝึกการออกเสียงโดยใช้คอมพิวเตอร์ช่วย การรู้จำคำพูด อัตโนมัติ

## Introduction

Skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> century refer to a range of abilities and competencies. These include communication, problem-solving, collaboration, creativity, and innovation (Zaitseva, 2020). Communication skills are needed in recruitment as they are crucial for productive performance in a globalized job market (Lee, 2020). Although communication skills (i.e., oral communication, public speaking, and presentations) are one of the most vital skills for undergraduates to learn and practice throughout their education to ensure career success (Gallego et al., 2021), many business learners lack communication skills (Lee, 2020). The development of communication skills is as important as technical competence for those, who want to

find jobs and keep them (Robles, 2012). The foundation of effective spoken communication, which includes successful language learning, is all connected to good pronunciation (Garrigues, 1999).

English pronunciation is one of the most difficult areas for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners to acquire and improve (Hu, 2017; Ruengwathakee, 2021). It is an integrated and essential part of language learning and consists of focused elements that are more important than the sounds of consonants and vowels. It includes the elements of rhythm and intonation, which support the communicative process (Wei, 2006). Therefore, if any EFL learners want to gain communicative competence, they have to study pronunciation. Without sufficient pronunciation skills, learners' ability to communicate can be limited (Otlowski, 1998). The skills required for listening comprehension, the ability to speak a language, and pronunciation are interconnected (Gilbert, 1984). Although pronunciation is a critical element of spoken and communication skills, it is not taught as it should be (Wiriyaichitra, 2002). Further, it has been neglected in the teaching of English (Alonso-Herrero & Herrarte, 2019; Haryadi & Aprianoto, 2020; Sridhanyarat, 2017; Wei, 2006; Wongsuriya, 2020). English pronunciation is simply ignored in the curriculum of some universities in Thailand (Wei & Zhou, 2002). Pronunciation is often categorized as an elective course, which may not sufficiently be of interest for learners, who register in several Thai universities.

Pronunciation problems, leading to communication breakdown (Fraser, 2000; Kholis, 2021), are raised from two principal areas: the segmental and suprasegmental aspects, which influence the learners' accents, their confidence to speak out, and their feelings about inferior or unintelligible speech and sounding monotonous. In addition, their accents are affected by off-target vowels, wrong or missing consonants, misplaced stress, and odd intonations. Regardless of how

excellent their grammar and vocabulary are, non-native English speakers (NNES) will encounter oral communication problems if they are below the threshold level of pronunciation. Despite errors in other areas, those with good pronunciation are considered more intelligible and comprehensible. It can be difficult to understand individuals with poor pronunciation (Fraser, 2000; Wong, 1987). A lack of pronunciation knowledge could even impact the learners' reading and spelling (Wong, 1993). This was presented in Duncan's (1983) study in which there was a significant positive relationship between phoneme production and reading achievement for first to fifth graders of Anglo children.

According to Era 4.0, education should support learners to learn autonomously by accessing online educational applications. Since such applications meet the learning needs of digitized learners, it is necessary to provide pronunciation learning tools, which are technologically based. This study implies the integration of technology into the English classroom where EFL learners can gain benefit from self-practice and from using their voice recordings outside the context of the classroom. Online applications can help reduce anxiety when learners speak English (Dong, 2013). The computer-assisted pronunciation training (CAPT) system, which is used by NNES to improve their English pronunciation (Agarwal & Chakraborty, 2019), meets the requirements of pronunciation training for the following reasons: 1) it helps to address the problems of individual learners; 2) each learner can train at his/her speed depending upon the amount of free time; 3) individual training leads to a reduction in language anxiety (Young, 1990); and 4) learners and instructors can monitor problems and gauge improvement according to the recorded log-files (Lee, 2008; Neri et al., 2002).

## Literature Review

Pronunciation is a pivotal part of speaking skills; however, many students experience anxiety as a result of poor pronunciation. To date, educational technology has been utilized to help with pronunciation anxiety.

### 1. Pronunciation and Anxiety

Primarily, the reason for speaking anxiety is a lack of competence in the foreign language linguistic items, particularly pronunciation. In a safe environment, repeated exposure to fear can reduce fear itself (Shin & Newman, 2018). The fear of public speaking can be reduced by frequent practice (Kalra & Siribud, 2020). In the EFL context, students are most nervous and anxious when they need to speak in front of the classroom. In higher education, the students are supposed to speak or give effective presentations in front of the class (Bunrueng, 2008). Consequently, it is possible to reduce pronunciation anxiety with frequent practice using the CAPT application.

According to theories of pronunciation, there are two core elements of pronunciation: the segmental and the suprasegmental aspects. The segmental level of sound structure in pronunciation is concerned with vowels, consonants, monophthongs, diphthongs, and clusters. Meanwhile, the suprasegmental aspect is concerned with syllable structure, stress, rhythm, pauses, linking or liaison, variation, and intonation. The native languages of the EFL learners influence their English pronunciation problems, and these are the so-called first language/linguistic interference (Brown, 2000) or negative transfer (Senel, 2006). In other words, the Thai language (L1) influences the learners' English (L2) pronunciation. The

problems occur when the rules for combining the sounds in syllable forms are different in the two languages. Many EFL learners have major difficulties with pronunciation (Fraser, 2000) such as the differences in the phonological systems between L1 and L2 (Li et al., 2016; Narksompong, 2007; Yangklang, 2006), and the stress placement in their pronunciation (Bourjan, 2003).

When pronouncing L2 words with the L1 interference in the classroom, learners might encounter repeated negative experiences, which may provoke performance anxiety (PA). PA consists of three sub-categories: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation (Horwitz et al., 1986). The first sub-category is caused by the unwillingness to communicate with others, while the second one is centrally related to the expected scenarios of negative test results. The last one arises when a person feels afraid of being judged by his/her peers in a variety of situations owing to negative self-perception. MacIntyre (2017) unveiled the effects of foreign language anxiety on L2 learners. Firstly, it has an effect on academic performance, which can be observed in lower grades or test scores, negative self-evaluations of L2 competence, and putting more effort into L2 learning due to receiving lower than expected grades, scores, or performance. Secondly, anxious L2 learners encounter effects on their social lives. Thirdly, they tend to have cognitive processing, which is obscured by foreign language anxiety. Szyszka (2017) elaborated upon the effects of anxiety on mental processes by adopting the three stages of information processing: input, processing, and output, as proposed by Tobias (1979). In the input stage, the attention to linguistic stimuli is diverted, resulting in the processing of fewer

linguistic stimuli in the next stage. Fewer stimuli are mentally processed in the second stage. Working memory (limited mental working capacity) plays a role in temporarily storing and processing the stimuli. To comprehend and process the stimuli, working memory also retrieves prior linguistic knowledge from long-term memory. L2 learners, who are influenced by their anxiety, take more time in processing the linguistic stimuli or find that their mental processes are disrupted. In the output stage, written or verbal responses to the stimuli are partially or completely inappropriate.

## 2. Thai EFL Students' English Pronunciation Problems

L2 learners are more likely to encounter difficulty learning L2 sounds that do not exist in the L1, particularly in terms of categorizing and discriminating sounds between both languages. English has four pairs of voiceless-voiced fricatives at an initial, intervocalic, and final position, whereas Thai has only two initial voiceless fricatives (Roengpitya, 2011). Native Thai speakers tend to articulate English voiceless fricatives as voiceless, English voiced fricatives as voiced (Roengpitya, 2011), and assimilate the English sound to the sound closest in the Thai sound system (Kitikanan, 2017). Thai intonations are applied to English pronunciations, and Thai final consonants are always unaspirated and unvoiced (Wei & Zhou, 2002). This applies when Thai EFL learners pronounce words in English in Thai ways, resulting in a lack of stress and intonation outcomes. Most of the Thai non-English major students at universities pronounce English words or sentences without knowing how to properly pronounce stress and intonation. This includes the fact that their pronunciation of English sounds monotonous. According to Lin (1995), when listening to English, many EFL



students pay more attention to sounds, vocabulary, and grammar, but pay little attention to pitch changes. This results in their vocal sounds being monotonous when they speak (Yangklang, 2013).

Several studies have investigated the enhancement of Thai EFL students' English pronunciation and the pronunciation problems they have frequently encountered. The studies have mostly been concerned with consonants and vowels, intonation, and stress. Some of which include: 1) mispronounced /-s/ (Narksompong, 2007; Sahatsathatsana, 2017; Ruengwattthakee (2021); 2) the linking sounds between words as linking does not occur in Thai sound system (Sahatsathatsana, 2017); 3) the final /-l/ sound (Yangklang, 2006); 4) back vowels /u/ and /ʊ/ (Nusartleart & Pattanasorn, 2015); 5) L1-L2 differences in phonological systems or some sounds in the Thai language may not exist in English pronunciation (Narksompong, 2007; Wongsuriya, 2020; Yangklang, 2006); 6) final clusters created by grammatical endings, whereas there are no final consonant clusters in Thai (e.g., the past tense ending /t/ when added to “glimpse” creates the 4-consonant cluster /mpst/) (Narksompong, 2007); 7) /z/ (voiced alveolar fricative) (e.g., “is” /iz/) (Ruengwattthakee, 2021); 8) /d/ sound (Kanokpermpoon, 2005); 9) -ed ending sounds “relaxed” /-kst/ (e.g., /t/, /d/, and /Id/) (Likitrattapanorn, 2014; Ruengkul, 2020); and 10) the pronunciation of English sounds by using Thai consonant sounds (e.g., “salmon” is usually pronounced as /sælmən/ instead of /sæmən/ by most Thai learners since they cannot differentiate between the spoken and written forms as the spoken and written forms in Thai resemble and go hand in hand with the word) (Machackova, 2012; Malarak, 1998; Mano-im, 1999)

The pronunciation features pointed out in the study are based on mispronunciation (e.g., beginning-mid-final consonants sound, /-s/), omitting consonants (e.g., omitting /r/ “grade” /greɪd/ pronounced as /geɪd/), (e.g., replacing /s/ with /d/ “happiness” /hæpɪnəs/ pronounced as /hæpɪnəd/) stress, and intonation. /s/ is one of the phonemes that Thai EFL students frequently mispronounce (Narksompong, 2007; Sahatsathatsana, 2017). As Ruengwatthakee (2021) pointed out, /-s/ also functions as a suffix in morphology and signals plural, possessive, and subject-verb agreement. Mispronouncing or omitting /-s/ therefore causes writing errors as well. The target sounds in this study are the final consonants and final /-s/, which play a vital part in English grammar, but /-s/ is often omitted and mispronounced by Thai EFL students (Ruengwatthakee, 2021). Therefore, making students aware of the consonant sounds, stress, and intonation is necessary to improve their pronunciation.

### 3. Computer-assisted Pronunciation Training (CAPT)

Based on the prevalence of several applications and digital platforms, the utilization of technology, which has been employed as a language learning tool for EFL learners to practice their speaking and pronunciation, has been emphasized (Calvo Benzie, 2017; Rogerson-Revell, 2021). The computer-assisted pronunciation training (CAPT) system, which was first developed by Kalikow and Swets (1972) for NNES to improve their pronunciation, has, for a decade, gained much attention predominantly in the field of foreign language instruction (Henrichsen, 2021; Rogerson-Revell, 2021). A CAPT tool records the speech of a learner; detects and diagnoses incidences

of mispronunciation (performance analysis); and suggests ways to correct them (Agarwal & Chakraborty, 2019). Consequently, CAPT can help teachers to address the problems of individual learners by allowing them to practice at their own pace, as well as to self-regulate, self-access, and self-monitor their English pronunciation performance and autonomous learning without the presence of their teacher and peers (Neri et al., 2002) and in a stress-free environment (Rogerson-Revell, 2021). Such conditions may reduce foreign language classroom anxiety and allow the teacher and student to identify individualized problems and monitor improvements. The more confident learners feel about initiating practice to communicate in English, the more likely they will be to improve their pronunciation (Brown, 2000). CAPT systems can detect up to 86% of mispronunciations in a speech and can help learners reduce incidences of mispronunciation by up to 23% (Agarwal & Chakraborty, 2019). Several studies have revealed that English learners, who had been taught using the CAPT tool, were able to significantly outperform their counterparts in vocabulary acquisition (Wu et al., 2021), and pronunciation (Pourhosein Gilakjani & Rahimy, 2020). For example, there was a 7% decrease in mispronunciation after using CAPT for 2 months (Akima et al., 1992), and a 23% improvement in pronunciation performance (Jing & Yong, 2014).

## Objectives

The study aimed at: (1) investigating whether the integration of an English pronunciation application could reduce the students' pronunciation anxiety, (2) assessing the learners' English pronunciation competence, and (3) exploring the learners' levels of satisfaction after utilizing the pronunciation application.

## Research Methodology

### 1.The Participants in the Study

The population of the study was public university students (non-English majors), aged 19-22, who were studying Business English in the academic year of 2021: 425 students from K1 University and 149 students from K2 University. The participants were 30 Thai EFL university students who were selected by simple random sampling: seventeen from K1 University (56.67%) and thirteen from K2 University (43.33%). There were five males (16.67%) and twenty-five females (83.33%) with ages ranging from 19-22. Of them, 14 (46.67%) had finished studying English Pronunciation, 10 (33.33%) had completed Listening and Speaking, and 6 (20%) had completed Public Speaking before participating in this research. The grade results for the 30 students in the previously mentioned courses related to communication were as follows: A (40%), B+ (16.67%), B (20%), C+ (16.67%), C (3.33%), and D+ (3.33%).

### 2.The Instruments

*2.1 The Pronunciation Anxiety Scale.* The scale, which was adapted from the version by Kralova et al. (2017), was used to examine the participants' English pronunciation anxiety levels before and after the intervention. Its design was inspired by the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCA) (Horwitz et al., 1986) and the Phonetics Learning Anxiety Scale (Baran-Lucarz, 2013) and was based on the researchers' teaching experiences in speaking and communication courses, which had indicated the most frequently occurring weaknesses found in the Thai EFL learners' English pronunciation. The questionnaire included twenty declarative statements to survey the learners' perceptions of their English pronunciation and required the participants to indicate the extent to

which they agreed or disagreed with the statements based on a 5-point Likert scale (5 –strongly agree, 4 –agree, 3 –neutral, 2 –disagree, 1 –strongly disagree). The questionnaire comprised six sub-components: personal background information, oral performance apprehension, self-concern over the pronunciation, pronunciation self-image, pronunciation self-efficacy, and attitudes toward English pronunciation.

*2.2 The Pronunciation Performance Test.* The pronunciation test included a pre-test and a post-test, which consisted of a list of thirty words designed from the most problematic English words with /-s/ and consonant sounds appearing in either the initial or final position. The test was designed to identify the participants' pronunciation abilities before and after using the training program. In the test, the participants were required to pronounce stress and to record it, before and after using the training program. To examine the participant's levels of English pronunciation proficiency and to establish the reliability of the measurements, three raters (one native speaker of English and two Thai instructors specializing in applied linguistics, who were all teaching EFL courses) conducted a subjective auditory evaluation of the students' English pronunciation quality using the interval 5-point Likert scale (5 –excellent, 4 –very good, 3 –quite good, 2 –not very good, 1 –poor (see Appendix). The scale reflects the extent to which the participants' accents diverge from the British English pronunciation norms (Received Pronunciation). Before and after the intervention, each participant's pronunciation was recorded and evaluated.

*2.3 Questionnaire on Learning Satisfaction.* The 16-item questionnaire measured the students' learning satisfaction with the CAPT program, i.e., RP and IR. The survey was designed to be used after the post-test. Closed-end questions were divided into two parts: the background information of the respondents and the level of student satisfaction with their use of the CAPT application. The questionnaire

was designed by employing a 5-level Likert scale corresponding from the levels of least to most concerning each student's level of satisfaction.

*2.4 Application and Tool. Reading Progress (RP)*, recently launched in Microsoft Teams (MS Teams) by Office 365 in 2021, is an Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) that provides a separate pronunciation assessment (formative assessment) and feedback on accuracy. RP is used as a principal tool for students to read the assigned texts aloud, which provides them with an audio-visual record of themselves as presented in Figure 1. *Immersive Reader (IR)*, which was first developed in 2015, is a tool that is available in Teams and allows students the opportunity to participate in enhanced reading instruction by listening to the voices of native speakers (either male or female) and to read along with the given texts so that they can imitate the sounds (see Figure 2). It implements techniques that can improve the students' reading (Jarke et al., 2020), and is used as an accompanying feature, which in this study, has been incorporated with RP. Reading fluency is an essential part of any student curriculum, and each student must have opportunities to build his/her reading skills and in turn, increase his/her confidence. However, some assessments, which were provided by RP, were not found to be consistent with feedback from the pronunciation instructors. This is why the one-on-one meetings, which included the instructor's feedback, were provided for the students in this research.

The instruments were tested on a pilot group of 20 students for reliability. The results showed that Cronbach's alpha coefficients were 0.89, 0.86, and 0.94 respectively, which is greater than 0.7, indicating that the scale, test, and questionnaire had an acceptable level of confidence.

## Figure 1

RP: The Student's View  
of the Reading Text Being  
Recorded



## Figure 2

IR: The Voice of a  
Native English Speaker



This study is a pre-experimental (one-group pretest posttest) research design (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Initially, there were thirty-two participants, but two participants dropped out of the study. The participants consisted of thirty non-English major students (19-22 years old), who were taking a Business English course during the Academic Year of 2021. The study was conducted between January and February 2022 utilizing the experimental Teams platform.

A volunteer invitation was announced for those, who wanted to participate in the training. The volunteers were invited to join the Line group since it is considered one of the most famous social media platforms, which is used to send notices and reminders to participants. The ethical clearance from the university research committee was approved (COE No. 65/003), and a consent form was sent to the volunteers individually.

For this study, an experiment channel was created on the Teams platform for the following purposes: demonstrating, addressing notices, delivering twelve reading texts for practice, creating voice recordings, monitoring, evaluating, and providing one-on-one consultations. Before participating in the study, participants were given a training session on how to use the applications (both IR and RP) for their pronunciation practices. The steps of research methods are as follows:

- 1) The participants were required to complete a pronunciation anxiety scale and have a pronunciation performance pre-test as a voice recording.

- 2) During the twelve sessions held over the 4-week intervention period, the participants submitted twelve voice recordings, and based on those recordings, they were provided with pronunciation feedback from the instructor, which consisted of an interpretation of the graphical presentation from the application.

- 3) A weekly 10-minute one-on-one live meeting in which tailored advice was given to each learner focusing on his/her problems.

- 4) After they had finished the twelve sessions over the four weeks, they were asked to complete the following: 1. the pronunciation anxiety scale, 2. the Pronunciation Performance Post-test, and 3. the online questionnaire, which focused on gauging their levels of satisfaction about using the applications.

This pre-experimental research with the one-group pretest posttest design, which is shown in Table 1, was divided into three stages: the pre-intervention, the ongoing intervention, and the post-intervention. The pre-test was conducted to evaluate the participants' abilities before beginning the training program, and then the post-test was conducted after the 4-week intervention. The Pronunciation Performance tests were rated by three raters consisting of one native English-speaking instructor and two Thai English instructors, who are



specialists in EFL teaching and applied linguistics. Their mission was to assess the participants’ levels of ability regarding their English pronunciation (particularly in producing the English /-s/ and consonant sounds).

**Table 1**  
The One-Group Pretest Posttest Study Design

O <sub>1</sub>	X	O <sub>2</sub>
pronunciation anxiety	A 30-minute pronunciation practice three times/week and weekly one-on-one meetings for a month	pronunciation anxiety
pronunciation performance		pronunciation performance
		satisfaction with the application utilization
O <sub>1</sub> = pre-test	x = intervention	O <sub>2</sub> = post-test

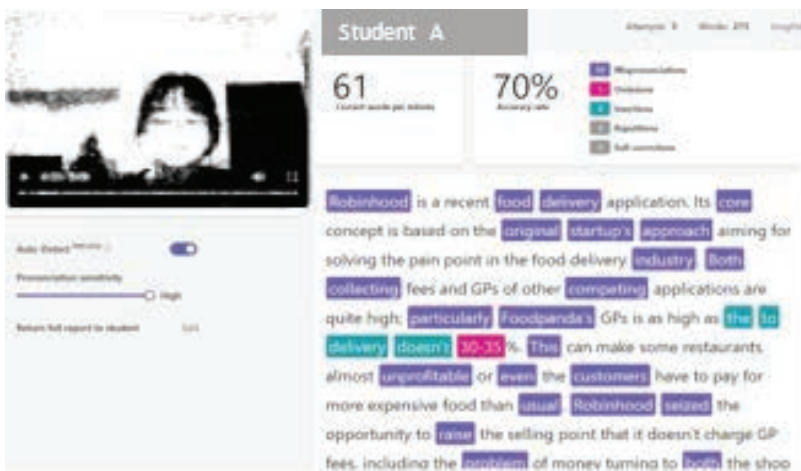
The collected data was of the quantitative type and was made up of two kinds of variables: *Independent Variables* (the CAPT application) and *Dependent Variables* (pronunciation anxiety, pronunciation performance, and the level of satisfaction with utilizing the application).

Twelve different business-related reading texts with an average length of 250 words were assigned and uploaded three times a week for a month. In general, these texts were customized for participants’ reading levels. Given that the app was streamlined by integrating with the Teams’ Education Insights dashboard, instant

feedback on reading accuracy, mispronunciations, repetitions, omissions, self-corrections, and insertions was provided from the auto-detect feature as shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 3**

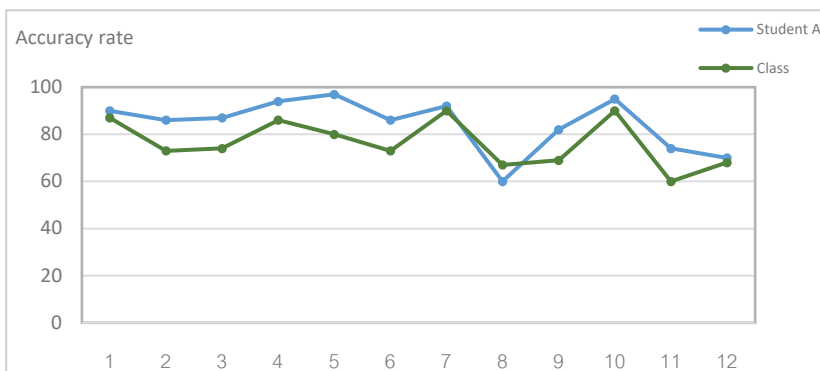
RP: The Teacher's View (The student's audio-visual clip was recorded with the number of correct words per minute, the accuracy rate, the mispronunciations, omissions, insertions, repetitions, and self-corrections.)



Over the 12-session intervention, each student's reading accuracy rate was compared to others in the class, which allowed the participants to track their progress. In addition, the students were able to receive individualized corrective feedback from the instructor, which was given during one-on-one meetings as shown in Figure 4.

**Figure 4**

The Individual Student's Accuracy Rate Compared to the Class During the 12-Session Intervention



To account for different speech patterns and accents, it was possible to set the pronunciation sensitivity levels. Some of the inaccuracies, which the auto-detect feature had highlighted, were overridden by the instructor since both tracking systems needed to go hand-in-hand to track the results more accurately. Moreover, the most mispronounced words were shown both individually and as an overall group as illustrated in Figure 5. The participants were, therefore, able to realize the words that they had most frequently mispronounced and could correct their errors.

**Figure 5**

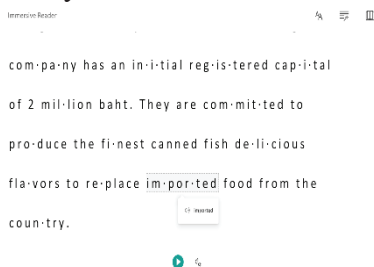
A Word Cloud of the Most Frequently Mispronounced Words



Not only was the sound structure provided, but the text was broken into syllables and was highlighted as it was read aloud. Furthermore, grammatical structures (i.e., the parts of speech) were also offered by IR as shown in Figure 6 and Figure 7 accordingly.

**Figure 6**

IR: Syllables



**Figure 7**

IR: Grammar Options



### 3. Analysis

After the participants had submitted their first voice recordings of thirty words as the pre-test, all three raters listened and recorded on the score sheets. The same process was conducted again for the post-test. During the 12-session data collection over the four weeks, the /-s/ and initial or final consonants were continuously practiced. The preliminary data analysis for the participants' demographic descriptions was conducted by using descriptive statistics (e.g., age, gender, faculty, and grade). The test scores were then analyzed using SPSS version 20. The statistics employed to complete the students' pronunciation performance were means, standard deviations, and percentages. The paired samples t-test was conducted to analyze the pre-test and post-test scores for pronunciation anxiety and pronunciation performance.

Findings

1. Thai EFL Students’ Pronunciation Anxiety

The data from the pronunciation anxiety pre-test and post-test were analyzed. There was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test. Table 2 shows that the mean score of the participants for pre-pronunciation anxiety was 3.48 (SD 0.40), while the post-pronunciation anxiety was 3.06 (SD 0.43). The participants’ pronunciation anxiety significantly lessened at 0.01 after the training.

Table 2  
T-test (Pronunciation Anxiety)

	mean	SD	df	t	Sig.
Pre-test	3.48	0.40			
Post-test	3.06	0.43	29	4.101	0.00**
Paired	0.42	0.56			

2. Thai EFL Students’ Pronunciation Performance

The results of the pronunciation performance pre-test scores were assessed by three raters (one native speaker of English and two Thai instructors, who specialized in applied linguistics and were teaching EFL courses) as seen in Figure 8. For the pre-test of the thirty participants, the pronunciation performance was at a moderate level with a mean score of 3.13. The student with the highest score had an average score of 3.96: Rater #1 rated 4.13, Rater #2 rated 3.80, and Rater #3 rated 3.97. On the contrary, the student with the lowest score had an average score of 2.37: Rater #1 rated 2.00, Rater #2 rated 2.53, and Rater #3 rated 2.56.

**Figure 8**  
 The Inter-raters' Scores for the Pronunciation Performance Pre-test



Figure 9 illustrates the results of the pronunciation performance post-test scores evaluated by the three raters. For the Post-test of thirty participants, the pronunciation performance showed a high level with a mean score of 4.01. The pronunciation performance of all students appeared to have improved. The student with the highest score had an average score of 4.73 (Rater #1 rated 4.95, Rater #2 rated 4.83, and Rater #3 rated 4.42). Conversely, the student with the lowest score had an average score of 3.24: Rater #1 rated 3.68, Rater #2 rated 3.30, and Rater #3 rated 2.73.

**Figure 9**  
 The Inter-raters' Scores for the Pronunciation Performance Post-test

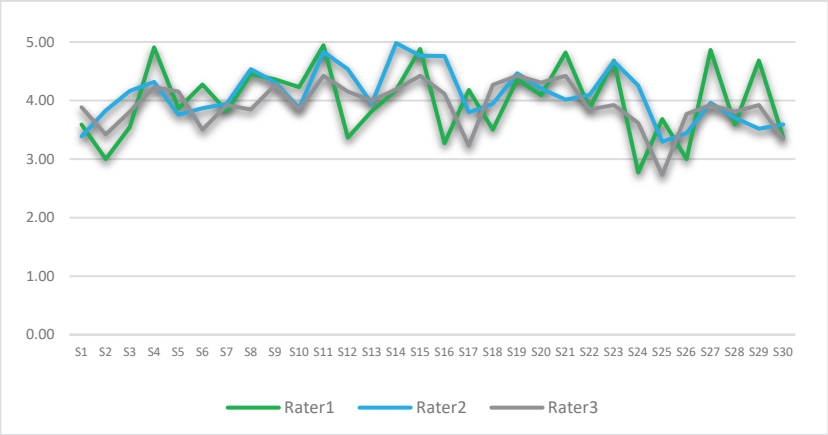


Table 3 illustrates the effects of using the app to improve the students' pronunciation. The scores of the pre-test and post-test pronunciation tests were compared. The mean score of the participants on pre-pronunciation performance was 3.16 (SD 0.44), while that for post-pronunciation performance was 4.34 (SD 0.25). There was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores for pronunciation performance. The mean score of the post-test was higher than the pre-test ( $p < .01$ ), indicating that the participants' pronunciation performance had improved significantly after the training. In other words, students had made significant gains as shown by the post-test after four weeks (twelve sessions) of intervention.

**Table 3**

T-test (The Pre-test and Post-test Pronunciation Performance Test)

	mean	SD	df	t	Sig.
Pre-test	3.16	0.44			
Post-test	4.34	0.25	29	-12.40	0.00**
Paired	-0.98	0.52			

3. Satisfaction with the Utilization of the Pronunciation Application

The results from the students’ satisfaction questionnaire, which focused on the utilization of the application, revealed that most of the EFL students had exhibited a positive attitude toward RP, indicating that the application had been an effective medium that could be implemented in supporting the EFL students to improve their pronunciation skills. RP was determined to be beneficial in supporting and improving the students’ pronunciation skills.

Table 4 reveals that before practicing with the application, most of the students had felt highly anxious about their pronunciation. The overall level of satisfaction of the EFL learners with the use of the pronunciation application was found to be significant ( $\bar{x} = 4.48$ ). Most participants were strongly satisfied with the following: 1) the IR’s native speaker voices to imitate ( $\bar{x} = 4.74$ ) 2) the unlimited number of attempts to record ( $\bar{x} = 4.56$ ), 3) the pronunciation scores that were provided on the teacher’s view ( $\bar{x} = 4.52$ ), 4) personal feedback from the instructor ( $\bar{x} = 4.67$ ), 5) individual practice on their own ( $\bar{x} = 4.74$ ), 6) pronunciation practice outside the class ( $\bar{x} = 4.52$ ), and 7) the application’s activities ( $\bar{x} = 4.59$ )



**Table 4****The Degree of Satisfaction with the Utilization of the Pronunciation Application**

Items	Mean	SD	Interpretation of Results
1. In general, I was comfortable with the experience of practicing my English pronunciation with the computer.	4.48	0.70	Satisfied
2. I did not have any difficulty operating the computer to proceed with the pronunciation exercises.	4.26	0.94	Satisfied
3. It was helpful to hear the native speakers' voices and to imitate those voices before the recordings of my attempts.	4.74	0.53	Strongly satisfied
4. It was helpful when there were unlimited attempts to record my voice on the application.	4.56	0.58	Strongly satisfied
5. It was helpful to monitor the pronunciation scores from the application from the teacher's view.	4.52	0.64	Strongly satisfied
6. Feedback from the instructor on my pronunciation practice was helpful.	4.67	0.48	Strongly satisfied
7. The one-on-one advice from the instructor about my pronunciation practice was helpful.	4.41	0.84	Satisfied
8. Practicing with the application on my own has helped me to improve my English pronunciation.	4.74	0.45	Strongly satisfied

Items	Mean	SD	Interpretation of Results
9. Before practicing with the application, I felt anxious about speaking in front of others because of my pronunciation.	4.78	0.51	Strongly satisfied
10. I feel less anxious about my English pronunciation now due to the practice I had with the application.	4.07	0.87	Satisfied
11. The application has helped me to improve my English pronunciation.	4.44	0.64	Satisfied
12. The application motivates me to practice English pronunciation outside of the class.	4.52	0.64	Strongly satisfied
13. The application has helped to build my confidence when pronouncing English.	4.44	0.64	Satisfied
14. The application has helped me to reduce anxiety when pronouncing English.	4.19	0.74	Satisfied
15. The application has helped me to increase my confidence when speaking English.	4.30	0.67	Satisfied
16. Overall, I enjoyed the application activities.	4.59	0.57	Strongly satisfied
<b>The overall level of satisfaction</b>	4.48	0.65	Satisfied

## Discussion

This study aimed at examining the use of a Reading Progress (RP) application and an Immersive Reader (IR) tool to reduce the students' pronunciation anxiety, increase their pronunciation competence, and investigate their level of satisfaction. The statistical analysis revealed significant differences in the levels of pronunciation anxiety and pronunciation performance scores. The students' experiences of using the application were positive. This implies that RP and IR are enjoyable applications that can lessen the pronunciation anxiety of the students and can enhance their pronunciation performance.

Firstly, their pronunciation anxiety might have decreased as a result of self-directed learning on a computer, which allowed the L2 learners to establish a sense of being in control of their learning process (Pourhossein Gilakjani & Rahimy, 2020; Shams, 2006). The application and tool provided the students with opportunities to be exposed to the voices of native speakers. They could listen to and imitate the reading texts pronounced by the tool. Moreover, before recording their voices, they could listen and re-listen to the texts until they felt confident about pronouncing the texts correctly. After they had finished recording, they could listen to their voices to check whether they were satisfied with the recorded voices and could then submit them. Secondly, pronunciation training via a computer may reduce performance anxiety, especially communication apprehension and the fear of receiving a negative evaluation. L2 learners with negative communication experiences have high communication apprehension (Szyzka,

2017). In addition, negative self-perceptions of limited pronunciation competence, which might lead to embarrassing moments in the classroom, are a major factor in triggering anxiety (Baran-Lucarz, 2013; Saito et al., 2018). In this study, the intervention was designed to limit peer pressure and social interaction, which could have triggered both communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation. Instead of pronouncing the texts in the classroom in which their classmates and the teacher could be the witnesses, the students were required to privately pronounce the texts in front of a computer.

Because of the decreased level of anxiety, the acquisition of pronunciation is assumed to be more effective, and thereby, results in better pronunciation performance. Based on Tobias's (1979) three stages of L2 information processing, two stages: input (perception) and internal processing, have been adopted to explain the probable causes. At the input stage, L2 learners with an elevated level of anxiety are mentally blocked from taking in L2 pronounced stimuli (Szyszka, 2017). This leads to an inability to pay attention to L2 auditory stimuli, and as a result, the amount of intake is distorted or reduced. Next, foreign language anxiety could prevent this mental process from continuing as normal (Eysenck et al., 2007) in working memory, which is responsible for processing intake, retrieving existing linguistic information from long-term memory, and combining the intake with the retrieved information. Without anxiety, L2 learners were able to accomplish the following: 1) compare and match segmental and suprasegmental information, which are embedded in the intake, with mental semantic representations; 2) could retrieve existing pronunciation knowledge; and 3) could relate to and integrate new pronunciation knowledge to the existing one. Based on the pronunciation errors detected by the application, the students' interlanguage was heavily

influenced by Thai (L1) at the beginning of the training. Gradually, they were able to demonstrate the awareness to correctly pronounce the final consonants, especially /-s/, consonant clusters, /r/ and /l/, and -ed ending sounds through the twelve reading practices. They ultimately showed less L1 interference and better pronunciation in the post-test.

At the end of the intervention, the students completed an exit survey exploring their levels of satisfaction. They were satisfied with the experience of using the application and receiving feedback from the instructor. Under self-directed and low-anxiety circumstances, the students had been able to take pleasure in the applications' features, which had assisted them in improving their pronunciation, such as the VDO and voice recordings, the text-to-speech generator, the automatic pronunciation error detection, and the pronunciation performance tracker, etc. In the one-on-one sessions, the teacher provided pronunciation feedback in a supportive manner, which allowed the students to perceive and accept their mispronunciation as an inevitable learning outcome. The results of this study are consistent with a study conducted by Gao and Hanna (2016), who insisted that the combination of teacher-led and software-led instruction could optimize the improvement of both attitudes and performance. In the Thai context, Arunsirot (2020) supported the advantages of using an educational technology tool. For Thai university students, the use of Augmented Reality interventions could have a positive impact on English pronunciation and could allow the students' levels of satisfaction to reach the highest level.

## Conclusion

This study used a one-group pretest posttest design to investigate the effects that the application had on the students' anxiety levels, pronunciation performance, and satisfaction. The application allowed 30 EFL participants at two universities to listen to computer-generated native speaker voices with unlimited access. In the training process, they were required to be exposed to a series of pronunciation practices, which were delivered on the application, and recorded their pronunciation. The teacher then gave individualized pronunciation feedback. The anxiety level after the training, which was compared with the anxiety before the training, was found to be significantly different ( $p < .01$ ). Better pronunciation performance was observed when comparing the scores between the pre-test and the post-test pronunciation tests. The students had also felt positive about the practice that they had received via the application and from getting feedback from the teachers.

In a classroom environment, some learners seem passive during communication tasks. They might be anxious learners, who are worried about receiving negative attitudes from their peers due to their inadequate pronunciation performance. As the results have shown, the learners in this study might have had lower anxiety when they learned about the application, which resulted in pronunciation acquisition. Therefore, the application should be seamlessly integrated into classroom lessons and activities. To do so, two conditions need to be considered. When learners are eager to participate in a communicative task, they might have less performance anxiety. In class, the teacher could encourage learners to consult the application and provide their

peers with pronunciation feedback. Unlike those learners, who tend to hide away from communication activities, the teacher should assign a pronunciation activity via the application before the class meets. The pronunciation activity would allow learners to familiarize themselves with pronouncing the words that are related to a topic or a communicative task in the classroom. If time allows, a teacher could offer one-on-one sessions to give individualized feedback. In a big class, the teacher could point out the frequently mispronounced words, which were identified by the application, and could demonstrate how to pronounce them correctly in class. After learners have gained sufficient confidence in pronouncing the words before the class meets, they may more actively participate in a communicative task in the classroom.

The first limitation of this research is related to the tools used in data collection. A self-rating scale was used to measure the level of anxiety, so the participants' biases were unavoidable. To increase the validity and reliability of the research, objective indicators of anxiety, such as heart rate variability (HRV) and skin conductance, should be measured. The raters (listeners) were required to evaluate the participants' pronunciation performance based on comprehensibility and intelligibility. Acoustic analysis is an alternative way to evaluate pronunciation by determining the alteration of certain pronunciation features over a certain period. Further research should use experimental design to evaluate causal hypotheses. Perhaps, there could be four groups of participants, who receive different interventions as follows: no intervention, human-led training, computer-led training, and a combination of computer and human-led training.

The study results can be applied to create a framework for students to practice English pronunciation online or can be applied to design a hybrid, which has a combination of on-site and online practice and learning, and which offers a more autonomous and motivating learning atmosphere. This can be implemented as a guideline for designing activities to prevent and reduce EFL learners' anxiety, which could enhance their levels of confidence in English language learning and pronunciation.

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## Appendix

The Rubric assessment for pronunciation

Score	Criteria
5	Very clear and easy to understand
4	Easily understood despite the detection of the influence of the mother tongue
3	Understandable to some extent
2	There are pronunciation problems requiring the full concentration of the listener.
1	There are serious pronunciation problems, and they cannot be understood.



# **An Investigation of the Needs, Abilities, Opinions, and Anxiety Levels of English Teaching Major Students Studying an English Pronunciation Course in a Blended Learning Environment**

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อังกฤษในการเรียนวิชาการออกเสียงภาษาอังกฤษ  
ด้วยวิธีการเรียนรู้แบบผสมผสาน

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## **Abstract**

The study investigated the needs and abilities of students taking an English pronunciation course in a blended learning (BL) environment. The students' opinions toward this course and their anxiety about English pronunciation were also examined. The participants were 72 first-year English teaching major students at Udon Thani Rajabhat University. The instruments consisted of a questionnaire of needs, an ability test,

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a questionnaire about the students' opinions, and a questionnaire about the students' levels of anxiety. The instruments were developed by taking into account both validity and reliability. The findings were as follows. Firstly, the students indicated the highest scores for needs on word stress ( $\bar{x} = 4.36$ ) and sentence stress ( $\bar{x} = 4.24$ ). Secondly, the scores for word stress in the post-test were significantly higher than those in the pretest (Pre:  $\bar{x} = 0.43$ ; Post:  $\bar{x} = 0.80$ ), and the sentence stress scores in the post-test were significantly higher than those in the pretest (Pre:  $\bar{x} = 0.44$ ; Post:  $\bar{x} = 0.80$ ) after implementing BL for word and sentence stress development. Thirdly, the participants were highly satisfied with studying the English pronunciation course in a BL environment ( $\bar{x} = 4.25$ ). Fourthly, the student's anxiety levels significantly lowered (Pre:  $\bar{x} = 3.24$ ; Post:  $\bar{x} = 3.19$ ). This means that the pronunciation course through a BL environment could help reduce pronunciation anxiety.

**Keywords:** EFL learners' needs, abilities, opinions, anxiety  
English pronunciation, blended learning

#### บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์ เพื่อสำรวจความต้องการและประเมินระดับความสามารถด้านการออกเสียงภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษาที่เรียนการออกเสียงในการเรียนแบบผสมผสาน เพื่อประเมินความคิดเห็นหลังเรียนและศึกษาระดับความกังวลในการออกเสียง กลุ่มตัวอย่างเป็นนักศึกษาชั้นปีที่ 1 สาขาการสอนภาษาอังกฤษ มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏอุดรธานี จำนวน 72 คน เครื่องมือในการวิจัย คือ แบบสำรวจความต้องการการออกเสียง แบบทดสอบการออกเสียง แบบสำรวจความคิดเห็น แบบสำรวจระดับความกังวล ซึ่งได้รับการตรวจสอบโดยผู้เชี่ยวชาญเพื่อหาค่าความเที่ยงตรงและความเชื่อมั่น ผลวิจัย

พบว่า ข้อที่ 1 คะแนนความต้องการสูงสุดคือการเน้นเสียงในระดับคำ ( $\bar{X} = 4.36$ ) และระดับประโยค ( $\bar{X} = 4.24$ ) ข้อที่ 2 คะแนนความสามารถด้านการออกเสียงมีการพัฒนาสูงขึ้นอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติทั้งในระดับคำ (ก่อน:  $\bar{X} = 0.43$ ; หลัง:  $\bar{X} = 0.80$ ) และระดับประโยค (ก่อน:  $\bar{X} = 0.44$ ; หลัง:  $\bar{X} = 0.80$ ) หลังจากการเรียนรู้แบบผสมผสาน ข้อที่ 3 นักศึกษาพึงพอใจต่อการเรียนการออกเสียงในการเรียนแบบผสมผสานในเกณฑ์สูง ( $\bar{X} = 4.25$ ) ข้อที่ 4 นักศึกษามีความกังวลลดลงอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ (ก่อน:  $\bar{X} = 3.24$ ; หลัง:  $\bar{X} = 3.19$ ) ดังนั้นการเรียนการออกเสียงในการเรียนแบบผสมผสานอาจจะช่วยลดความวิตกกังวลในการออกเสียงได้

**คำสำคัญ:** ความต้องการของผู้เรียนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศ  
ความสามารถ ความคิดเห็น ความกังวลการออกเสียง  
ภาษาอังกฤษ การเรียนแบบผสมผสาน

## Introduction

English is an international language, and pronunciation is an important element in learning to speak English as part of learning English as a second and foreign language. Morley (1998) mentioned that pronunciation plays an important role in helping people become better English speakers, as clear pronunciation supports communication flow. Correct pronunciation means the listeners can understand the message; however, pronunciation errors may result in miscommunication (Nakin & Inpin, 2017). Furthermore, errors in pronunciation may occur in non-native speakers because they have different mother tongues, cultures, and contexts (Winaitham & Suppasetserree, 2012).

Non- native speakers encountering problems in using the target language may result in anxiety ( Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). Pronunciation Anxiety ( PA) can be seen in non- native speakers (Kralova & Mala, 2018). Baran-Łucarz (2014) defines PA as a feeling of fear about negative foreign language pronunciation self-perceptions, fear of negative evaluation, beliefs about the importance of pronunciation, or difficulty in learning related to the sounds involved in pronouncing the foreign language. PA may result in unintelligible pronunciation, and this can affect students' learning of a foreign language.

In the study reported in this article, the ultimate goal was to reduce PA. Some studies have provided ways to decrease PA to help students improve their learning of pronunciation. Firstly, identifying students' pronunciation problems may be a way to develop pronunciation ability (Derwing & Munro, 2015). In the Thai context, numerous studies have investigated students' pronunciation problems, both segmental and suprasegmental features (Kanokpermpoon, 2007; Tanthanis, 2013; Chakma, 2014; Pradesh, 2015; Supanamoke, 2015). Secondly, preparation has been seen as a way to help students be more confident (Kondo & Ying-Ling, 2004). To decrease PA, pronunciation ability training may be a way to increase the intelligibility of pronunciation ( Derwing & Munro, 2015). Implementing explicit pronunciation teaching may enhance pronunciation improvement. For instance, Al-Tamimi & Attamimi (2018) investigated the effects of explicit pronunciation instructions on developing students' speaking skills and their attitudes toward the pronunciation training offered. The findings were that explicit pronunciation instruction is an effective method of improving students' speaking skills as well as their attitudes toward pronunciation training. Thirdly, preferences in EFL learning may make demotivated students more interested (Kondo & Ying-Ling, 2004). Learning with affection and motivation ( students' internal

factors) may improve pronunciation (Derwing & Munro, 2015). People who have positive feelings toward the target language are more likely to be successful at learning pronunciation (Brown, 1992). Therefore, needs analysis may support students' learning, and this may be a way to reduce PA. According to West (1994), need analysis refers to a systematic analysis of all the necessary objective information that learners will be required to negotiate when using a foreign language in a target situation, and how learners might be efficient in using the target language during the period of training. Furthermore, studying students' learning needs in pronunciation may enhance pronunciation development and improve confidence in pronunciation intelligibility. However, very little research has been conducted on students' needs in learning pronunciation. Some studies, for example, Kamsa-ard (2018) identified 72 Thai university students' pronunciation needs. The results showed that a better knowledge of segmental and suprasegmental features, i. e. , consonants, vowels, connected speech, stress, and intonation, was required by the non-English major students. Similarly, Zarzycki (2020) identified pronunciation needs for aspects of pronunciation learning with 50 Omani ESL students. The findings showed that the students needed both segmental and suprasegmental features, especially stress and intonation. They needed to read and write phonetic transcription in English. Moreover, more usage of a dictionary was needed. Students needed to better understand how to pronounce correctly. In short, decreasing PA consists of identifying students' pronunciation problems, preparing them for learning pronunciation, and identifying their pronunciation learning needs.

The use of technology in teaching pronunciation may also enhance students' language learning. Over the past decade, several studies have investigated technological tools to assist pronunciation teaching. For example, in 2014, Alipanahi investigated the effectiveness

of technology-based pronunciation instruction to help EFL students in Iran to better understand and learn correct stress patterns. In 2019, Arunsirot (2020) examined the effectiveness of Augmented Reality (AR) technology to develop students' ability to produce English consonant sounds and explored students' satisfaction with the use of AR technology. In 2020, Taladngoen et al. (2020) identified the pronunciation abilities of Thai EFL university students by using Google Translate. Similarly, Wongsuriya (2020) evaluated students' performance in English pronunciation using the Google Translate mobile application. In 2021, Visaltanachoti and Viriyavejakul (2021) developed and prototyped an AI technology (AIT) model for use in teaching English pronunciation to Thai students. The findings of these studies indicate that technological tools may assist in pronunciation instruction, and it appears to be very effective in improving students' attitudes, perceptions, learning, and pronunciation ability.

Very few studies have been conducted on pronunciation learning through technology to meet instructional goals. For example, Winaitham (2012) claimed that using technology in e-learning can introduce examples of pronunciation and discourse from native speakers. She examined errors in English stress pronunciation and trained her participants to improve their pronunciation ability by using the designed courseware. The results showed that the participants' pronunciation ability improved after the treatment. In addition, using computers on campus was inconvenient for the participants. Kettem & Phonlabutra (2020) developed blended learning (BL) course to develop the pronunciation of Thai university students. A BL course refers to a combination of a traditional class and an e-learning class. The students studied pronunciation through a learning management system (LMS). The results showed that the students improved and that they were highly satisfied with using the BL approach in a pronunciation course. In summary, previous studies have seen positive findings after using technology (e-learning) in a BL class.

Considering BL in more detail, it is the combination of a traditional learning environment and an online learning environment (Garrison, 2008). Several studies have provided evidence supporting online teaching. For example, Fitria (2020) investigated lecturers' opinions regarding using an online learning system in Indonesia. This study found that the Google Meet application was useful in EFL teaching. Similarly, Sakulprasertsri, et al. (2021) revealed that Zoom was useful for joining three webinars on English Language Teaching (ELT) during the COVID-19 pandemic in Thailand. Moreover, Microsoft Teams (MT) provides video conferencing, chat, meetings, notes, and attachments (Hubbard & Bailey, 2018). In this case, Google Meet was selected as an online learning platform for the BL pronunciation course because it has functions that support the teaching of pronunciation, such as the ability to share videos, sound files, and online exercises.

The current study started more holistically from the participants' real learning needs, then proposed the use of BL in a pronunciation course, examined the students' pronunciation ability, and examined the degree of their pronunciation anxiety. The research questions were as follows:

1. What are the student needs when studying an English pronunciation course?
2. What are the students' English pronunciation abilities before and after studying the English pronunciation course?
3. What are the students' opinions toward studying the English pronunciation course in a BL environment?
4. What are the students' anxiety levels before and after studying in such a course?

## Literature Review

### 1. Needs in Learning Pronunciation

A needs analysis in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a learning approach where the target situation is embedded in the course (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Moreover, course development should be based on identifying students' needs. Needs in a language-centered approach can be seen as the ability to understand or use the language of the target situation. It can be separated into two categories, namely target needs, and learning needs. Hutchinson & Waters (1987) stated that a needs analysis can be interpreted in terms of 'Needs, Wants, Necessities and Lacks' with regards to language and learning needs. The target need is an important term. The researcher needs to answer the question "What does the learner need to do in the target situation?" This can be viewed in terms of necessities, lacks, and wants. Necessities refer to the requirement of the academic or of work, while lacks refer to what the learners need to know or are deficient in, and wants refers to what the learners hope or expect to achieve. In contrast, learning need is different, as it has to answer the question of "How are we going to the destination?" Moreover, Hutchinson & Waters (1987) recommended many instruments to identify students' needs. The needs can be collected using interviews, observations (as a participant or non-participant observer), or questionnaires, and these instruments can be triangulated. Some related studies have considered pronunciation needs. Kamsa-ard (2018) identified Thai university students' pronunciation needs. The results showed that a better knowledge of segmental and suprasegmental features was identified by the learners. However, the study did not propose a way to train students to



achieve their real needs. Similarly, Zarzycki (2020) found that both segmental and suprasegmental features were important to develop in the case of Omani ESL students. Therefore, the present study aimed to identify the real needs of Thai university students to meet their pronunciation ability needs.

## 2. English Pronunciation

The phonological acquisition in the second language referred to in the present study focuses on the differences between English and other phonological systems, consonants, and vowels. Linguistics studies in this subfield mainly focus on segmental and suprasegmental features. Segmental features concern phonemes, whereas suprasegmental features refer to linking, intonation, and stress (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996). Stress plays an important role in pronunciation development at the level of the suprasegmental features of utterances (Ladefoged, 2006). It refers to how a syllable or a word is pronounced, with more force, louder, and with a slightly higher sound than other syllables. Moreover, a longer word can be stressed over more than one syllable. Words of one or more than one syllable contain stressed and unstressed syllables (Underhill, 2019). Stress placement plays an important role in speaking skill development because it conveys the meaning of the spoken language. Stress can be separated into word stress and sentence stress (Kelly, 2011).

Word stress is the characteristic pattern of two kinds of syllables, namely stressed and unstressed syllables (Dalton & Seidlhofer, 1994). Kreidler (1997) proposed dividing the stress patterns of English words into three types, where stress refers to the specific syllables that should be focused on. The first is the last syllable of the word (the ultimate syllable), such as agree,

obey, and divide. The second is the second-last syllable (penultimate syllable), or the ‘penult’, such as in ‘discover’, ‘examine’, and ‘inhabit’. The third is the third from the last syllable (antepenultimate syllable), or the ‘antepenult’, such as in ‘cinema’, ‘citizen’, and ‘opera’. Moreover, Roach (2010) noted that there exist two different types of suffixes, i.e., neutral and stress-moving suffixes. Celce-Murcia et al. (1996) added that compound words are as follows: noun and noun, adjective and noun, verb and noun, and so on. Several studies have examined word stress problems in English. Khamkhien (2010) examined pronunciation ability and determined the factors affecting the pronunciation competence of Thai students. The results showed that the participants had somewhat limited knowledge of using word stress, and gender was identified as the most significant factor in the pronunciation test scores, with female students achieving higher scores. Similarly, Plansangket (2016) examined the word stress of Thai graduate students to complete a stress assignment test featuring 15 disyllabic pairs, e.g. ‘a present’ and ‘to present’, in each sentence. The results showed that the participants had limited competence in word stress due to lacking important knowledge of stress rules. However, some related studies note that pronunciation stress can be learned. Tehlah (2012) investigated the word stress suffixion of Thai university students in Songkhla, Thailand. The experimental group was taught by using explicit suffixation instruction, and it showed positive results in developing English pronunciation. Similarly, Nguyen & Ingram (2005) compared the word stress ability of Vietnamese students using twenty minimal pairs of nouns and verbs, e.g., **conduct** and **conduct**, finding the experimental group improved after the treatment.

Sentence stress consists of content and function words. The content words are typically stressed, otherwise, the function words are unstressed (Roach, 2000). Content words are the words that present the core meaning of the sentence, such as nouns, main verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Function words are grammatical words that put the sentence together, such as articles, pronouns, conjunctions, auxiliary verbs, and prepositions. There is normally no need to stress the articles or the prepositions in utterances. Some previous studies have investigated sentence stress in the Thai context. Sahatsathatsana (2017) investigated students' opinions of pronunciation problems. The results showed that all the participants agreed that they had pronunciation problems at both word and sentence stress levels in sentences. Jindapitak (2010) investigated the conversation between two Thai speakers. He found a stress problem in sentences, as one of the participants spoke slowly and stressed every single word unnecessarily, including function words. Similarly, Cabrera (2016) investigated the pronunciation ability of the students of Suan Sunantha Rajabhat University, finding especially stress pronunciation to be limited. She suggested that subsequent studies should propose ways to teach stress to students. In addition, Nguyen (2019) investigated Vietnamese teachers' and students' pronunciation needs. The participants revealed that they preferred to be taught pronunciation explicitly and systematically. This means that the students wanted to take a pronunciation course with examples from native speakers and with the teacher providing comments when they pronounced sounds incorrectly.

### 3. Blended Learning and Pronunciation

The main goal of this study is to optimize blended learning (BL) models in language learning to develop students' pronunciation. Even though BL combines the face-to-face learning environment with online learning (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008), it is very difficult to find appropriate activities and tasks to develop students' pronunciation skills, due to students' different levels of English proficiency and their diverse attitudes towards learning English. Online learning may be suitable for students who have a high degree of responsibility for their learning and who can direct their learning with or without their teachers' supervision (Knowles, 1975). Therefore, this section reviews research studies that have investigated students' pronunciation development after implementing online learning or a BL environment, whether in international or in Thai EFL contexts. Notably, Winaithum (2012) proposed Stress and Pronunciation Multimedia Courseware (SPMC) for pronunciation development. The study showed that the SPMC lesson helped learners to improve their English pronunciation and stress. Even though the courseware was convenient for the participants' development of their pronunciation, the participants needed to spend time practicing at the university's laboratory. It would have been more useful if the participants had the opportunity to study pronunciation both in and outside of the class. Therefore, the study proposed BL for a pronunciation course. Wongsuriya (2020) applied the Google Translate mobile application to improve Thai students' ability to pronounce English. The pre-and post-test results showed that even though the participants were from rural areas where there may be few or no native-speaker models, all their pronunciation ability scores significantly improved. Kettem & Phonlabutra

(2020) developed a BL course to develop the pronunciation of Thai university students at Phetchaburi Rajabhat University. The pre and post-test showed that the students improved and that they were highly satisfied with using the BL approach in a pronunciation course.

#### 4. Anxiety in English Pronunciation

Anxiety is the normal feeling that a human has when faced with uncertain situations or something unfamiliar. Anxiety makes a person feel nervous and tense (Morrow & Labrum, 1978). In language learning and teaching, Horwitz et al. (1986) identified foreign language anxiety as comprising three types of anxiety specific to the foreign language classroom: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. The Foreign Language Pronunciation Anxiety Scale (FLPAS) was implemented to examine participants' English pronunciation anxiety levels before and after an intervention. Its design originated in the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale Horwitz et al. (1986), and it was further developed in the form of the Phonetics Learning Anxiety Scale (Baran-Bucarz, 2013), which focuses on students' opinions about the weak points of their pronunciation and their worries.

Some studies have investigated the effects of using the Foreign Language Pronunciation Anxiety Scale (FLPAS). Kralova et al. (2017) examined student teachers' English pronunciation anxiety before and after pronunciation training. They also proposed intensive English pronunciation training to reduce the foreign language pronunciation anxiety of pre-service teachers. They created a questionnaire and open-ended questions for measuring the pronunciation anxiety of student teachers and their English pronunciation quality. In the same way, Kafes

(2018) investigated pre-service EFL teachers' English pronunciation anxiety. The results showed that the pronunciation anxiety degree of all participants was at a moderate level. Another study, by Kralova et al. (2018), investigated personality factors and foreign language anxiety. The treatment consisted of pronunciation training. Moreover, Lee (2016) conducted a mixed-method study involving oral corrective feedback to pronunciation. In Thai contexts, Jindapitak (2010), Cabrera (2016), and Niamthet (2016) agree that pronunciation courses should be provided to improve pronunciation. Therefore, the present study aimed to reduce the pronunciation anxiety of students to improve their linguistic achievement.

## **Research Methodology**

### **1. Participants**

This research involved a one-group study. The participants, selected via purposive sampling, were 72 first-year students majoring in the English teaching program of the Faculty of Education at Udon Thani Rajabhat University, in Northeast Thailand. They consisted of 57 females and 15 males, and the students' average age was approximately 19.5 years old. This study proposed teaching a pronunciation course using a BL environment. It was a complimentary course. Concerning the participants' background regarding BL, they had prior experience of one semester in a BL course (an English for Communication course) before participating in this study.

### **2. Research Instruments**

The study employed four main research instruments. Firstly, the needs survey questionnaire, adopted from Kamsa-ard (2018), aimed to identify the participants' needs regarding pronunciation learning. The first part elicited the personal

information of the participants (gender, age, study year, faculty). The second part contained 15 items investigating the pronunciation needs, both segmental and suprasegmental features. The results showed that the IOC value was satisfactory (1.0, with an IOC value of  $\geq 0.5$  being satisfactory, while  $\leq 0.5$  is unsatisfactory). Secondly, the pronunciation ability test aimed to test the pronunciation ability of the participants in the pre-and post-tests. This was developed from studies by Niamthet (2016) and Plansangket (2016). This instrument consisted of three main parts. The first part elicited general information, including the name, gender, major, etc. The second part contained 20 items testing word stress and 10 items testing sentence stress. The IOC value was satisfactory, at 1.0. Thirdly, the questionnaire asking about the students' opinions on BL in practicing English pronunciation consisted of six questions. The results showed a satisfactory IOC value of 1.0. Fourthly, a questionnaire aimed to examine the participants' English pronunciation anxiety levels before and after the intervention. This was developed based on Horwitz et al. (1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and the Foreign Language Pronunciation Anxiety (FLPA) protocol developed by Baran-Lucarz (2013) and Kralova et al. (2017). The protocol was separated into two parts. The first part elicited general information about the participants. The second part comprised 20 questions about the students' levels of anxiety. The IOC value was satisfactory (1.0).

### *Teaching Instruments*

This section describes how the pronunciation lessons were delivered via a BL class. This was a bespoke course, i.e., the material was designed to meet the participants' needs. The researcher tried to adapt the pronunciation learning material

(word and sentence stress) from the lessons that the researcher obtained and developed from pronunciation books (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996; Roach, 2010; Kelly, 2011). There were two teaching instruments. Firstly, the lesson plan described the learning steps for the pronunciation lessons in the course. Validation was established by obtaining the opinions of three experts after identifying the relationship between the objectives and the contents. Secondly, the pronunciation learning material included MS PowerPoint presentations, MS Word files (pronunciation exercises and tests), and pronunciation videos. Using the formula E1/E2, based on Bramawong's criteria of an 80/80 standard (Bramawong, 2009), the E1/E2 of the lesson plan was 80.93/88.24, i.e., higher than the efficiency criteria (80/80).

#### *Implementation of BL in the Pronunciation Course*

Before commencing the learning plan, the participants were already familiar with three-stage task-based learning because the researcher usually conducted the English for Communication Course using a task-based learning design. Therefore, the participants had already experienced a learning background that involved doing tasks in English for this communication course. Blended learning is the combination of online learning and face-to-face learning (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008). The lesson plan for this course shows the ratio of the two main learning contexts, namely face-to-face learning (33.33%) and the online learning environment (66.66%). The teaching methodology was separated into three stages, namely, the pre-, during, and post-task stages (Ellis, 2003). In the pre-task stage, the teacher met the participants via Google Meet. The participants were introduced to the topics and watched a video (36 minutes) on how to do the exercises. The class was run by the teacher (teacher-led), and the students needed to do what the teacher



directed. Next, the during task stage was also online. The participants practiced and did the task in order to upload it on Google Classroom within the given time. Even though the plan indicated the activity was student-led, the teacher was always present in the online class to provide advice when the students encountered problems. The role of the teacher was to serve as a counselor. Finally, in the post-task stage, the teacher worked as an instructor (teacher-led) in the class. In this stage, the students' work on word and sentence stress was analyzed, and the teacher explained in more depth why mistakes and errors occurred. The participants received feedback, completed new tasks, and received the key.

### 3. Data Collection and Data Analysis

The data collection consisted of four stages. The first stage was identifying students' pronunciation needs. The researcher surveyed the participants' needs in terms of learning pronunciation by using online questionnaires (Google Forms). The data can be interpreted by using these criteria: 4.21-5.00 indicates Strongly Agree, 3.41-4.20 indicates Agree, 2.61-3.40 indicates Neutral, 1.81-2.60 indicates Agree, and 1.00-1.80 indicates Strongly Disagree. This scoring system was adapted from Plansangkiet (2016). The second stage was to identify the students' abilities before and after implementing the English pronunciation course in the BL class. In this stage, the participants' voice recordings were analyzed, checked, and rated by three experts (with one native speaker) to identify the accuracy of the word and sentence stress of all the participants. The third stage was to ask the participants, via an online questionnaire survey, for their opinions toward studying an English pronunciation course in a BL environment. The fourth stage was to use statistical measures to analyze the data on the

students' pronunciation anxiety via an online questionnaire before and after the treatment. The questionnaire was adapted from Horwitz et al. (1986). All the data collected were analyzed statistically by using the SPSS 20 software package and interpreted based on the means ( $\bar{x}$ ), Standard Deviation (SD), and t-tests.

## Findings

This section presents the students' pronunciation needs, their pronunciation ability, their opinions about the pronunciation lessons in the BL course, and their pronunciation anxiety levels.

**Table 1**

Needs of Students in Learning English Pronunciation

Segmental features	Mean	SD	Rank order	Suprasegmental features	Mean	SD	Rank order
1. Consonants	3.38	0.86	9	8. Intonation	3.47	0.80	4
2. Last Consonants	3.17	0.82	15	9. Word Stress	4.36	0.84	1
3. Voice	3.45	0.81	7	10. Sentence Stress	4.24	0.75	2
4. Voiceless	3.43	0.87	8	11. Rhythm	3.47	0.93	5
5. Clusters	3.36	0.86	10	12. Assimilation	3.34	0.91	11
6. Vowels	3.46	0.89	6	13. Juncture	3.28	0.88	14
7. Diphthongs	3.32	0.77	12	14. Blending Link-up	3.56	0.96	3
				15. Contraction	3.32	0.89	13
Overall Average (n = 72)					3.43	0.86	

Table 1 shows the results of the students' learning needs on segmental and suprasegmental features. Fifteen items addressed the needs of the students, based on the questionnaire findings. The mean scores of the students' needs showed that the highest scores were for word stress ( $\bar{x} = 4.36$ ,  $SD = 0.84$ ) and sentence stress ( $\bar{x} = 4.24$ ,  $SD = 0.75$ ), meaning that the students most needed to learn word stress and sentence stress.

**Table 2**

Students' Ability in English Pronunciation Before and After Studying the English Pronunciation Course (Word Stress)

Items	Pre-Test		Post-Test		Interpretation
	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	$\bar{x}$	
1. yourself	0.19	0.40	0.88	0.33	Increase
2. Italian	0.29	0.46	0.96	0.20	Increase
3. envious	0.33	0.47	0.82	0.39	Increase
4. personality	0.11	0.32	0.82	0.39	Increase
5. development	0.35	0.48	0.85	0.36	Increase
6. successful	0.33	0.47	0.97	0.17	Increase
7. responsibility	0.39	0.49	0.81	0.40	Increase
8. take-off	0.63	0.49	0.94	0.23	Increase
9. rainfall	0.68	0.47	0.15	0.36	Decrease
10. driving license	0.71	0.46	0.96	0.20	Increase
11. software	0.65	0.48	0.79	0.41	Increase
12. fifteen	0.64	0.48	0.74	0.44	Increase
13. Inform	0.18	0.39	0.82	0.39	Increase
14. relaxation	0.67	0.47	0.97	0.17	Increase
15. come on	0.63	0.49	0.96	0.20	Increase
16. toothpaste	0.67	0.47	0.99	0.12	Increase
17. perfectly	0.14	0.35	0.81	0.40	Increase
18. different	0.25	0.44	0.17	0.38	Decrease
19. easily	0.50	0.50	0.82	0.39	Increase
20. comfortable	0.33	0.47	0.78	0.42	Increase
Average	0.43	0.45	0.80	0.32	Increase

Table 2 presents the results obtained from the word stress test. The participants improved, from average scores of  $\bar{x} = 0.43$  (SD = 0.45) to  $\bar{x} = 0.80$  (SD = 0.32). The item that participants could improve the best was the word “personality”, from  $\bar{x} = 0.11$  (SD = 0.32) to  $\bar{x} = 0.82$  (SD = 0.39). There was a significant increase. However, the performance on two items worsened, namely “rainfall”, which fell significantly, from  $\bar{x} = 0.68$  (SD = 0.47) to  $\bar{x} = 0.15$  (SD = 0.36), and “different”, which fell slightly, from  $\bar{x} = 0.25$  (SD = 0.44) to  $\bar{x} = 0.17$  (SD = 0.38).

**Table 3**

Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Mean Scores of Word Stress Ability

	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	T-values	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-test	72	0.43	0.45	5.41	0.00*
Post-test		0.80	0.32		

\*significant at 0.05

Table 3 compares the pre-test and post-test scores on word stress after the treatment. For the pre-test,  $\bar{x} = 0.43$  (SD = 0.45), and for the post-test,  $\bar{x} = 0.80$  (SD = 0.32), while the T-value (5.41) showed that there was a statistically significant difference ( $p > 0.05$ ). This means the pronunciation course may help the participants improve their word stress ability.

**Table 4**

Students' Ability in English Pronunciation Before and After Studying the English Pronunciation Course (Sentence Stress)

Items	Pre-Test		Post-Test		Interpretation
	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	
1) I'd like to speak to Mr. Wong.					
like	0.81	0.40	0.97	0.17	Increase
speak	0.54	0.50	0.99	0.12	Increase
Wong	0.68	0.47	0.97	0.17	Increase
Mean	0.68	0.46	0.98	0.15	Increase
2) Where is your new wooden house?					
where	0.57	0.50	0.82	0.39	Increase
new	0.57	0.50	0.81	0.40	Increase
wooden	0.56	0.50	0.69	0.46	Increase
house	0.57	0.50	0.96	0.20	Increase
Mean	0.56	0.50	0.82	0.36	Increase
3) I'm looking for my cousin's house.					
looking	0.56	0.50	0.81	0.40	Increase
cousin	0.58	0.50	0.81	0.40	Increase
house	0.57	0.50	0.43	0.50	Decrease
Mean	0.57	0.50	0.68	0.43	Increase

Items	Pre-Test		Post-Test		Interpretation
	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	
4) My bag's been stolen.					
bag	0.68	0.47	0.42	0.50	Decrease
stolen	0.42	0.50	0.79	0.41	Increase
Mean	0.55	0.49	0.61	0.46	Increase
5) We are not familiar with this new computer program.					
not	0.42	0.50	0.96	0.20	Increase
familiar	0.08	0.28	0.97	0.17	Increase
new	0.46	0.50	0.94	0.23	Increase
computer	0.46	0.50	1.00	0.00	Increase
Program	0.46	0.50	0.44	0.50	Decrease
Mean	0.37	0.45	0.86	0.22	Increase
6) Do you have any sisters or brothers?					
have	0.42	0.50	0.96	0.20	Increase
sister	0.67	0.47	0.99	0.12	Increase
Brother	0.11	0.32	0.96	0.20	Increase
Mean	0.40	0.43	0.97	0.17	Increase
7) He bought a red car for his daughter.					
bought	0.11	0.32	0.99	0.12	Increase
red	0.42	0.50	0.40	0.49	Decrease
car	0.44	0.50	0.99	0.12	Increase
daughter	0.39	0.49	0.92	0.28	Increase
Mean	0.34	0.45	0.83	0.25	Increase
8) I don't know the answer, either.					
don't	0.25	0.44	0.94	0.23	Increase
know	0.44	0.50	0.97	0.17	Increase
answer	0.39	0.49	0.56	0.50	Increase
either	0.26	0.44	0.40	0.49	Increase
Mean	0.34	0.47	0.72	0.35	Increase
9) We don't need to register for the next new season.					
don't	0.17	0.38	0.61	0.49	Increase
need	0.14	0.35	0.43	0.50	Increase
register	0.26	0.44	0.99	0.12	Increase
next	0.35	0.48	0.82	0.39	Increase
new	0.35	0.48	0.85	0.36	Increase
Season	0.36	0.48	0.75	0.44	Increase
Mean	0.27	0.44	0.74	0.38	Increase
10) Do you prefer tea or coffee?					
prefer	0.64	0.48	0.68	0.47	Increase
tea	0.58	0.50	0.92	0.28	Increase
coffee	0.56	0.50	0.61	0.49	Increase
Mean	0.59	0.49	0.74	0.41	Increase
Average	0.44	0.46	0.80	0.31	Increase

Table 4 presents pre- test and post-test results for the sentence stress test. The participants improved their stress in content words, with overall average scores increasing from  $\bar{x} = 0.44$  (SD = 0.46) to  $\bar{x} = 0.80$  (SD = 0.31). The sentence on which participants increased their performance most significantly was 6) “Do you have any sisters or brothers?”, which increased from  $\bar{x} = 0.04$  (SD = 0.43) to  $\bar{x} = 0.97$  (SD = 0.17). In contrast, the item on which participants performed worst was the sentence 4) “My bag’s been stolen.”, which only rose from  $\bar{x} = 0.55$  (SD = 0.49) to  $\bar{x} = 0.61$  (SD = 0.46).

**Table 5**

Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Mean Scores of Sentence Stress Ability

	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	T-values	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-test	72	0.44	0.46	8.03	0.00*
Post-test		0.80	0.31		

\*significant at 0.05

Table 5 compares the pre-test and post-test scores after the treatment. For the pre-test,  $\bar{x} = 0.44$  (SD = 0.46), and for the post-test,  $\bar{x} = 0.80$  (SD = 0.31); the T-value (8.03) showed that there was a statistically significant difference ( $p > 0.05$ ). This suggests the pronunciation course may have improved the participants’ sentence stress ability.

**Table 6**

Students’ Opinions Toward Studying an English Pronunciation Course via a BL Environment

Blended Learning	Blended Learning Class		
	$\bar{x}$	SD	Interpretation
1. Pronunciation teaching in the BL course enhanced students’ efficiency in pronunciation ability.	4.32	0.47	Very High

Blended Learning	Blended Learning Class		
	$\bar{x}$	SD	Interpretation
2. Pronunciation teaching in BL was convenient to study.	4.19	0.39	Very High
3. After studying pronunciation in the BL course, students felt confident in their pronunciation ability.	4.45	0.53	Very High
4. The specially designed model is interesting enough to develop pronunciation.	4.08	0.86	Very High
5. Studying pronunciation in the BL course needs more suggestions to improve the specially designed model.	2.35	0.48	Low
6. BL is suitable for teaching pronunciation	4.11	0.59	Very High
Overall Average (n = 72)	3.91	0.55	High

Table 6 shows positive results in terms of the students' opinions toward studying the English pronunciation course in a BL environment. Their overall opinion was at a high level of satisfaction ( $\bar{x} = 3.91$ ,  $SD = 0.55$ ) after the BL course. However, the students disagreed that studying pronunciation in the BL course required additional suggestions to improve the specially designed model ( $\bar{x} = 2.35$ ,  $SD = 0.48$ ).

**Table 7**

Levels of Students' Anxiety Before and After Studying the English Pronunciation Course via a BL Environment

No.	Statement	Pre-Questionnaire		Post-Questionnaire	
		$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD
1.	I feel nervous when speaking English.	2.68	0.80	2.46	0.99
2.	I do not like talking to more advanced English speakers.	3.33	0.75	3.18	0.70
3.	I feel embarrassed talking to people with good English pronunciation.	3.31	0.85	3.24	0.94

No.	Statement	Pre- Questionnaire		Post- Questionnaire	
		$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD
4.	I get nervous when I have to speak English in front of other people.	2.81	0.76	2.67	0.87
5.	I am not satisfied with my English pronunciation.	3.29	0.80	3.21	0.79
6	I am bothered about making pronunciation mistakes.	2.90	0.89	2.81	0.88
7	I realize how many pronunciation mistakes I make.	2.86	0.80	2.54	0.93
8	I feel embarrassed when I realize that I pronounce some words incorrectly.	3.31	1.00	3.13	0.80
9	I am afraid people will think I am silly and incompetent because of my poor English pronunciation.	3.81	0.91	3.49	0.83
10.	I consider imitating native-like English pronunciation ridiculous.	1.89	0.78	1.83	0.86
11	I am afraid my future students will have better English pronunciation than I do. (teacher)	3.19	0.78	3.14	0.74
12	Other students have better English pronunciation than I do.	3.35	0.86	3.35	0.84
13	I am worried about not being understood because of my improper pronunciation.	2.91	0.85	2.79	0.86
14	I feel ashamed when people correct my pronunciation mistakes.	3.08	0.79	2.79	0.87
15	It seems to me that I cannot get rid of my Thai accent in English.	3.35	0.78	3.24	0.90
16	I can never master good English pronunciation.	3.57	0.98	3.56	0.87
17	I think English pronunciation is very difficult.	3.65	0.97	3.38	0.90
18	I consider the rules of English pronunciation incomprehensible.	2.67	0.99	2.54	0.93
19	It is very difficult to pronounce like a native speaker.	2.69	0.85	2.54	0.92



No.	Statement	Pre- Questionnaire		Post- Questionnaire	
		$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD
20	I think that good English pronunciation is very important for an English teacher.	3.81	0.93	3.53	0.95
Overall		3.24	0.91	3.19	0.86

Table 7 shows the results of the anxiety levels from the pre-and post-questionnaires. According to the overall mean scores, there was a reduction in the students' pronunciation anxiety after studying the pronunciation course (pre:  $\bar{x} = 3.24$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ; post:  $\bar{x} = 3.19$ ,  $SD = 0.86$

**Table 8**

Comparison of Anxiety Levels Before and After the Course

	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	T-values	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-questionnaire	72	3.24	0.91	8.13	0.00*
Post-questionnaire		3.19	0.86		

\*significant at 0.05

Table 8 compares the levels of anxiety before and after the course. The T-value showed that there was a statistically significant difference ( $p > 0.05$ ). This means that after the participants attended the pronunciation course, the treatment could help them reduce their anxiety regarding English pronunciation in terms of word and sentence stress.

## Discussion

This section discusses the findings according to the four research questions. Firstly, the students' need to learn the pronunciation of both segmental and suprasegmental features was high, and the highest scores were for word stress and sentence stress. The findings are consistent with those of Kamsa-ard (2018), who identified Thai university students' pronunciation needs. The study showed that learners required an understanding of segmental and suprasegmental

features. Similarly, Zarzycki (2020) found that Omani ESL students agreed that it was important to develop both segmental and suprasegmental features. Moreover, this study showed that students needed to learn the pronunciation of both word stress and sentence stress.

Secondly, the findings indicated that the post-treatment word stress accuracy scores were significantly higher, and the sentence stress accuracy scores also significantly increased. For word stress, this also saw an improvement in scores, especially on the word “personality”, which was the item that participants could pronounce best. This indicated that they understood the rule that when a suffix is added to a root word, the primary stress is shifted from the first to the third syllable, as in “**personal**” to “**personality**”. This finding supports the findings of a previous study (Tehlah, 2012). Tehlah investigated word stress suffixation. The study’s experimental group was taught by using explicit suffixation instruction, and this group was significantly better at pronouncing words with suffixes, such as -ity, -tion, -ian, -ous, and -ic. It may be inferred that explicit suffixation instruction could enhance students’ knowledge of English pronunciation. Similarly, Jaiprasong & Pongpairroj (2020) investigated L1 Thai university students’ English word stress production. The participants needed to read out loud for two tasks in word and sentence stress. The results revealed that both groups of participants (intermediate students and advanced students) knew word stress with suffixes like -ic, -ity, -tion, and -sion. However, the advanced students performed better. On the other hand, and with decreasing scores, the words ‘rainfall’ and ‘different’ were problematic. Even though these two words were explained in class, two factors may explain this. Firstly, ‘rainfall’ is a combination of a noun and a verb. The participants may not have been familiar with this due to insufficient knowledge (Khamkhien, 2010; Plansangket, 2016). Secondly, for ‘different’, this may be due to interference from the Thai mother tongue. This supports the findings of Winaithan & Suppasetseree’s (2012)

study, which found that Thai students pronounced words by using Thai tones on words that were familiar to the students. This is also in the line with Kanoksilapatham's (2017) study, which found that one problem with Thai students' pronunciation was interference from the first language.

For the sentence stress test, the words that most students pronounced incorrectly in sentences were 'register' and 'familiar'. Further, the sentence where most students could not pronounce the stress correctly was no. 2) "Where is your new wooden house?" 3) "I'm looking for my cousin's house.", and 4) "My bag's been stolen." The word that most students had a problem with was 'where'. Considering the mistakes that the participants made, this may be over-differentiating between the content word and function word. Prior studies have noted the importance of stress problems in sentences (Jindapitak, 2010; Sahatsathatsana, 2017). Similarly, Winaitham & Suppasetseree (2015) identified the obstacles that Thai ELF students face in pronunciation. Their students lacked knowledge of pronunciation, and that was the reason why they could not solve any pronunciation problems. In addition, the findings of the current study support the findings of a previous study by Nguyen (2019), who investigated Vietnamese students' pronunciation needs. His participants revealed that they preferred to be taught pronunciation explicitly and systematically in class. Blended learning provides explicit teaching in class and online, and the lessons provide examples of foreigners from sound files and the YouTube website. Even though the teacher was a non-native speaker, the preparation of examples and feedback was positively received by the participants as part of teaching pronunciation in the BL course.

In conclusion, after the participants took a pronunciation course in a BL environment for the current study, they improved in both word and sentence stress following the treatment. Further, the participants were taught explicitly in class (traditional learning

environment), and they had a chance to repeat their learning through the pronunciation video (online learning environment). That appears to be the reason why the participants improved in both word and sentence stress.

Thirdly, the participants' opinions towards the BL English pronunciation course were that they were highly satisfied, according to the questionnaire results. The BL pronunciation course was found to match the participants' real pronunciation learning needs. The results showed that the students agreed with teaching pronunciation in a BL environment. Similarly, Khamkhien (2010) recommended that teaching pronunciation to students with a low level of English proficiency requires explicit pronunciation instruction and noted that English learning materials are needed to improve the students' stress. Importantly, the BL approach provides both a face-to-face and online learning experience (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008). Therefore, using the BL approach in teaching pronunciation may improve students' pronunciation ability. The BL course was particularly suitable for teaching pronunciation because it was convenient, and the students felt more confident in their pronunciation ability. These results are similar to those of Kettem & Phonlabutra (2020), who developed a BL course to develop pronunciation. Their students were highly satisfied with using BL in their pronunciation course. In online learning, Winaithum (2012) recommended that it would be more useful if the participants were able to have the opportunity to learn pronunciation both in and outside class. Therefore, the present study assumed that using BL in a pronunciation course would benefit the participants, and indeed they appeared satisfied.

Fourthly, the student's anxiety levels in the post-test were lower than those in the pre-test. This means that the pronunciation course may reduce pronunciation anxiety. In the current study, the students were in the lower range of the Foreign Language Pronunciation Anxiety Scales (FLPAS) (Kralova et al., 2017). This study supports the

finding of a previous study (Kralova et al., 2017), which found that intensive English pronunciation training may reduce the foreign language pronunciation anxiety of pre-service teachers. Moreover, this tallies with a study by Kralova et al., (2018), who implemented pronunciation training for 24 weeks (one 90-minute session per week) and used an inductive approach, which means the students tried to observe the phonetics and derive the rules. The results show that after the intervention, the experimental group's FLPA score fell. Therefore, this study supports the notion that a pronunciation course may be useful for pronunciation practice. In the same way, this study confirms that the participants felt anxiety over pronunciation when they demonstrated inadequate English pronunciation (Kralova & Mala, 2018). Similarly, Roach (2009) stated a pronunciation class was a practical solution, especially if complementary theoretical input on English phonetics and phonological issues was delivered in a way that may reduce language interference.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The main findings can be concluded as follows. First, the strongly identified pronunciation needs were word stress and sentence stress. Second, the students' English pronunciation ability both word stress level and sentence stress level improved significantly after the course of treatment. Third, the participants were highly satisfied with the BL English pronunciation course. Fourth, their anxiety levels lowered significantly at the end of the course. Therefore, the pronunciation course may reduce pronunciation anxiety.

Concerning the teaching of English pronunciation, the findings of this study offer the following implications for all parties involved. Policymakers or administrators should consider technology supports such as internet network connectivity and necessary technological tools to enhance pronunciation development, especially in the Blended Learning environment. For a pronunciation course, this

study provided evidence for improving students' pronunciation ability and attitudes after implementing BL in a pronunciation course. Therefore, the newly designed pronunciation course could incorporate interesting activities which are suitable for the online teaching environment. For language instructors, as using technology may enhance language teaching, they may need to develop their skills. Pedagogical knowledge and technological and online knowledge are needed for creating a BL environment and online teaching. Specifically, for all English language teachers, it may be useful for them and their students to be aware of the pronunciation problems revealed in this study and take them into account in the pronunciation course.

Turning now to further studies, some recommendations are made. Firstly, regarding research methodology, interviews could be used to pursue follow-up questions for specific answers. Secondly, first-year English teaching major students were the participants in this current study. Future studies could focus on more advanced groups of participants. For example, the situations of senior students or graduate students should be investigated, or a longitudinal study could be conducted. Thirdly, the application of BL in other language skills should be made and explored.

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# A Development of English and Thai Product Labels for Curry Paste of “Sam Tambon” Community Enterprise Group in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province: Stakeholders’ Satisfaction and Attitudes

การพัฒนาลากผลิตภัณฑ์ภาษาอังกฤษและภาษาไทย  
ให้กับเครื่องแกงของกลุ่มวิสาหกิจชุมชนสามตำบล จังหวัด  
นครศรีธรรมราช: ความพึงพอใจและทัศนคติของผู้มีส่วนได้ส่วนเสีย

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## Abstract

The curry paste of “Sam Tambon” Community Enterprise Group is well-known among Thai consumers, and has

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อาจารย์ สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อการสื่อสาร คณะวิทยาศาสตร์และเทคโนโลยีมหาวิทยาลัยเทคโนโลยีราชมงคลศรีวิชัย วิทยาเขตนครศรีธรรมราช (สไใหญ่) ประเทศไทย

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นักศึกษาสาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อการสื่อสาร คณะวิทยาศาสตร์และเทคโนโลยี มหาวิทยาลัยเทคโนโลยีราชมงคลศรีวิชัย วิทยาเขตนครศรีธรรมราช (สไใหญ่) ประเทศไทย

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been certified as a 4-star One Tambon One Product of Thailand (OTOP). However, to make the product globally recognized, an English label may be helpful in increasing sales and marketing opportunities. This study, therefore, was conducted to develop both English and Thai labels for “Sam Tambon” curry paste, and to evaluate the stakeholders’ satisfaction and attitudes towards the developed labels. Fifteen committee members of “ Sam Tambon” Community Enterprise Group, 100 Thai consumers and 20 foreign consumers participated in the study. The instruments for data collection were 1) the English and Thai labels for “Sam Tambon” curry paste, 2) a questionnaire concerning the stakeholders’ satisfaction towards the developed labels, and 3) a semi-structured interview. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and content analysis. The results showed that in general, the stakeholders’ satisfaction towards the labels for “Sam Tambon” curry paste was at a high level. Every label component was highly satisfactory. The stakeholders also showed positive attitudes towards the developed labels. Regarding the English language, the stakeholders thought that the language made the product more modern and reliable. Stakeholders also suggested that the font size of the letters should be increased and the color of the labels should be in a darker tone to indicate the type of curry paste more clearly. The findings support that incorporating English into managing local as well as larger businesses can potentially lead to more success of the businesses.

**Keywords:** curry paste, product labels, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Sam Tambon Community Enterprise Group

#### บทคัดย่อ

เครื่องแกงของกลุ่มวิสาหกิจชุมชนสามตำบล ได้รับความนิยจากผู้บริโภคเป็นสินค้าคุณภาพได้รับการรับรองมาตรฐาน 4 ดาว ของสินค้าหนึ่งตำบลหนึ่งผลิตภัณฑ์เพื่อทำให้สินค้าเป็นที่รู้จักในระดับโลก ฉลากภาษาอังกฤษอาจเป็นประโยชน์ในการเพิ่มโอกาสการค้าและการตลาด การศึกษานี้จึงจัดทำเพื่อพัฒนา

ตราฉลากภาษาอังกฤษและภาษาไทยให้กับเครื่องแกงสามตำบัลและประเมินความพึงพอใจ และทัศนคติของผู้มีส่วนได้ส่วนเสีย คณะกรรมการกลุ่มวิสาหกิจชุมชน 15 คน ผู้บริโภคชาวไทย 100 คน และผู้บริโภคชาวต่างชาติ 20 คน เข้าร่วมในการศึกษานี้ เครื่องมือในการเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลประกอบด้วย 1) ฉลากภาษาอังกฤษและภาษาไทยสำหรับเครื่องแกงสามตำบัล 2) แบบสอบถามความพึงพอใจที่มีต่อฉลากและ 3) การสัมภาษณ์กึ่งโครงสร้าง ผู้วิจัยวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลโดยใช้สถิติเชิงพรรณนา และการวิเคราะห์เนื้อหา ผลการศึกษาพบว่าในภาพรวมผู้มีส่วนได้ส่วนเสียพึงพอใจต่อฉลากที่พัฒนาขึ้นในระดับมากทุกองค์ประกอบของฉลากเป็นที่น่าพอใจมาก ผู้มีส่วนได้ส่วนเสียมีทัศนคติที่ดีต่อฉลากที่พัฒนาขึ้นเช่นกัน ด้านภาษาอังกฤษ พบว่า ผู้มีส่วนได้ส่วนเสียคิดว่า ภาษาอังกฤษทำให้สินค้ามีความทันสมัยและน่าเชื่อถือมากขึ้น นอกจากนี้ผู้มีส่วนได้ส่วนเสียได้แนะนำให้เพิ่มขนาดตัวอักษรและสีของฉลากควรเข้มขึ้นเพื่อสามารถระบุประเภทของเครื่องแกงได้ชัดเจน ผลการศึกษานับสนุนว่าการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษในการทำธุรกิจท้องถิ่นรวมถึงธุรกิจขนาดใหญ่นำไปสู่ความสำเร็จที่มากขึ้นของธุรกิจนั้น

**คำสำคัญ:** เครื่องแกง ฉลากสินค้า นครศรีธรรมราช  
กลุ่มวิสาหกิจชุมชนสามตำบัล

## Introduction

It cannot be denied that English is number one language used in international communication among non-native English speakers. It has been accepted as an international language (McKay, 2002; Jenkins, 2003). Due to this fact, English is a language used in every international communication in various fields, such as education, hospitality, tourism as well as business. In business sectors, it is necessary for people concerned to be equipped with the knowledge of English because English can lead to a prosperity of

business (Kiatkungwanglai & Sattayanuwat, 2018). The language can increase products' value and distribution channels to international markets which can result in bigger incomes and profits.

In order to ensure the sales success of the products, it is essential to provide information about those products to customers. In Thailand, if the labels contain product information in English, it is likely that the products will widely attract both Thai and foreign customers. For Thai customers, English can convince them of the quality and reliability of these products. For foreign customers, English on product labels can let them understand the products clearly, which may lead to the sales of these products. The findings from a considerable number of research studies have indicated that English labeling can increase distribution channels of products. In a qualitative study on labels of different face cream products, Thonglor and Chayangammongkol (2018) concluded that Thai consumers perceived that English on the labels contributed to addition of those products' value. In the studies of Sirikhan (2019) and Kositrakun (2020), English information on local product labels could attract foreigners to buy products. The positive result of using English on product labels can be seen in the studies of Modric (2016) and Ho et al. (2019). In the study of Modric (2016), Croatian people thought that English could make the products more modern, elegant and reliable in comparison to the ones with only the Croatian language. Ho et al. (2019) also reported that compared to other languages, English on the coffee packages had the strongest effect on Chinese coffee drinkers. They perceived that the products with English were more trustworthy and tastier which could attract them to purchase the products. Moreover, the English language can foster Thai stakeholders' confidence in their products. In the study of Pochakorn & Homhual (2018), food and beverage entrepreneurs' high satisfaction was observed because they perceived that they could sell their products to

foreign customers if the entrepreneurs studied an English manual especially made for their products. The high satisfaction level of stakeholders was also found in the study conducted by Nakplad et al. (2021). In this study, it was reported that stakeholders believed that the English language on the signs created to give information in That Noi Temple could result in a larger number of Thai and foreign visitors. All in all, based on the mentioned previous findings, English information on labels or other media related to public relations of products contributes to a possibility of more distribution channels.

“Sam Tambon” curry paste is a well-known product whose quality has been certified with a 4-star standard by the Community Development Department of the Ministry of Interior. This guarantees that it is a national quality product and is ready for international distribution. It is also a Thailand One Tambon One Product (OTOP) of “Sam Tambon” Community, meaning that it has been promoted by the Thai government as a quality local product. The product is now in the process of getting a 5-star standard. “Sam Tambon” Community is a successful community enterprise group in Nakhon Si Thammarat province. It has been manufacturing quality curry paste for eight years. According to “Sam Tambon” committee, the sale volumes keep growing since the first day of the business foundation because of the good taste and high quality ingredients of the curry paste. The curry paste has been sold regionally and nationally. Currently, the community has some informal export of curry paste to foreign countries; however, with only Thai product labels, the sales can be limited. The researchers, hence, would like to develop the labels containing product information in both English and Thai for the curry paste. It is assumed that the bilingual product labels will help increase distribution channels for the curry paste as Kosittrakun (2020) mentioned that bilingual product labels with a consumer’s native language



and the international language of English could help increase a product's value which resulted in a higher sales volume because it could attract foreign customers to buy the product.

From the information mentioned earlier, it can be concluded that English is useful for making products more well-known to international markets. However, few studies were conducted to investigate the usefulness of English for other fields, especially local business sectors. Additionally, although the committee of "Sam Tambon" Community Enterprise Group would like to have English labels for their curry paste, without experts' assistance, this cannot be effectively done. This is because the committee believes that the labels could help promote their products and increase the distribution channels. An increase of curry paste's sale volumes would not only benefit "Sam Tambon" Community Enterprise Group, but it is also beneficial to the nearby communities because main raw materials of the curry paste, such as turmeric and lemon grass are from local farmers. In this study, other components of labels, such as colors, font styles, size and illustrations were also developed in order to make the labels the most useful. Moreover, the stakeholders' satisfaction and attitudes towards the developed labels were evaluated to get valuable information for further development.

## **Objectives**

1. To evaluate whether the stakeholders are satisfied with the developed labels for "Sam Tambon" curry paste.
2. To investigate what contributes to the stakeholders' satisfaction and attitudes towards the developed labels for "Sam Tambon" curry paste.

## Literature Review

### 1. Integrated Marketing Communication

Integrated marketing communication (IMC) is defined as a process used by entrepreneurs to continuously communicate with the target consumers in order to make them more familiar with the products or services (Kotler & Keller, 2008). IMC is useful to both entrepreneurs and consumers (Khanaruksombat, 2014). For entrepreneurs, it allows them to effectively present their products or services to the target group of consumers which can result in higher profits. For consumers, it offers the possibility for them to learn about those products or services through various activities.

Common activities for integrated marketing communication comprise advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relation and direct marketing (Horthong, 2020). Product labeling is one effective tool for advertising or publicity and public relations of products or services; therefore, this technique is used by many business sectors to attract and impress target consumers.

### 2. Product Label Development

A product label is necessary because it can give information about products such as quantity, ingredients and instructions for use to consumers. This information is useful for consumers' decision making when buying products because it acts as the very first part that can convince consumers of products' quality. Good product labels can help promote products and increase their marketing channels which may result in higher incomes and better profits (Kosittrakun, 2020). According to Noonpakdee (2010, as cited in Buaclee, 2018),

product labels have to be clear and eye-catching in order to attract consumers. Size, colors, font style and illustrations on labels are important because they can attract consumers (Buaclee, 2018). Given this importance, many products, especially food products have labels.

As food is an important product, labels for food have to contain specific information, such as the product's name, quantity, ingredients, expiry date, proper storage, instruction for use, manufacturer/distributor, safety sign and warning (if any) in order to achieve consumers' maximum benefits (Department of Industrial Promotion, 2016). In this study, the labels for "Sam Tambon" curry paste were developed in accordance with the mentioned guidelines. English and Thai were employed on the labels to give information about two kinds of curry paste since the objectives of the study were to upgrade and to make this product well-known to foreigners as mentioned by Kunasri et al. (2017) that using English together with Thai to give products' information can attract a greater number of consumers.

### 3. Previous Related Studies

A considerable number of studies relating to using English to enhance success of business can be seen in the following studies. English has been employed to promote tourism in Thailand (Limsiriruangrai, 2013; Kongsuk & Chuayoin, 2020). Limsiriruangrai (2013) noted that English brochure appeared to enhance tourism business of Phanom Rung Historical Park and Muang Tam Historical Park in Buriram province. Kongsuk & Chuayoin (2020) reported that the English and Thai brochure could promote tourism at Baan Rai Tawanwarn in Lam Tap district, Krabi province. The tourists and stakeholders in these studies showed high satisfaction towards the English tourism promotion because they could help

increase the opportunity of selling products. The similar findings were observed by Kosittrakun (2020) and Sirikhan (2019) that the entrepreneurs and foreigners strongly needed English notice boards and product labels at Saturday Night Market in Muang district, Khon Kaen province because they could provide correct information to foreign customers and could increase sales volumes. Pochakorn & Homhual (2018) also reported that an English food and beverage manual could help entrepreneurs communicate with foreign customers better. This could increase their incomes.

It can be concluded from the previous related studies that English can help enhance the success of business because it can upgrade the products and increase the marketing channels, especially in international markets. This bigger opportunity can lead to better incomes and profits. However, it is observed that not many studies investigate the benefits of incorporating English on product labels to promote their distribution, in particular for local products like curry paste. The present study was, as a result, carried out to create English and Thai labels for “Sam Tambon” curry paste, a product that can reflect Thai identity.

## **Research Methodology**

### **1. Population and Samples**

By means of convenience sampling method, the participants of the study comprised three distinct groups. The first group consisted of 15 committee members of “Sam Tambon” Community Enterprise Group, the curry paste manufacturers. All of them were Thai. They were chosen as participants because they were the manufacturers and sellers. The researchers wanted to discover their satisfaction and attitudes towards the English language on the labels. The second group

consisted of 100 Thai consumers who were regular curry paste consumers. A bigger part of them were regular “Sam Tambon” curry paste consumers, and the rest were first time buyers. This group of participants could express whether the labels with and without English could affect their satisfaction and attitudes differently. Moreover, they could suggest if the English labels could better persuade them to buy the curry paste. The last group comprised 20 foreign consumers who have worked and stayed in Nakhon Si Thammarat. They were South Africans, Filipinos, and Europeans. A little more than half of these foreign consumers bought the product for the first time, and the rest were non-first time consumers. Some of them had consumed the curry paste a few times, and some had bought the product several times in a few years. This group of participants can reflect whether English on the developed labels was useful. These 120 Thai and foreign consumers were consumers buying the curry paste during a questionnaire collection period of one month, and they were convenient to complete a questionnaire.

## 2. Instruments

Three instruments were employed in the study.

### 2.1 English and Thai product labels

Before developing the labels, 15 committee members were interviewed to get some useful information about the layouts, colors, font styles and contents of the labels. In addition, the researchers sought for labeling instructions from related documents. The Thai data on the previous version of label were studied. The data, such as ingredients, details of the manufacturer, and quality marks were maintained and improved. Based on the obtained information, two labels were developed. One type was for sour curry paste (Kang Som) and the other one was for red curry paste (Kang Kua). These two types of curry

paste were mainly manufactured for selling. The rest one type which was not chosen was very spicy curry paste (Kang Phed) because it was specially made for a small group of consumers who occasionally placed an order. And according to the committee members, the two types were the best sellers. Each label was separately designed using the English and Thai languages. Three experts in the field of marketing and English were also asked to verify the layouts and the contents of the labels. The labels then were improved according to the experts' advice. Thereafter, they were attached to the package of each curry paste type before distribution for general sale.

## 2.2 A questionnaire

A questionnaire used in the study aimed to investigate the participants' satisfaction towards the developed curry paste labels. It was composed of three parts. The first part sought for the participants' personal information which was gender, age, education background and occupation. The second part comprised 5- point Likert scale items focusing on the participants' satisfaction towards the labels. The final part was made up of open-ended questions with the objective to let the participants freely express their opinions about the developed labels.

Prior to the main study, the content validity of questionnaire was verified by three experts by means of Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC). The IOC value of the questionnaire was 0.90 which meant that the questionnaire was highly valid.

## 2.3 A semi-structured interview

To investigate what contributed to the participants' satisfaction and attitudes towards the developed labels and to validate the information from the questionnaires, the participants

were asked to answer four questions in the semi-structured interview: 1) how they think about the product labels?, 2) were they satisfied with the labels and why?, 3) which part of the labels needs improving?, and 4) were they interested in buying the curry paste with the new labels? All of the questions were also verified by the three experts to ensure the clarity and correctness.

### 3. Data Collection

The collection of data was carried out in two main stages as follows:

#### Stage 1: A questionnaire distribution

After 1-month trial of using the labels with the curry paste, a set of questionnaires was distributed to 15 committee members, 100 Thai consumers, and 20 foreign consumers. They were given some time to complete the questionnaires. All of the questionnaires were then collected by the researchers for further analysis.

#### Stage 2: A semi-structured interview

After the completion of questionnaires, 15 committee members, 45 Thai consumers and five foreign consumers were interviewed. The interview data were recorded for further analysis.

### 4. Data Analysis

A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was used to analyze the obtained data. The participants' personal information was analyzed using frequency and percentage. The participants' satisfaction information was analyzed through means and standard deviation and interpreted (Cheenatrakoon, 1995) as follows:

4.51-5.00	Highest
3.51-4.50	High

2.51-3.50	Moderate
1.51-2.50	Low
0.00-1.50	Lowest

The information from the open-ended parts in the questionnaires and the semi-structured interview was categorized, interpreted and analyzed using content analysis.

## Findings and Discussions

The questionnaires completed by 15 committee members, 100 Thai consumers and 20 foreign consumers were collected by the researchers after 1-month trial of using the curry paste labels. The participants completing the questionnaires were 37 males (27.4%) and 98 females (72.6%). Their age ranged from 18 to 50 years. A little more than a quarter of them (27.4%) had a high school diploma, followed by a bachelor's degree (25.2%) and a primary school certificate (24.44%). In terms of occupation, a little larger than one third of the participants were merchants (34.81%). The information about their satisfaction towards the developed product labels was analyzed and illustrated in Table 1.

**Table 1**

The Satisfaction on the Curry Paste Labels Categorized by the Sample Types

Sample type	Mean	S.D.	Level of satisfaction
The committee of Sam Tambon Community Enterprise Group	4.31	0.74	High
Thai consumers	4.36	0.65	High
Foreign consumers	4.13	0.90	High
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.27</b>	<b>0.76</b>	<b>High</b>



From Table 1, it can be generally concluded that the stakeholders were highly satisfied with the two- language product labels ( $M=4.27$ ,  $S.D.=0.76$ ). A high level of satisfaction was observed in every group of the stakeholders. The Thai consumers showed the highest satisfaction towards the labels ( $M=4.36$ ,  $S.D.=0.65$ ), followed by the committee members ( $M=4.31$ ,  $S.D.=0.74$ ), and the foreign consumers ( $M=4.13$ ,  $S.D.=0.90$ ). This finding lends support to the finding of Pochakorn & Homhual (2018), who indicated that the food and beverage entrepreneurs were highly satisfied with the English manual. It is also in line with Sirikhan (2019), who reported that the participants had high satisfaction with English notice boards at Sunday walking-market in Chiang Mai. It can be concluded from these findings that an English-Thai version of labels, notice boards, brochures or handbooks are beneficial because they can attract foreign customers and help increase an opportunity of marketing channels for products which can lead to increased incomes and profits. This conclusion agrees with Limsiriruangrai's findings (2013) which proposed that English-Thai notice boards could enhance the tourism business at Phanom Rung Historical Park and Muang Tam Historical Park in Buriram province and those of Kongsuk & Chuayoin (2020), who reported that the brochure in English could promote Baan Rai Tawanwarn to foreign tourists.

**Table 2**

The Samples' Satisfaction on the Curry Paste Labels Categorized by Questionnaire Items

Questionnaire items	Mean	S.D.	Level of satisfaction
The labels are unique, attractive and colorful.	4.46	0.58	High
The label size is suitable for the package.	4.21	0.84	High
The illustrations are interesting and related to the curry paste.	4.12	0.85	High
The quality marks, such as GMP Rising (nfi), OTOP, Central LabThai, and Rising star, contribute to your purchase.	4.39	0.68	High
English font has proper size and format.	3.93	0.91	High
Thai font has proper size and format.	4.19	0.80	High
English contents on the labels, such as product' s name, ingredients, proper storage, expiry date, net weight and manufacturer are concise, precise and easy to understand.	4.29	0.74	High
Thai contents on the label, such as product' s name, ingredients, proper storage, expiry date, net weight and manufacturer are concise, precise and easy to understand.	4.41	0.72	High
The labels are useful to consumers.	4.43	0.62	High
The labels persuade you to buy the products.	4.33	0.81	High
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.27</b>	<b>0.76</b>	<b>High</b>

From Table 2, it is observed that the overall level of stakeholders' satisfaction with the developed labels was high ( $M=4.27$ ,  $S.D.=0.76$ ). When each aspect of the labels was considered, the most satisfying one was the uniqueness and colors of the labels ( $M=4.46$ ,  $S.D.=0.58$ ), followed by their usefulness to customers ( $M=4.43$ ,  $S.D.=0.62$ ), the presence of quality marks ( $M=4.39$ ,  $S.D.=0.68$ ), conciseness, precision and understandability of Thai contents ( $M=4.41$ ,  $S.D.=0.72$ ), the persuasive power of the labels ( $M=4.33$ ,  $S.D.=0.81$ ),

conciseness, precision and understandability of English contents (M=4.29, S.D.=0.74), the suitability of label size (M=4.21, S.D.=0.84), the appropriateness of Thai font (M=4.19, S.D.=0.80), illustrations (M=4.12, S.D.=0.85), and the appropriateness of English font size (M=3.93, S.D.=0.91). A high level of the stakeholders' satisfaction was observed; this is possibly explained by the fact that the information necessary to put on the labels was given by all concerned parties. In other words, the labels were directly created in response to their needs. This is in line with the finding of Thongrungrroj (2012), who proposes that concerned people's participation, both consumers' and the entrepreneur's in this study, is important in order to meet their requirements.

Since the English language was used on the labels in order to attract foreign consumers to buy the curry paste, their satisfaction was separately evaluated as shown in Table 3. In this calculation, the two items related to the Thai language were removed.

**Table 3**

Foreign Consumers' Satisfaction on the Curry Paste Labels

Questionnaire items	Mean	S.D.	Level of satisfaction
The labels are unique, attractive and colorful.	4.35	0.67	High
The label size is suitable for the package.	4.00	1.12	High
The illustrations are interesting and related to the curry paste.	3.85	0.98	High
The quality marks, such as GMP Rising (nfi), OTOP, Central LabThai, and Rising star, contribute to your purchase.	4.30	0.65	High
English font has proper size and format.	4.00	1.07	High

Questionnaire items	Mean	S.D.	Level of satisfaction
English contents on the labels, such as product's name, ingredients, proper storage, expiry date, net weight and manufacturer are concise, precise and easy to understand.	4.30	0.71	High
The labels are useful to consumers.	4.30	0.73	High
The labels persuade you to buy the products.	3.90	1.25	High
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.13</b>	<b>0.90</b>	<b>High</b>

Although the number of foreign consumers is small, their satisfaction towards the labels was considered very important because the English label version was developed to arouse their interest. From Table 3, it can be seen that their overall satisfaction was at a high level ( $M=4.13$ ,  $S.D.=0.90$ ). Considering each item individually, it was also found that foreign consumers were highly satisfied with each component of the labels developed for the curry paste. With respect to the English language used, the figure showed that the foreign consumers expressed high satisfaction towards the English contents on the labels ( $M=4.30$ ,  $S.D.=0.71$ ).

As mentioned earlier that 15 committee members, 45 Thai consumers and five foreign consumers participated in a semi-structured interview in order to cross-check the satisfaction level and to investigate what contributed to their satisfaction and attitudes towards the developed labels, all of the answers were qualitatively analyzed and categorized into two main points. The first point related to the usefulness of the labels developed for the curry paste which ultimately led to the stakeholders' high satisfaction towards the labels. Based on the analysis, high satisfaction was found among the three groups of stakeholders.

A deeper analysis revealed that the label colors, the languages and details on the labels were three aspects receiving great interest. In terms of colors, it was found that the colors could clearly specify the types of the curry paste. By seeing the colors, they could once learn the types of the curry paste because two different colors: orange and brown were used to specify the types of the curry paste. The old label version used the same color for the two types of curry paste. Regarding the languages, the stakeholders mentioned that using English together with Thai on the labels could upgrade the products and may promote distribution channels of the curry paste, especially in international markets. The trustworthiness of the curry paste was increased when English was used together with Thai. This finding agrees with Modric (2016), Ho et al. (2019) and Thonglor & Chayangammongkol (2018), all of which proposed that English could make products modernized and reliable. Thai committee members who were the main stakeholders believed that the developed labels with English and Thai could make the curry paste more attractive and reliable. Their product possessed modernity and internationality, so they could sell more products to more Thai consumers. Importantly, they could use these labels when they promoted their products in any national and international fairs where foreign consumers visited. Furthermore, they could manage for further export to international markets. These findings can be observed from the following comments given by two committee members. The first one mentioned that *“For me, the labels look modern and reliable because they contain the English language. We hope we can sell more curry paste and use these labels for future export.”* The other committee member pointed out that *“I like the labels. I think they have beautiful colors and useful product details in*

*both Thai and English, but if the fonts can be bigger, it will be better for me because now it's difficult for me to see them clearly.*” These findings are in correspondence with those of Wajitragum (2010), who mentioned that to make a label universal, English should be used together with Thai to attract foreign customers. For Thai consumers, though they could read the Thai information provided, they commented that the labels with the English language were more modish and reliable compared to the one having only Thai. It was easier for them to make a decision to buy the product. The evidence for this claim can be seen in the comments given by one of the Thai consumers who mentioned that *“I usually buy this curry paste. I think the labels make the curry paste more reliable because we know more details, such as ingredients, expiry date, etc. They are good for consumers.”* For foreign consumers, English on the labels could attract them and was useful for them. They saw English on the labels, and they were attracted to know more about the products. Once they read the given information, they wanted to try the curry paste, especially sour curry paste. They added that if no English was on the labels, they might not buy the product because they were not familiar with Thai curry paste. The comments made by a male foreign consumer can confirm this claim, *“Without the labels, I'm sure I will not buy this product. The labels let me know more about the curry paste. Once I read the labels, I learn that it is safe for eating. I can buy it for my wife.”* This finding can be supported by those of Kositrakun (2020) and Sirikhan (2019), who pointed out that foreigners tended to buy products since they could learn about the products through the English texts provided on the labels. Pertaining to the details, it was found that the details in English and Thai on the labels let consumers learn about the product. Both Thai and

foreign consumers agreed that the labels provided them with necessary information about the curry paste. Moreover, the details of the quality marks could convince them of the product's safety. All in all, the labels were useful for them. The other main point which could be interpreted from the collected data was the suggestions for future improvement of the labels. Some stakeholders suggested that the font size should be bigger for the elderly's easy reading. Color tones should be darker to better reflect the colors of each type of curry paste, such as bright orange for sour curry paste and dark brown for red curry paste. These findings agree with Buaclee (2018), who said that colors and font styles were vital for product label design in order to interest consumers.

In summary, the analysis of the information obtained from the interview was found to correspond with the data from the 5- point Likert scale and open- ended parts of the questionnaire. The stakeholders expressed high satisfaction and positive attitudes towards the developed labels made for the curry paste. The labels were satisfactory and useful in terms of the colors, the English language and the complete details of curry paste.

## **Conclusion**

The present study was carried out with the purpose of making “Sam Tambon” curry paste well- known to foreign consumers. Product labels in both English and Thai for two types of curry paste of “Sam Tambon” Community Enterprise Group were developed in response to the stakeholders’ requirements. After 1 month of the launch of the curry paste with the developed labels, satisfaction questionnaires were distributed to 15 committee members, 100 Thai consumers and 20 foreign

consumers. They showed a high level of satisfaction towards the developed labels for sour curry paste and red curry paste. A semi-structured interview was also conducted to verify the level of satisfaction of the consumers and the committee and to learn their attitudes towards the labels. Ultimately, it was found that both sets of information obtained from the questionnaires and the interview agreed with each other in that the stakeholders showed high satisfaction towards the labels. With respect to their attitudes, it can be concluded that the stakeholders had positive attitudes because the developed labels were useful for them. Additionally, some suggestions were provided for future improvement of the labels. For example, font styles should be bigger to ease the elderly's reading, and the color tones of the labels should be brighter for sour curry paste and darker for red curry paste in order to precisely represent each type of curry paste. The findings from the present study provide both theoretical and practical contributions. The findings can shed light on using English together with Thai on product labels or other media for public relations in order to upgrade products or services. The curry paste labels in this study could be referred to as a model for other local products. In addition, other label components are important to make labels the most useful. According to the findings of this study, local business sectors as well as the larger business ones can make use of English to upgrade their products or services. The results can serve as the guideline of integrated marketing communication for a marketing/business English label development. English can be integrated with other fields of study for more benefits; the positive results from this study can reinforce the usefulness of English in other professions.



## Suggestions

Some useful suggestions can be made from the findings of the study. First, a foreign language, particularly English plays a vital role to increase a sales opportunity for any products, especially the local ones which are not familiar to foreigners; English can attract and persuade foreign customers to buy these products. The English language can also gain positive attitudes from Thai consumers in that the language helps make products or services more modern and reliable. In addition, English can make entrepreneurs more confident in their products and enable them to manage the sales for wider distribution channels. Finally, stakeholders of products are important sources of information for making product labels or any public relations media because they can help provide useful and precise guidelines for label design. Feedback on, for example, label colors, font formats, and product details from consumers might be more valuable to manufacturers, especially those aiming for the global market.

As 100 Thai consumers and only 20 foreign consumers were involved in this study, there may be some limitations because the proportion of both groups of consumers may be inappropriate. This imbalance was due to the Covid-19 lockdown. Therefore, further studies involving a larger number of foreign consumers would be desirable. Future studies may also explore whether the English language used is effective for adding products' value. Additionally, a comparative study of Thai only labels and Thai and English ones would be considered to identify if the two label types differently affect Thai participants.

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# The Invented Traditions of Phra Buddha Sihing – Phra Singh in Contemporary Thai Society

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บทความนี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของวิทยานิพนธ์ดุษฎีบัณฑิตเรื่อง "พระพุทธรูปหิ้งค์-พระสิงห์: การสืบทอดและการสร้างสรรค์ตำนานเรื่องเล่าและประเพณีพิธีกรรมในบริบทสังคมไทยร่วมสมัย" ซึ่งได้รับการพิจารณาจากคณะกรรมการพิจารณาจริยธรรมการวิจัยในคน กลุ่มสหสถาบัน ชุดที่ 2 สังคมศาสตร์ มนุษยศาสตร์ และศิลปกรรมศาสตร์ จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย ทั้งนี้ผู้วิจัยขอขอบคุณทุนอุดหนุนการศึกษาสำหรับนิสิตระดับปริญญาเอกและโทที่เข้าศึกษาในสาขาที่เกี่ยวข้องกับความเป็นไทย และทุนวิจัยวิบูลย์สวัสดิ์ แอนเดอร์สันด้วย

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## Abstract

This article aims at collecting invented traditions of Phra Buddha Sihing in contemporary Thai society as well as analyzing concepts that are laid underneath this traditional invention. Both written and fieldwork documents, together with online data, were gathered from October 2019 to June 2021 in Bangkok, Chiangmai, Nakhon Sri Thammarat, Trang, Maehongson, and Samut Sakhon Provinces. Participant observation and informal interviews were mainly used along with related folklore methodologies, especially the concept of invented tradition.

It was found that among 14 traditions pertaining to Phra Buddha Sihing, 11 traditions were inherited and 3 of them were invented: 1) the “Auspicious Event of Thailand’s Buddha Image Worship at the Front Palace” organized by the Office of National Museum, Fine Arts Department, 2) the “Yi Peng Ritual in Wat Phra Sing Temple, Chiangmai Province” created by chief monks of Wat Phra Sing Temple, and 3) the “Wish-making Ritual for the Reclaiming of Phra Buddha Sihing of Wat Hua Thanon Temple, Trang Province” invented by the former provincial governor. These three invented traditions of Phra Buddha Sihing, the focus of the study, were established based on the two concepts of tradition invention: 1) to create new traditions based on old beliefs, and 2) to combine existing rituals into new ones. The study indicates the dynamics and roles of rituals, traditions, and customs within the context of contemporary society in Thailand.

**Keywords:** Phra Buddha Sihing, Phra Singh, invented tradition, folklore, Buddha image

## บทคัดย่อ

บทความนี้มีจุดประสงค์เพื่อรวบรวมประเพณีประดิษฐ์เกี่ยวกับพระพุทธสิหิงค์ในบริบทสังคมไทยร่วมสมัย และวิเคราะห์วิธีคิดในการประดิษฐ์ประเพณีพิธีกรรมดังกล่าว ผู้วิจัยได้รวบรวมทั้งข้อมูลเอกสารและข้อมูลภาคสนาม ช่วงเดือนตุลาคม พ.ศ. 2562 ถึงเดือนมิถุนายน พ.ศ. 2564 ในกรุงเทพมหานคร เชียงใหม่ นครศรีธรรมราช ตรัง แม่ฮ่องสอน และสมุทรสาคร นอกจากนี้ ยังใช้ข้อมูลประเภทอื่นมาเป็นข้อมูลเสริมในการวิเคราะห์ เช่น ข้อมูลจากอินเทอร์เน็ต เอกสารหรือหนังสือที่มีการตีพิมพ์ และข้อมูลภาคสนามอื่น ๆ ที่เกี่ยวข้อง ในการศึกษาค้นคว้าครั้งนี้ผู้วิจัยสำรวจข้อมูลและเก็บข้อมูลภาคสนามจากการสังเกตแบบมีส่วนร่วม และการสัมภาษณ์อย่างไม่เป็นทางการ โดยใช้แนวคิด “ประเพณีประดิษฐ์” เป็นแนวการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูล

ผลการศึกษา พบว่า ประเพณีพิธีกรรมเกี่ยวกับพระพุทธสิหิงค์ที่ปรากฏในสังคมไทยปัจจุบันมี 14 ประเพณีพิธีกรรม เป็นประเพณีสืบทอดจำนวน 11 ประเพณีพิธีกรรม และเป็นประเพณีประดิษฐ์จำนวน 3 ประเพณีพิธีกรรม ได้แก่ กิจกรรมสักการะพระพุทธรูป ณ วังหน้าพระปฎิมาแห่งแผ่นดิน กรุงเทพมหานคร ประเพณียี่เป็ง จังหวัดเชียงใหม่ และ พิธีอธิษฐานจิตระลึกถึงพระพุทธสิหิงค์ จังหวัดตรัง บทความนี้ศึกษาเฉพาะประเพณีประดิษฐ์เท่านั้น โดยประเพณีประดิษฐ์เกี่ยวกับพระพุทธสิหิงค์มี “วิธีคิด” ในการประดิษฐ์ประเพณีอยู่ 2 ลักษณะ ได้แก่ การสร้างประเพณีใหม่บนฐานความเชื่อเดิม และการผสมหลายพิธีกรรมเข้าด้วยกัน การศึกษาประเพณีประดิษฐ์เกี่ยวกับพระพุทธสิหิงค์แสดงให้เห็นถึงพลวัตและบทบาทหน้าที่ของประเพณีพิธีกรรมในบริบทสังคมไทยร่วมสมัย

**คำสำคัญ:** พระพุทธสิหิงค์ พระสิงห์ ประเพณีประดิษฐ์ คติชนวิทยา  
พระพุทธรูป

## Introduction

“Phra Buddha Sihing” is one of the priceless Buddha images of Thailand, located as the principal Buddha image in Thai kingdoms - Nakhon Sri Thammarat, Sukhothai, Chiangmai, Chiangrai, Ayutthaya, and Bangkok. However, academics believe that there are three so-called images of Phra Buddha Sihing in Thailand, enshrined in Phutthaisawan Throne Hall in Bangkok National Museum, in Lai Kham Vihara of Wat Phra Sing Temple, Chiangmai Province, and in the Buddha Image Hall of Nakhon Sri Thammarat province.

At present, in the contexts of globalization and tourism, part of the Phra Buddha Sihing ritual is promoted for tourism in Bangkok, Chiangmai, and Nakhon Sri Thammarat, where the Buddha image of Phra Buddha Sihing is located, especially in a religious procession during the Songkran Festival so that people can pour water on the sacred image for auspicious worshipping.

According to the preliminary survey data and field data, there are some Buddha images with particular mythical legends and rituals in several areas of Thailand that are believed by the local folks as “the genuine Phra Buddha Sihing”. Therefore, it could be said that the so-called “Phra Buddha Sihing” or “Phra Sing” is a term for many Buddha images enshrined in different regions of Thailand.

Apart from the inherited traditions, there are newly-invented ritual performances discovered from the survey data and defined as “invented traditions”. According to Hobsbawm (1983, cited in Nathalang, 2019), the term “invented tradition” means any cultural practices which are “presented” or “perceived” as tradition, no matter how long those have been invented. Nathalang (2015) further explains that Hobsbawm’s (1983) definition indicates that “any traditions” could



be invented anywhere and anytime; similarly, many traditions have newly been created based on existing cultural roots so as to persuade people to believe that they have been inherited from the early days.

Additionally, the concept of “invented traditions” thereon can be applied to clarify how and how much the invented traditions of Phra Buddha Sihing “utilize” Thai cultural and religious bases. The study on the invented traditions of Phra Buddha Sihing can also serve as a record of contemporary Thai history and a reflection of social phenomena during the research period.

Correspondingly, the traditions of Phra Buddha Sihing are discussed in the article “New thoughts on “Phra Singh” of Chiang Mai” by Wichienkeo (2012) and the Master of Arts thesis entitled “An analysis of Sihingkanidana in Lanna” of Amaramedho (2011). The first study focuses on the loss of Chiangmai traditions of Phra Buddha Sihing, while the second one suggests that the original version of Phra Buddha Sihing Myth, the so-called Sihinga Nidana, was so influential to people’s beliefs and faiths that it gave rise to new traditions relevant to Phra Buddha Sihing.

Based on the literature review, there are traditions of Phra Buddha Sihing that have both been inherited and lost due to changes of socio-cultural contexts. However, most of the previous studies focused on inherited traditions, and the research on invented traditions has been limited. Therefore, this has become the focus of this research, and the idea of the invented tradition has been applied as the research framework.

## **Research Question**

How are the invented traditions of Phra Buddha Sihing in present-day Thai society conceptually created?

## Objectives

1. To collect field data on invented traditions of Phra Buddha Sihing in present-day society.
2. To analyze the underlying concepts of this traditional invention.

## Research Methodology

The data on the invented traditions of Phra Buddha Sihing were gathered from written documents and field research from October 2019 to June 2021 in the provinces where the Buddha images named “Phra Buddha Sihing – Phra Sing” are located – Bangkok, Chiangmai, Nakhon Sri Thammarat, Trang, Maehongson and Samut Sakhon. Additional data such as online information, books, or supplementary field data were used for analysis.

To collect the field data, participant observation and informal interviews were used with 13 key informants who were conversant with rituals of Phra Buddha Sihing image: 6 Buddhist monks (including the abbots), 3 community leaders/ritual performers, and 4 villagers in the communities where one of the so-called Phra Buddha Sihing is located. None of the fieldwork data collection methods affected folk beliefs or local ways of life.

## Findings

### 1. Invented Traditions of Phra Buddha Sihing – Phra Sing

Both the inherited and newly created rituals and traditions of Phra Buddha Sihing in Thai society at present were cultivated from a

strong belief in the sacredness of this Buddha image. These cultural phenomena not only emphasize how important ancient traditions are in today's society but also inform that the recently-invented ones have some particular purposes and functions in the current context.

Based on the preliminary survey and field data results, 14 traditions of Phra Buddha Sihing were found - 11 inherited traditions which are mostly the water-pouring and yearly worshipping ceremonies and 3 invented ones. Only the collection of invented traditions is mentioned in this study.

1.1) The Auspicious Event of Thailand's Buddha Image Worship at the Front Palace is a cultural activity that has been yearly organized by the Office of National Museums, Fine Arts Department since 2011. During the New Year festival, some remarkable Buddha images are brought to Phutthaisawan Throne Hall in the Front Palace, where Phra Buddha Sihing is enshrined as the principal sculpture; the activity is set up for Thai people's sake of auspiciousness. Solely for this study, the ritual was observed in 2020. In that year the event took place from 25<sup>th</sup> December 2019 – 5<sup>th</sup> January 2020 under the main theme "Various Artistic Styles of the Ten Precious Buddha Images". In general, people came into the throne hall to pay respect and offer flowers or garlands to Phra Buddha Sihing before worshipping other temporarily-enshrined images, saw the exhibition, and so on.

1.2) The Yi Peng Ritual in Wat Phra Sing Temple, Chiangmai Province is organized by monks of the monastery themselves during the festive time of the 15<sup>th</sup> waxing moon in the 2<sup>nd</sup> northern-Thai lunar month called "Yi Peng". The fieldwork document thereof was primarily collected in 2017; the ritual was performed for two days on 3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> of November, starting from preaching Phra Sing Myth (Sihingā-nidāna) along with offering covert cloth to the image before

lighting small candle pots around Lai Kham Vihara to worship Phra Sing image in the first day evening, while ending with the miniature ship-launching ritual called “Long Sapao” on the second night.

1.3) The Wish-making Ritual for the Reclaiming of Phra Buddha Sihing of Wat Hua Thanon Temple, Trang Province, was invented by Mr.Dejrat Somsiri, the provincial governor at that time, on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2016, in Wat Hua Thanon Temple, Tambon Na Phala, Amphoe Mueang Trang, Trang Province, to symbolically express people’s wishes to get the Buddha image, which has been stolen since 18<sup>th</sup> January 1983, back to the community. Today this ritual is performed every Buddhist holy day before offering food to monks. From the fieldwork observation on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2020, people lighted the candles and incenses to pay homage to the replica of Phra Buddha Sihing, meditated for making their wishes to reclaim the Buddha image, and offered food to the monks.

From the foregoing, dates of the invention, together with inventors, of these three invented traditions can be precisely ascertained. Despite being recently established, all these traditions were built upon ancient cultural bases. Underlying concepts of the establishment of these traditions are discussed in the following section.

## 2. Concepts of How to Create the Invented Traditions of Phra Buddha Sihing

Differentiated by hidden cultural bases that can be noticed from how each ritual is performed, two of these three invented traditions were built upon the concept of creating new traditions based on old beliefs, and one was established by combining various ancient customs.

## 2.1) Creating New Traditions Based on Old Beliefs

To invent a new tradition requires old beliefs as cultural materials. Two traditions of Phra Buddha Sihing built upon this concept include the Auspicious Event of Thailand's Buddha Image Worship at the Front Palace and the Wish-making Ritual for the Reclaiming of Phra Buddha Sihing of Wat Hua Thanon, Trang Province.

*The Auspicious Event of Thailand's Buddha Image Worship at the Front Palace* is the New Year occasion when people are invited to worship Phra Buddha Sihing, along with other precious Buddha images particularly selected each year. According to data from the National Archives of Thailand, to worship Phra Buddha Sihing on the festive time of New Year for the sake of auspiciousness has been inherited from the old days. In the past, Phra Buddha Sihing was brought to a public place where people were allowed to pay respect to on Songkran and New Year festivals by performing the water-pouring ritual. Bangkok Metropolitan Administration thereat took responsibility for the ceremony celebrated by many theatrical performances.

Based on the traditional perception, the great transmigration of the Sun to Aries (in April in approximate), namely Songkran, is generally regarded as Thai New Year. For this reason, in 1889 the New Year Day was officially changed to the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, thereafter the public New Year Celebration was firstly organized by the government in 1934 when Phra Buddha Sihing was brought to the Royal Ground for the water-pouring and gold leaf-covering rituals performed by ordinary people (Chotamra, 1979), as well as in 1935. The cultural

activity has been recorded in the picture from the National Archives of Thailand as shown below.

**Figure 1**

National Archives of Thailand



Note: The National Archives of Thailand (1935). Water-pouring Ritual to Pay Respect to Phra Buddha Sihing Image on 1935 New Year [Photograph]. The National Archives of Thailand. NAT-P004124

Even though the Thai New Year's Day has been changed to the 1<sup>st</sup> of January since 1940 by the government under Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram, Phra Buddha Sihing was brought to the public on New Year's Day as before. The historical document kept in the National Archives in Honour of H.M. Queen Sirikit, Trang Province, states that the 1941 New Year Celebration took place from 31<sup>st</sup> December 1940 – 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1941 on the Royal Ground where people were allowed to perform the ritual of pouring water over Phra Buddha Sihing and covering the image with gold leaf.

Moreover, firework displays were held and several theatrical performances were given to celebrate the image of Phra Buddha Sihing (Monthon Phuket, Monthon Phuket 1.02.1.13/30 C.E./1941).

Public installation of Phra Buddha Sihing, together with the worshipping rituals, on New Year Festival, was continually set up as mentioned in the documents from the National Archives of Thailand that the activity was annually organized from 1957 - 1963 (Ministry of Interior, MOI 0201.2.1.28.3/10-23 C.E./1953-1962; Ministry of Interior, MOI 0201.2.1.28.3/24-34 C.E./1961-1964).

Although in 1964 this Buddha image was not brought out to the Royal Ground for the New Year bathing and gold leaf-covering rituals, the Putthaisawan Throne Hall, where Phra Buddha Sihing was enshrined, was publicly opened for people to pay respect to the Buddha image as stated in the document from the National Archives of Thailand, particularizing the revival of New Year Tradition (Ministry of Education, MOE .0701.48/116 C.E./1963). In 1967, Phra Buddha Sihing was brought out to the Royal Ground for public worship on New Year Festival again as shown in the Tourist Organization of Thailand (TOT) booklet, specifying that the New Year worshipping rituals of Phra Buddha Sihing were performed, along with a firework display, from the evening of 31<sup>st</sup> December to the morning of 1<sup>st</sup> January 1967.

Even though today this significant Buddha image is no longer brought out to the Royal Ground on New Year Festival, the Bangkok National Museum has organized the cultural New Year occasion *“The Auspicious Event of Thailand’s Buddha Image Worship at the Front Palace”* to invite people to pay

respect to Phra Buddha Sihing, together with some selected Buddha images each year, inside the Phutthaisawan Throne Hall since 2011.

Apart from the belief of the New Year Worship for the sake of auspiciousness, mythological relevance between Phra Buddha Sihing and King Ramkhamhaeng the Great narrated in the widely-believed version of Phra Buddha Sihing Myth named *Sihinga-nidāna*, is pointed out almost every year.

It can be understood from the above that the Auspicious Event of Thailand's Buddha Image Worship at the Front Palace is built upon the long-lasting belief of Phra Buddha Sihing in Thailand.

*Wish-making Ritual for the Reclaiming of Phra Buddha Sihing of Wat Hua Thanon Temple, Trang Province* has been performed since the Phra Buddha Sihing image of this monastery was stolen in 1983. In other words, this ritual, performed by folks every Buddhist holy day before offering food to the monks, manifests local people's hope for the recovery of the stolen Buddha image.

There are two overlapping definitions of “wish-making” (*adhiṭṭhāna* in Pali). On one hand, the Buddhist term *adhiṭṭhāna* can be summed up as “resolution” ( Phra Brahmagunabhorn, 2012 ). On the other hand, folk laypersons define the word as “wish-making for a certain success” (Kerdkaew, 2011), which is generally relevant to their belief.

A careful look into the purpose of this ritual reveals that the core of this wish-making activity is to beg Phra Buddha Sihing image itself to miraculously stimulate anyone who



presently possesses the image to return it to the community. The cultural activity, thus, is built upon the belief of wish-making power traditionally inherited in Thai society.

From the above, it is apparent that both traditions originated from the creation of new traditions based on the beliefs that exist in that culture.

## 2.2) Combining Ancient Customs to Create a New One

In general, an invented tradition can be set up by combining ancient customs. The Yi Peng Ritual in Wat Phra Sing Temple, Chiangmai Province is created by the same cultural method.

It is found from the study that the *Yi Peng Ritual in Wat Phra Sing Temple, Chiangmai Province* is “invented” by combining 3 ancient customs inherited among the Northern Thai – the preaching ritual, the candle-lighting ritual, and the miniature ship-launching ritual, despite the different purposes of ritual performance in general contexts of Lanna Society.

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lunar month of the Northern Thai, namely Lanna, the grand preaching ceremony called “Tang Tham Luang” is asynchronously performed in each community/monastery. In general, the subject of preaching is Vessantata Jataka or “the Tale of Prince Vessantara, the Gautama Buddha-to-be”, but the topic is changed to the myth of Phra Sing by the monks of Wat Phra Sing Temple to cultivate strong faith toward the principal Buddha image of the monastery.

The pot candle-lighting ritual, on the other hand, is adapted from the significant olden-aged ritual of Lanna culture derived from the myth of the five Buddhas of this aeon: to light “crow clawed-candles” to worship “the Female White Crow” who is believed to be the mother of the five Buddha-to-be”. Despite having very little information about when and how this particular candle-lighting ritual was performed, a historical document entitled “The Devotion of Religious Slaves to Wat Phra Sing Monastery” (1630) informs that when the Lanna Kingdom was under Toungoo Dynasty approximately in 1647, the Karen slaves descending from ones whom Queen Anoja of Chiangmai devoted to the long-abandoned temple named Wat Pa Phai Luang, Ngao Village, were collected by the abbot of Wat Phra Sing (the Chief Monk of Lanna at that time) so that these people had to send an amount of oil to light the candles to worship Phra Sing. This indicates that the candle-lighting ritual for Phra Sing lasts a very long time.

Regarding the miniature ship-launching ritual called Long Sapao, Rupin (2001) said that it is performed after the Buddhist Lend period, mostly on the 15<sup>th</sup> waxing moon of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lanna month, namely Yi Peng Day. The purpose of this ritual was changed by Wat Phra Sing Temple from making offerings to ancestors to removing bad luck and worshipping Phra Sing some years ago.

As has just been described before, Yi Peng Ritual in Wat Phra Sing Temple, Chiangmai Province, is adaptively invented from odds and ends of the details from Lanna traditions to become a new cultural rooted-corresponding ritual.

The table below gives details of the three invented traditions.

**Table 1**

Invented Traditions of Phra Buddha Sihing – Phra Sing in Present Day Thai Society

<b>Name</b>	<b>Year of Invention</b>	<b>Initiator (s)</b>	<b>Ritual Purpose</b>
The Auspicious Event of Thailand's Buddha Image Worship at the Front Palace	2011	Office of National Museum, Fine Arts Department	To allow people to pay respect to Thailand's remarkable Buddha images during the new year festival
Yi Peng Ritual in Wat Phra Sing Temple, Chiangmai Province	Circa 2007	Monks of Wat Phra Sing Temple	To pay respect to Phra Buddha Sihing during Yi Peng Festival
The Wish-making Ritual for the Reclaiming of Phra Buddha	2016	Mr. Dejrat Simsiri, the Provincial Governor	To reclaim the stolen Buddha image

<b>Name</b>	<b>Year of Invention</b>	<b>Initiator (s)</b>	<b>Ritual Purpose</b>
Sihing of Wat Hua Thanon Temple, Trang Province		(at that time)	

Table 1 indicates that all these invented traditions share some features: 1) the exact beginning date and 2) the inventors that can be identified, which are dissimilar to the inherited ones of which none of the two details are clear.

The findings on to what extent these three newly created traditions of Phra Buddha Sihing are based on religious and cultural beliefs show that the long-lasting myths, beliefs, and rituals play important roles in the establishment of these traditions. These traditions not only serve people's psychological needs toward religion, but also build up secular power in the modern world e.g. to promote tourism and to negotiate with the government sectors, which will be discussed in the next section.

## **Conclusion and Discussion**

The findings on the underlying concepts of the invented traditions of Phra Buddha Sihing can be discussed as follows.

### **1. Traditions of Phra Buddha Sihing – Phra Sing as the Invented Traditions**

The three invented traditions of Phra Buddha Sihing have been created under two concepts: creating new traditions based on old beliefs and combining ancient customs to create a new one. These two concepts can lead to the belief that the

invented traditions are the olden practices. These ideas are consistent with Hobsbawm's idea that traditional invention often relies on cultural and religious roots to convince people to believe in its "oldness" (Nathalang, 2015).

It is noticeable that all the invented traditions of Phra buddha Sihing have not been originally created by the local folks themselves, but by the government sectors – Bangkok National Museum, Fine Arts Department, to set up the "Auspicious Event of Thailand's Buddha Image Worship at the Front Palace" and the former provincial governor of Trang province to establish the "Wish-making Ritual for the Reclaiming of Phra Buddha Sihing of Wat Hua Thanon Temple" and by the monastery - the "Yi Peng Ritual in Wat Phra Sing Temple" by the monks of Wat Phra Sing.

These three traditions were invented to serve different purposes. The purpose of the "Auspicious Event of Thailand's Buddha Image Worship at the Front Palace" is to invite people to pay respect to Phra Buddha Sihing on New Year Festival for auspiciousness. The "Yi Peng Ritual in Wat Phra Sing Temple in Chiang Mai was invented to allow people to pay respect to the Phra Buddha Sihing image on the Yi Peng Day, whereas the prime objective of the "Wish-making Ritual for the Reclaiming of Phra Buddha Sihing of Wat Hua Thanon Temple" in Trang is to manifest Trang people's firm intention, as well as negotiation, to get the stolen Phra Buddha Sihing back.

However, a closer look at the purposes of these invented traditions suggests that each tradition of Phra Buddha Sihing can be regarded as a "political tool". The name "Auspicious Event of Thailand's Buddha Image Worship at the Front Palace" implies that the key centre of "the Kingdom of

Thailand” is “Bangkok”, where Phra Buddha Sihing and other “remarkable Buddha images of the Land” are located. The “Yi Peng Ritual in Wat Phra Sing Temple” was invented to benefit Chiang Mai’s tourism, which can bring Thailand’s economic stability, leading to improved state welfare and the well-being of the nation. The “Wish-making Ritual for the Reclaiming of Phra Buddha Sihing of Wat Hua Thanon Temple” was utilized by the provincial governor at that time as “a political method” to rule people in his position with the responsibility to reclaim the remarkable Buddha image back to the province.

It is noticeable that all the traditions have underlying political purposes. This is consistent with Hobsbawm’s (1983, cited in Nathalang, 2019) idea that most of the invented traditions in modern society originate from state policies. In other words, the nation-state itself invents the traditions as a type of political discourse. These ideas, thereof, correspond to Hongsuwan’s (2015) suggestion – the principal purpose of inventing traditions inclines to profane needs than sacred objectives.

By employing the concept of invented traditions in the study of invented traditions of Phra Buddha Sihing, it was found that all traditions of Phra Buddha Sihing are based on “traditional” ways of belief and ritual practices. The myths of Phra Buddha Sihing, together with the beliefs in the Buddha image, are significantly hidden behind these invented traditions, as well.

## 2. Invented Traditions of Phra Buddha Sihing – Phra Sing as Creative Traditions

It is figured out from the research that the three invented traditions can be identified as creative traditions,

especially by Nathalang's (2019) definition that the term "creative tradition" thoroughly means both the olden traditions which have already been applied to be contemporarily presented and the recently-created ones with new practicing forms, contents, and purposes that are necessary for today's creative economy, tourism or global contexts.

All invented traditions of Phra Buddha Sihing can be "precisely dated" and the inventors can also be identified. Firstly, the "Auspicious Event of Thailand's Buddha Image Worship at the Front Palace" was started in 2011 by the Bangkok National Museum under the supervision of Mrs. Somsuda Leeyawanich, the Director-General of Fine Arts Department, and Mr. Anant Choochot, the director of Bangkok National Museum at that time.

The "Wish-making Ritual for the Reclaiming of Phra Buddha Sihing of Wat Hua Thanon Temple", secondly, is performed for the first time on May 1, 2016 in the temple where Phra Buddha Sihing was once located according to the "initiative idea" of Mr. Dejrat Somsiri, the former provincial governor.

Lastly, without knowing the exact date when the "Yi Peng Ritual in Wat Phra Sing Temple" was invented, the fieldwork data point out that this tradition was established approximately in 2007 in cooperation with Phra Dharmasiddhācārāya (Nu Thāvaro), the former abbot of Wat Phra Sing; Phra Devasiṇhavarācārāya, the abbot of Wat Phra Sing; and Phra Khru Palat La Amamedho, the assistant abbot of Wat Phra Sing.

The above information indicates one of the characteristics of an invented tradition – its date of invention and its inventor can be clearly identified. Correspondingly, Nathalang (2015) defines the term “invented traditions” in Thai society as newly-created traditions having practicing forms, contents, and purposes which have “never been seen before” in “that particular area”. Invented traditions, herein, include traditions that have been applied from olden customs and have recently been built upon inherited beliefs. Importantly, it is possible to “identify the dates of invention”.

Since “creative traditions” belong to “creative folklore”, socio-cultural contexts that influence the invention of traditions should be considered as well.

The Yi Peng Ritual in Wat Phra Sing Temple, in other words, is performed under a tourism economic context. The ultimate aims of the ritual are not only to worship Phra Sing on the night of Yi Peng, but also to participate in tourism events organized by Chiangmai Municipality Office, the local administration sector that requests ones who take responsibility for tourist sites to set up cultural activities like candle-lighting, Vessantara Jakata preaching, krathong-launching, etc. to “entertain” tourists. For this reason, Wat Phra Sing Monastery created the pot candle-lighting ritual, which has become popular until now.

In addition to giving people the opportunity to pay respect to Phra Buddha Sihing for an auspicious new year, the Bangkok National Museum organizes the “Auspicious Event of Thailand’s Buddha Image Worship at the Front Palace” to promote museum tourism during the New Year Vacation by exempting visitors to the museum from paying the entrance fee.



The preliminary data and field data show that both the “Yi Peng Ritual in Wat Phra Sing Temple” and the “Auspicious Event of Thailand’s Buddha Image Worship at the Front Palace” need a picturesque background for photoshoots, either with the candle lights or with the displayed Buddha images, so ones who take responsibility for each invented tradition have to keep in mind how to set up lighting for photoshoots.

In the information age, the Wish-making Ritual for the Reclaiming of Phra Buddha Sihing of Wat Hua Thanon is a symbolic action of the local folks to retrieve Phra Buddha Sihing that has been stolen since 1983. Mr. Dejrat Somsiri, the ritual initiator and the provincial governor at that time, raised the idea to the abbot of Wat Hua Thanon Temple together with the community leader that local people should show to those in possession of the stolen Buddha image and those in authority how this Buddha image is spiritually important to them and they still long for its return. On that first occasion, the provincial governor invited TV reporters and pressmen to broadcast the ritual performance and asked the folks to share the activity through online social media to send their collective will to the person who possesses the Buddha image and the authority in the country to see this ritual.

Capitalism and the creative economy affected the 2020 Yi Peng Ritual in Wat Phra Sing Temple. Its new interpretation displayed in the monastery’s online media is that the main purposes of the pot candle-lighting ritual are “to remove bad luck, increase personal wealth, enhance auspiciousness, and confirm ones’ success and prosperity, not merely to worship the Buddha image anymore. The realm of the objectives of the ritual extends from the sacred sphere to the real world of capitalism, somewhat by today’s creative economic impulse.

Concerning “creative folklore”, traditions and rituals are “cultural data” that can be reestablished based on existing religious beliefs for new purposes in today’s social context. This shows that social context is one of the key factors that contributes to the creation of new traditions in Thai society.

The results of the study show that the invented traditions of Phra Buddha Sihing can be classified into the kingdom level and local level. Each of them has its particular process, elements, purposes, etc., but the key common feature of these rituals is their role in politics and governance in today’s social context.

In summary, the invented traditions of Phra Buddha Sihing demonstrate the dynamics of traditions in today’s Thai society that can be adapted, applied, re-interpreted, or invented for different purposes in today’s changing socio-cultural contexts.

Based on the preliminary data and field data, it was found that the three invented traditions tend to be carried on until they become “permanently-inherited traditions” because “the concepts” of inventing these traditions are based on legends, beliefs, and rituals inherent in Thai culture and ways of life.

## **Recommendations**

### **1. Research recommendation**

Thanks to the fact that the invented traditions of Phra Buddha Sihing originated from tourism and creative economy, these should be comparatively discussed with other similar-type cultural phenomena to build up further knowledge of contemporary Thai cultural dynamism.

## 2. Policy recommendation

Since the study reveals how the creative economy affects cultural dynamism on a large scale, it should be thoroughly considered by tourism organizations how to “preserve” local identities in the dynamistic world along with “building upon” creative culture from inherited cultural capitals.

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# **The Barrier of Relationships: Dynamics of Social Interaction and Interethnic Political Relation of People in Na Ngam Subdistrict of Pattani under Violent Situations in the Three Southern Border Provinces**

กำแพงความสัมพันธ์: พลวัตความสัมพันธ์ทางสังคม  
สู่ความสัมพันธ์ทางการเมืองของคนในตำบลนาแกม  
จังหวัดปัตตานีภายใต้สถานการณ์ความรุนแรง  
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## **Abstract**

This research examines the relationship dynamics of coexistence and political relations through people's interactions in social spaces in violent situations from 2004 to 2021. It aims to capture people's lives in a community in the Na Ngam

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Subdistrict of Pattani, which is a *community* with a long history of settlement and coexistence amongst diverse groups of people. These people have played a part in fostering a sense of community through social spaces in everyday life, including agricultural, economic, and educational spaces. Not to mention the fact that they have constantly been facing violent situations that last for more than a decade. This research used the methods of literature review, fieldwork from 2019 to 2021, participant observation, and in-depth interviews with the Thai Buddhist Village Volunteers.

The results have revealed that this ongoing violence, which is progressing toward an intractable conflict, and the government's military operations to manage the area have transformed the identity of the Thai Buddhists into being part of the conflicts within the military and political sphere of interaction. This transformation has ultimately altered the connections between people of different religions at the community level into political relations, which in due course has gradually shattered social relations among the peoples.

**Keywords:** dynamics of social interaction, identity, conflict, politics.

## บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้เป็นการศึกษาเรื่องพลวัตความสัมพันธ์ของการอยู่ร่วมกันสู่ความสัมพันธ์ทางการเมืองผ่านการปฏิสัมพันธ์บนพื้นที่ทางสังคมภายใต้สถานการณ์ความรุนแรงในพื้นที่สามจังหวัดชายแดนใต้ นับตั้งแต่ พ.ศ. 2547-2564 โดยทำการศึกษาในพื้นที่ตำบลนางาม (นามสมมติ) ซึ่งเป็นพื้นที่ที่มีประวัติศาสตร์การตั้งถิ่นฐานและการอยู่ร่วมกันของคนที่หลากหลาย โดยมีผู้คนที่ช่วยกันสร้างความเป็น

ชุมชนผ่านพื้นที่ทางสังคมในชีวิตประจำวัน ทั้งการทำการเกษตร การค้าขาย การศึกษา รวมทั้งต้องเผชิญกับความรุนแรงมานานกว่าทศวรรษ โดยใช้วิธีการศึกษาด้วยการ ทบทวนวรรณกรรม ศึกษาภาคสนามในชุมชนระหว่าง พ.ศ. 2562-2564 สังเกตการณ์ แบบมีส่วนร่วม (Participant Observation) รวมถึงการสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึก (In-dept Interview) ในกลุ่มไทยพุทธราษฎรอาสาสมัครรักษาดินแดน

ผลการศึกษา พบว่า จากความรุนแรงที่เกิดขึ้นอย่างต่อเนื่องและกำลัง ดำเนินไปสู่ลักษณะของความขัดแย้งที่ดื้อยา (Intractable conflict) รวมถึงวิธีการที่ ทางภาครัฐใช้ยุทธวิธีทางการทหารที่เข้ามามีจัดการพื้นที่ได้ส่งผลต่อการเปลี่ยนแปลง อัตลักษณ์ของคนพุทธในพื้นที่ให้กลายเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของความขัดแย้งภายใต้อุดมการณ์ ทางทหารและการเมืองจนกระทั่งทำให้สายสัมพันธ์ในระดับชุมชนของคนต่าง ศาสนาไปสู่ความสัมพันธ์ทางการเมือง จนทำให้ความสัมพันธ์ในชุมชนระหว่างคนต่าง ศาสนาได้แตกหักออกจากกันในท้ายที่สุด

**คำสำคัญ:** พลวัตความสัมพันธ์ อัตลักษณ์ ความขัดแย้ง การเมือง

## Introduction

Amid the violence in Thailand's three southern border provinces that last for more than a decade, the incident of gunmen raiding a military arms depot in 2004 marked the beginning of this violence. This raid has changed the definition of the "three southern border provinces" from a geographical landscape to the region of violence due to the state's policy to enforce special laws to control these areas and the actions of the dissenters against the state.

In this phenomenon, there has been an attempt to understand the background and the situations of these areas in various dimensions. Satha-Anand (1990) stated in his book, which can be literally translated as *Challenging Dilemma*:

*Violence and Non-violent Actions*, that there are many definitions of violence, and more than 2,400 books and articles have been written about it. There have been academic efforts to make broad explanations of the reasons behind violent actions in this region. The two reasons can be explained through the ideological frameworks of national security and nationalism. These ideologies relate to each other through the history of Siam and Patani (Sutthasat, 1976).

In order to examine the underlying roots of conflicts in the three southern border provinces, there have been studies about the conflicts at the levels of social groups and political relations through communities. The studies of ethnic identities garnered more attention since they portrayed people's lives in areas full of conflicts and negotiations. These studies also gave different perspectives on understanding identities, especially among the Malay Muslims and people of diverse cultures, aiming at revealing the complex dimensions of violent situations.

For instance, a study by Sirisakdamkeong (2003) revealed that the Malay Muslims and the Chinese living in the market area of Yala Province adapted themselves to reduce conflicts caused by their coexistence in the same area. The Malay Muslims adjusted their identity by identifying themselves as Malay Muslims of Chinese descent, which could be considered as a negotiation in the economic space, or as Malay people who had received a good education. Aim-Aur-Yut (2008) studied social interactions among the Malay-Muslims in the context of Islamization and the dominant power of the Thai state through experiences and memories of the Malay Muslims. The study aimed to reveal the complexity of the Malay Muslim identity under the situations of violence and the Thai state's manipulation in the area where local people managed to live in coexistence with people of different religions.



A good example of this can be seen in the changes in social spaces, including people's behaviors under religious rules, the migration of the Chinese and the Buddhists in search of safety.

Both studies revealed that people used their identity to deal and negotiate with the government sector and the people of different religions in daily social spaces, especially in economic and community areas. However, the two studies only focused on the Muslims who had interactions with other groups. This article aims at introducing and examining people of different groups who were faced with similar situations of violence by studying the Na Ngam Subdistrict. It is a community with a large Buddhist population and a long history of coexistence among people of diverse cultures who lived amid many waves of violence. In addition, the community has been faced with various forms of violence that broke out and are still going on in the three southern border provinces. As a result of this long-lasting violence, the Na Ngam Subdistrict is regarded as a military control area where there are various levels of military operations. It is hoped that this article will pave the way for the study of the Thai Buddhists' lives in the three southern border provinces, which will ultimately expand important perspectives in understanding military operations and what happened in the southern border provinces through violent actions in this area.

## **Objectives**

To study the dynamics of social relations which lead to political relations through interactions in social spaces in Na Ngam Subdistrict in the context of violent situations in the three southern border provinces.

## Research Methodology

This research is an anthropological study. The Na Ngam Subdistrict has been chosen as the field site since it has a long history of coexistence among people of different religions and long-lasting violence since 2004. Geographically, Na Ngam Subdistrict is located on a plain close to the foothills and has mountain ridges that serve as natural boundaries. These boundaries were considered an important landmark during the time when the area was governed under provincial administration and was under the governorship of Yaring Province. Considering its location that was connected to Saiburi Province at that time, this area served as a trading border city between two major provinces in the past. Thus, this area is full of history and stories regarding the coexistence of multicultural groups, such as the Chinese, the Muslims, and the Thais. An instance of this is the story about the settlement of the Thai Buddhists in this subdistrict. It is said that they came with the Ayutthaya troops to fight a war. It happened that a war elephant escaped the army, so some soldiers volunteered to search for it. Finally, some of them managed to settle down along the route. As a result, these soldiers have been regarded as the ancestors of the Thai Buddhists living in this subdistrict.

At present, Na Ngam Subdistrict is divided into six villages. The majority of its population are Buddhists. There are only two villages that have Muslim households. In the Buddhist community, people communicate in the local vernacular called Phasa Ban, while Muslims communicate in Malay which is their primary language. In the past, all people living in the subdistrict were closely bound together in production and economic areas.

Moreover, rituals functioned as a social tie in which all people in the community were linked as neighbors.

There are two levels of data collection methods. The first level is a review of relevant documents on the issue of the history of interactions between people of different religions in social spaces in the three southern border provinces. It is also an ethnographic study in which formal and informal in-depth interviews were conducted. In addition, the method of participant observation was adopted during the fieldwork from 2019 to 2021.

Key informants selected for this research were the Thai Buddhists living in the community continuously for more than 20 years with experiences in interacting with people of different religions as well as the ability to tell stories about their way of life before the unrest in 2004 and to express their perception of the violent situations in the community. Thus, six key informants were selected among those who worked as farmers, merchants in the Ka Pho market, and public-school teachers, all of whom were Thai Village Volunteers. In addition, the other two key informants were religious leaders who contributed to collecting information from Muslims who could communicate in Thai so that social interactions in various social spaces could be observed. The data collected were analyzed under the concept of an intractable conflict that affected the identity and social interactions to visualize the dynamics of relationships among people in the area. The researcher also reviewed the data through the method of literature review and adopted the method of Triangulation to cross-check the data gained from documents and interviews with various parties as well as to make the data reliable and can be used to confirm the research conclusion. It is

found that when key informants were asked to provide information related to the violent situations in the area, they tended to avoid mentioning those situations when they were in a formal interview. On the other hand, they were more willing to give information if no personal and specific information was required from them. In the research process, the researcher provided the interviewees with the study framework, and they could end the interviews whenever they wished. Therefore, in this research, the fictitious names of the key informants have been used to ensure their safety and prevent any possible impact on the persons and places.

## **Findings and Discussions**

### **1. Social Spaces: Coexistence of People of Different Ethnicities**

#### **1.1 Social Spaces in Agricultural Society: Daily Life that Connects People of Different Religions**

Thanks to the subdistrict's flat land and foothills that are important water sources, most locals grow rice or fruits for a living. Rice is the most popular crop in the area. Some farmers grow glutinous rice to make the Tupat or local rice dumplings for local rituals and ceremonies. With a large flat area, a vast area of rice fields extends to the feet of the mountains. So, it is hard to tell precisely who owns what pieces of land by looking superficially. The rice fields occupy most of the area of Moo (Village Number) 6, where the Muslims have densely built their houses. Each family grows rice in small paddies next to each other and grows sugar palms on the rice paddy dykes. On the hills, there are rubber, durian, and coconut plantations covering

the foothills to almost the entire hill area of Moo 4, stretching to the mountain ridges adjacent to Saiburi District.

Rice farming and crop cultivation rely greatly on mutual assistance. People in the neighborhood will always arrange appointments to go uphill and work in the plantations or rice fields together. And mostly, people who live near each other will have their fields and plantations next to each other. These fields and plantations have been divided into smaller plots, each of which is owned by each family, alternating between the plots of their relatives and village neighbors. Each plot is not very large. The way their ancestor divided land has led to mutual assistance among community members. For example, rice farmers have to help each other transplant in the paddy fields or harvest rice by using ‘Kae,’ a small harvest blade used to cut the ears of rice. Rubber farmers need labor from their neighbors to harvest rubber, and fruit farmers need to borrow monkeys from others to pick up the fruits, especially coconuts. One person may own 10-20 rai of rice fields or plantations. If their fields or plantations are not connected on the same piece of land, these fields will be exchanged with those of their neighbors. This means that the vast area of the community rice fields consists of many smaller plots of fields or plantations belonging to both Thai Buddhists and Muslim neighbors.

In addition, local people domesticate animals for food sources, work purposes, and ales. In every household, cows were raised for plowing. Therefore, apart from helping each other in rice farming, the locals also help each other take care of the livestock. In addition to watching over the rice fields, another daily activity is keeping an eye on the cows while taking them out to graze in various areas around the community and nearby

subdistricts. Many people in the community stated that this daily activity had brought them new acquaintances, who ended up becoming their friends. The friendship started with the request to rest under the owner's house or a visit to have casual conversations while watching cows, and they ended up becoming close and trustworthy friends to trade livestock with each other. In addition, monkeys are also domesticated to collect coconuts on the plantation. It takes time and specialized skills to tame the monkeys, so only a few families can do that, and most of them are Muslims. They are often asked to assist in harvesting the coconuts and get paid with coconuts, rice, labor, or money, whichever is agreed upon.

It is worth noting that almost every house in the community has a small shack in front of the house. An interviewee stated that the evening time was considered a break time in the past so that people would sit at the shack in front of their home. These shacks are also used for welcoming neighbors who would stop by to eat, drink tea, and spend time chattering every day.

"When I was young, I saw people who were older than me. They were even closer to each other. They always shared what they cooked. Our family never liked to eat pork. In the case of older people, they ate similar food. They ate fish, chicken, and beef. Some Buddhists who lived next to the Muslims didn't even eat pork. It was normal for them to eat like the Muslims. When I was young, my Muslim friends went fishing and brought those fish to eat at my home. It was an ordinary thing to do, just without pork. My parents cooked for us to eat like this. There was no such strict thing as having to change the plates. Most people would bring their plates from home to get the shared

food. The house of the Buddhists and the Muslims were scattered throughout the community, and they were never afraid of each other. In Moo 6, three Buddhist households originally lived there from the beginning and they still live there now. When the Buddhists wanted to do anything, the Muslims would always come to help." Mr.Pong (Personal communication, March 10, 2019)

However, in terms of mutual assistance or even the interactions among neighbors with different beliefs, it is found that the locals adapted themselves to each other in their daily living by means of common community resource management. Such learning and understanding of different cultures led to the way of life in which people harmoniously coexisted.

It is similar even in terms of social space belonging to a 'gray area' like alcohol drinking, which is considered sinful by all religions. In this community, the locals would gather to drink Tuak<sup>2</sup>, which is a kind of palm wine. The locals in each village would arrange a drinking party in the evening. In the past, the Tuak party was considered an ordinary activity for people in the community, but it is a special social space nowadays. Only people deemed close friends of the inviter would be invited to the Tuak party. And it is 'known' among the members of each Tuak party about the party's schedule in which they would come to drink and eat together.

The Tuak party in researcher's neighborhood was held every Friday, beginning at noon and ending in the evening before sunset. Most of the people attending the party were Buddhist men. It took me about two months since the start of my

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<sup>2</sup> Tuak, a Malay word meaning a kind of palm wine, an alcoholic beverage produced from the fermentation of sap of palm trees

fieldwork to get invited to join the party by being told that "[t]his Friday, don't buy food to eat." and that I should visit the house of a middle-aged woman near my rented house. When I arrived there, I found that apart from the Tuak, people would bring meat, such as beef and wild pork, vegetables, and rice to share and cook for the party. Thus, it was a fun and relaxing space while also being a space for exchanging news among people within and outside the community. Sometimes there were Muslims joining the party. But most of them had been friends of the community members for a long time. Since drunkenness is known to be a 'gray' activity and considered sinful for the Muslims, the matter of who should be invited to join the party is therefore relatively important and sensitive.

It is found that social interactions in the agricultural society have created a space in which people of different religions are connected in many ways. This includes the spaces for occupation, such as farming and domesticating animals, which require a long period of time to build relationships. In addition, agriculture and livestock farming require the allocation of community areas to accommodate production that needs both environmental and labor management to ensure a management system in the community. Such management would enable all households to make cultivation and harvest plans. More importantly, some relationships are built upon particular interactions based on expertise. For example, borrowing monkeys to collect coconuts on the plantation is an opportunity for people of different religions to visit each other.

The abovementioned information has revealed that the characteristics that contribute to being a neighborhood are related to the spatial dimension, which means a geographical



location, such as the residential area and agricultural area. The way these spaces or areas are managed intimately is an opportunity to create interactions that lead to social intimacy and the sense of belonging to the group and the community, ultimately resulting in social connections that comprise all activities that occur in the community. These connections also reflect the relationships of people in the community (Kraus, 2000), which can be seen in the stories about those relationships that are related to the use of certain spaces, such as the communities of rice farmers, plantation farmers, livestock farmers, and Tuak party members.

The intimacy in terms of space and neighbors' relationships that have fostered the sense of community plays is of importance. Not only does it lead to the development of solid relationships and daily mutual assistance, but it also opens up a possibility for different religions and ways of life to be understood and explained in a different way for peaceful coexistence in the community.

## 1.2 Social Spaces in Commercial Society: From the Economy of the Border City to the Economy of Kapo Market

Kapo Market is a bustling place due to its location flanking the main road. The market is therefore considered a transportation center from the district to downtown Pattani and Narathiwat. One side of the market is adjacent to Na Ngam Subdistrict, and the other side is adjacent to Khao District, in which the majority of its population is Muslims. But people still manage to travel across districts to trade and exchange goods.

Mr. Som (Personal communication, February 3, 2020), aged 81, told about the Kapo market in his memories.

"This market was big. Many Chinese people owned the businesses in the market. People in this neighborhood used to call this shop 'Ran Chin Seu Klam,' translated as the 'Chinese who wears a vest,' which reflects the dressing style of the Chinese in those days. The name of the shop owner is unknown until now. The Chinese could speak Malay and actively ran a variety of trading businesses, including buying rubber, coconuts, and rice, opening a pharmacy, a gold shop, and a grocery store. The Buddhists and the Muslims worked as their employees and communicated with each other in ungrammatical Malay and Panare (the local vernacular spoken by people in the subdistrict). In addition, young Buddhist men made a living by riding a rickshaw to take passengers to the market. I rode a rickshaw when I was 15 years old. This allowed me to enter Muslim villages and get to know all people in the subdistrict."

In addition, an Imam (Personal communication, March 15, 2019) described the arrival of the Chinese who later became the owners of the market area.

"The Sino<sup>3</sup> have been here for quite a long time. They came to live in local communities first and later began to buy more lands from the Nanyu<sup>4</sup>. At that time, the Si-a<sup>5</sup> raised pigs in upstream areas, so the water flowed down into the fields of the Nanyu. The Nanyu at that time lived a comfortable life. Because they did not want to use the water contaminated by pig farming, they decided to stop farming in that area. Their fields were abandoned for a long time until the Sino purchased them from the Nanyu. Then, the main road was built on those fields and that

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<sup>3</sup> Sino is a pronoun that the Malay Muslims use to refer to the local Chinese

<sup>4</sup> Nanyu is a pronoun people use to refer to the Malay Muslims

<sup>5</sup> Si-a, derived from Siam, is a pronoun that the Malay Muslims use to refer to the Thai Buddhists

area become the market now. So it is not surprising that most of the land in the market area today is owned by Chinese people."

In the market, some Chinese people own businesses and almost all of the rental rowhouses while the Buddhists and the Muslims are either their employees or tenants. Mr.Aminoh (Personal communication June 7, 2019) is a Muslim who makes a living by selling sports equipment. He said that there were many Buddhist households in the market when he was young. Most Buddhists living in this neighborhood understood Malay even though they could not speak the language.

"When we talked about them or teased them, most of them understood although they couldn't speak Malay. Only some of them could. My father would always sell coconuts to the Chinese and get other goods as in exchange from time to time. It's like you make a deposit in the bank, but you withdraw goods with no interest instead of money." In the same way, the Imam of the mosque said that in the past, dogs could be seen here and there, and there were many Si-a and Sino people. The house I am renting belongs to a Buddhist police officer, but he moved to Hat Yai after 2004."

There is a wide variety of goods at the market, originally from downtown Pattani and Saiburi. People come to shop in this market. It has everything you need, including pork butcher shops. From the interviews with the Buddhists in many areas, many pork butcher shops were in the market before the incident in 2004. But the pork had to be put in a black plastic bag. If it was put in a transparent plastic bag, it would be wrapped in another layer of paper. The locals did this out of respect for the Muslims to prevent them from accidentally touching the pork.

These descriptions of Kapo Market reflect that the market area is not the space where people exchange goods and money only, but also their cultures. An instance of this is the use of black plastic bags when buying pork out of respect for the Muslims, the purchase of land from Muslims whose property was close to pig farming areas, or the use of Malay as the main language of communication, which even the Chinese and the Buddhists could communicate in their daily life at least by listening. The commercial area is also an important space for social interactions and cultural learning, in accordance with the explanation of Sirisakdamkeong (2003) that gave a picture of the Sai Klang market in downtown Yala, a space of interactions between the Chinese and the Malay Muslims that the commercial area has been a space for social interactions among different groups of people since the old days. It served as a space where people bought and sold goods and made negotiations although they came from different walks of life and had different roles, whether buyers, sellers, service providers, or service recipients. This context contributed to constant and consistent interdependence and interactions, especially economic relations without any connection to politics, since merchants who came from other places, such as Chinese people, had to learn the languages and beliefs of their customers for convenience and commercial benefits. Therefore, the relationship under the economic system may be the relationship in which people are unequal, and bargaining is always necessary. It is also found that people's adaptability to coexist with people of other cultures is another form of relationship that could be seen in the area.

### 1.3 Social Spaces in Education: Interactions in the Areas in Representation of the State

In addition to being a large agricultural and commercial area of Panare District, Na Ngam Subdistrict has also been an important subdistrict of Pattani Province in terms of educational development. The establishment of schools spread to significant districts, including Na Ngam, which was an important border district. According to a document of the donation to establish a school at Wat Na Ngam in Pattani Province in 1909, the Pattani Provincial Governor requested the establishment of a school that taught in Thai at the pavilion of Wat Na Ngam Temple. A Buddhist monk known as Phra Daeng was invited to teach students following the curriculum of the Department of Education at that time. Ten monks were invited to pray the Buddha's mantra to celebrate the school's opening. Phrakhru Phinitomnaphara presided over the ceremony. Important government officers also attended the event, including Mr. Thong, soon-to-be Provincial Education Officer and Luang Nomajkitphiboon, Permanent Secretary of Yaring Province. In this event, donations were offered from both the government and the people in the community. The names listed in the donation document included the names of the Chinese, the Thai Buddhists, and the Muslims, such as Mr. Cheng, Awang, Mr. Lee, Mae, Kimli, Chin Choo, Chin Chai, Chin Thong, Thong, Eiad, Mr. Dam, etc. (Notification No. Hor Jor Chor. Sor Thor. 51.9/5 Subject: Donation for the establishment of a school at Wat Kuan Nok of Monthon Pattani (1 October - 16 December B.E. 2452/ C.E. 1909)

According to the document recording the establishment and management of the school, although the school is the space belonging to the government, its establishment indicates that at one time, the Thai state used to rule the three provinces with the ideology of development. This ideology has opened up an

opportunity for the locals to adapt to each other due to the Buddhists' need to coexist with the Malay Muslims, who were the majority of the population in the region. The fact that people in the community welcomed the development initiated by the Thai state can be seen from the list of racially diverse donors. Therefore, the school has been a space with a dual status, one being a space for enhancing people's quality of life and the other being the space of the Thai state's administrative power that came into the Malay land.

Miss Chinda (Personal communication, June 20, 2019), aged 67, told about how people studied in those days.

"Some of the elderly here used to attend the same school with Thai Buddhists. At that time this temple school taught up to 4th grade. We learned the Thai language and met Thai Buddhist friends at school. Children often taught Malay to each other, so people in that era could communicate with each other. The Buddhists could listen to and understand Malay. Sometimes they even replied in Malay and sometimes replied in Thai. But when in the class, only Thai was allowed.

At that time, students had to bring food from home to eat at school. The kids always shared what they had, and the Buddhist students wouldn't eat pork at school. Mostly they ate eggs or fish. Outside of school, I would go out to play with other kids. We picked up guavas or different kinds of fruits. I also played at the houses of both Muslim and Buddhist friends, where we could go in and out comfortably. I could understand some Malay but was not fluent. Fortunately, I had (a) friend(s) who taught me one Malay word a day. Most of my Muslim friends who furthered their studies in secondary school came from a civil servant's family. Their parents were teachers, soldiers, or

police. Most of my friends quit school to work in the fields after finishing grade 7.

The memories of a retired public-school teacher (Personal communication, February 5, 2020), aged 79, reflect the way of life of a retired public-school teacher who is a native of Na Ngam Subdistrict.

“At that time, I was a teacher at a secondary school that was known as a place full of dangerous people because it was in a Muslim community like it is today. No one dared to come, but I was never afraid. I was a teacher, so I tried to think that all people I taught were my students. I rode the bicycle wherever I went. It was not until later that I had a motorcycle. People would greet or Wai me as I passed by. All the school teachers were the Thai Buddhists. In school, everything was taught in Thai to enable the students to speak Thai. Malay was forbidden in classes, but students might talk to their friends in Malay. Sometimes, the very strict teachers would punish students who spoke Malay by hitting them or asking them to pay a small fine or do school work. At that time, I just thought that if we taught them well, they would speak Thai clearly and fluently so they could contact government offices by themselves and further their studies. The student’s parents also entrusted their children’s ability to speak Thai to the teachers.

I could speak Malay from the beginning, while other people in the community could understand some Malay if unable to speak it. Once they understood us, we would respond in our language. But in trading here, we had to help Thai people. Most Chinese in the market could speak Malay. Even if they had never been in school, they could sell goods or do business. At that time,

Muslims rarely let their children come to school. They said that school was not necessary.”

In terms of social interactions in the educational space, although the school area belonged to the Thai government, nobody expressed the frozen Thai identity at school. Students could talk amongst themselves in Malay to foster relationships within the school. In addition, in terms of attitude towards the use of the Thai language, nobody viewed it as a means of expressing Thai nationalism nor an act of assimilating. But the learning of the Thai language was solely for the purpose of communication with the government authorities. This is because, in everyday life, people still had to use the Malay language for the most part.

The fieldwork data revealed that the relationships among people in Na Ngam Subdistrict are diverse due to their different social spaces in the community, including residential and production areas. The management of the area where people lived closely helped foster a relationship in which people were closely interdependent. In an economic space, there was a pattern of relationships in which people learned about different cultures and used what they learned to make negotiations for profits. Even the relationships among people in the community could cut across the state’s space, such as the educational space. This is consistent with the description of Kraus (2000), who has defined the meaning of neighborhood. In addition to physical space, there must also be interaction at another axis, a temporal relation that means a long history of coexistence. This type of relationship cannot be changed overnight or by just a few events.

The sense of community is reflected through the role of neighborhood life (Kraus, 2000). Its elements include physical



surroundings, whether in occupation or education, and individual development, such as language learning, behaviors, or the decisions to behave in a way that would affect the trust of neighbors. Not to mention the social group identity, which includes the act of referring to themselves as one of the Na Ngam people, the use of Malay in combination with the Panare language, interracial communications, carefree commutes within the community, and the participation in local rituals, such as the La Sang. These elements reflect the sense of community that still existed. The meaning of the Na Ngam community was much more than what had been defined by geographic administrative boundaries. The stories about people's way of life in these social spaces reveal how people of different races and ethnicities coexisted before the violence in 2004, which has changed the relationships among Na Ngam people.

## 2. The Barriers of Relationship: The Transformation of Community Relations to Political Relations of the Thai State

### 2.1 Relationships under the ideology of National Security of the Thai State and Muslim citizens

Social relations at the community level were under the state policies on development and military in different periods. The three southern border provinces have been areas in dispute with the Thai state in terms of public administration at various levels. At a macro level, there has been an attempt to drive the ideology of separatism and the discrimination against local people in favor of government authorities is still going on.

The narratives at the community level are mostly found to be about the insurgents or criminals. There have also been rumors about the Muslims who live in a neighboring subdistrict adjacent to Na Ngam separated by a two-lane road. The locals

often asked me if I had ever heard of a group of people whose last name was derived from the name of that subdistrict. It is a story that the locals who shared the same experience of the year 1967 always raised to compare it with today's violence.

Mr.Mai (Personal communication, February 11, 2020), aged 81, said that:

"People in Na Ngam lived with the insurgents even before the raid in 2004. In the past 30-40 years, people in this neighborhood were acquainted with the criminals like Ji Ma-ae Seng from Tha Nam Subdistrict and Ma E-so from Mayo District. We all knew that they were the kidnappers holding people for ransom on the mountain. They would write what they wanted on paper and leave the ransom note to whom they targeted, mostly those well-off Chinese living downtown. Nothing would happen if the ransoms were paid. Those who refused to pay would be taken and confined in the mountain. But no one died because of that. Violence was only used against government officials. There would be deaths only when they and police officers fired bullets to kill each other.

The violence in those narratives about violent actions can be seen in the form of threatening or bullying, which caused nonserious trouble to the victim's daily life. Deaths were only caused by the clashes with the police and the District Chief, who were the administrative authorities regarded as their direct adversaries This is the kind of violence that Stewart (2008) considered a form of violent conflict that clearly reflects the inequalities in the political context in which the state is targeted. The state is regarded as the opponent who has a direct conflict with influential Muslims without interference in community relations or social groups.

The narratives of the violence about people who were not affiliated with the Administrative or even the teachers who represented the state's ideology do not end in fatal violence. The predictable level of violence and the knowledge about who were their targets make the narratives about these insurgents mixed with either laughter or respect for their protectors who have exercised their power in the area. This is why those family names can still exist in the community where economic resources have been managed systematically and fairly. People in the community all know that the threats to take resources of the rich are for helping the poor and the political separatists who are not yet economically strong and rely primarily on assistance from the locals. However, the relationship under violence in this economic structure does not affect the way of life and daily living of the community and does not reflect horizontal inequalities in people's relationships.

A study of the Committee on Strategic Nonviolence of the National Security Council, which later transformed into the Strategic Nonviolence Working Group (2018), has revealed that in addition to the violence fueled by bullying and bias from some people in the government sector, disrespect for diverse cultures, history, and beliefs also plays an important role.

From the above information, the conflicts that prevailed before 2004 could be divided into two levels. The first level is the relationships under the Thai state's ideology of national security and the Muslim citizens' ideology of separatism. At another level is the conflicts between Thai government officials and Muslim citizens, which is the level of operations in the area due to cultural differences. Consequently, a conflict is a set of relationships, according to Bodtker and Jameson (2001), that

operate on both the individual and social levels. It also serves as a political tool that has an impact on both vertical and horizontal relationships.

Although these conflicts arise at different levels, all the explanations have led to the national security ideology, making the conflicts tend to be protracted and hard to negotiate and reach a settlement although there was previously demand for a settlement at the national level. The existence of this kind of conflict is one of the starting points for the development of the intractable conflict as defined by Coleman (2011). This conflict has been perceived as non-negotiable, and thus, it is an operation on a daily level. It has affected people's perception and self-identity through the self-recognition of their positions or the places they belong by means of the process of othering that divides "Us" from "Them." And this is also part of the conflict. Although it may take place on the individual level, this intractable conflict can intensify the degree of otherness and cause endless conflicts until they become a shared experience and memory of society as well as a characteristic of the political relations between the Malay Muslims and the Thai state.

## 2.2 Military Power and Changing Violent Landscape within the Buddhist Community

Due to the unrest caused by ongoing violence throughout the three southern border provinces and hidden conflicts at various levels, people have also been faced with confusion over the unrest and the practices of government authorities as well as different forms of political relations that dominate and intensely govern the Buddhist communities. This aims to eliminate violence through military measures and operations as a means of state response to the violence caused

by the insurgent movement both in the form of sieges and clashes with higher intensity and greater frequency.

The military officers are considered newcomers who came to interact with the locals in the community during the same period with the new political and administrative restructuring in 2004. Amid the outbreak of violence throughout the three southern border provinces, an emergency decree was announced, allowing the Thai state to exercise its powers and limit the rights of local people. The violence caused a stir to the Thai state and the perception of Thai people through violent actions in the area. However, local people still believed that the adversaries in this conflict were the Thai state and the Malay Muslims, who have been engaged in the conflict for a century.

"At that time, we weren't scared at all. We knew there was violence, but it was an issue between the Muslims and the soldiers. After the Krue Se incident, we still didn't feel scared. We never thought that the violence would be spreading like it is today. But it didn't stop. More incidents took place. I had never thought it would happen to our community. We had heard the news about bombings elsewhere, but most of the injured or killed were soldiers. One day the soldiers came to be stationed at the temple. The first group was the green soldiers from the northeastern region. They came to talk to the abbot and the village headman to ask for permission to set up a camp here because this place was a Thai Buddhist community. The abbot of Wat Nai refused them because most soldiers would drink alcohol in the camp. So, they ended up in Wat Nok. At that time, I made a lot of money from selling. In the evening, soldiers would come to buy spicy salads at my shop. They also bought food and liquor. We made a lot of money then." Mrs.Tai (Personal communication, February 16, 2020)

This interview reflects the atmosphere in the early days of the arrival of the military and the role of local people who still had jobs and had not been consolidated with military power.

Until the military began to play an important role in creating and disseminating news and information to the district office, which was the administrative authorities. They would have weekly meetings during serious situations. At the district level, meetings would be held to communicate with the subdistrict headmen, village headmen, and all government offices. This news-seeking process was one of the military operations and military warnings were the most important ones at the government level.

From the interviews with public-school teachers who were sent out to teach in schools throughout Pattani Province, it is found that the teachers would receive this kind of news from the school principals who had previously attended meetings with the district office. Often, the news was spread among the Thai Buddhist teachers themselves. It was not until the incident at Wat Phrom Prasit<sup>6</sup> in 2005 that the violence began to shift its

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<sup>6</sup> This is the first incident marked as important in the feelings of Buddhists. An old monk and the temple boys were murdered and burned on the night of October 16, 2005. Three people in total were killed in this incident. Phra Kaew Kosaro, aged 78, was beaten with a stick and slashed with a big knife, and his body was burned. Mr. Hannarong Kamong, aged 17, and Mr. Sathaporn Suwannarat, aged 15, who were temple boys, were shot by firearm and slashed by a big knife to death. Then their bodies were taken to the Kuti (a monk's house) before the criminal(s) used oil as fuel to set fire and destroy the Kuti. The criminal(s) also used a stick, a stone, a knife, and a firearm to destroy the objects inside the Buddhist sanctuary, making (an) old giant

target to the Buddhists and started to cause paranoia. When the situation improved, the Buddhist monks started to ask for alms again while the Buddhists started to suspect and know the culprits' identity. Rumors went around among the locals about whose sons were the "allies," but no one dared to report to the authorities. Whether the Buddhists or the Muslims, everyone decided to keep silent because they needed to survive. Although no one said anything, everyone in the community always kept their eye on every incident that happened during inspections. Whenever a violent incident occurred, they had no idea who did it or what really happened, but they witnessed it when authorities came to inspect houses and arrest people. Some of them were released and some never returned. However, the protection measures of the military might not be enough to provide a sense of security. This violent situation resulted in some Buddhist monks and community members moving out of the community. At the same time, security measures have caused the military area to overlap with religious and communal areas.

By considering the phenomena that occurred, the fieldwork has revealed consistent data that the 2004-2006 period was a time of changes in the relationships of the locals. The first one is the change in the relationship pattern between the civil work sector, such as the police, the prosecutors, as well as the judicial process, and local people. In fact, this sector was reduced its role, while the role of the military's authority was increased with special laws. As a result, the relationship between the military and people in the community is a kind of relationship that is linked to security and safety. It has played a

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statue(s) in front of the sanctuary door and the statue of Phra Phrom enshrined in the sanctuary being damaged.

vital role in leading to an intractable conflict by changing the pattern of the conflict response process (Coleman, 2012). Secondly is the state of the intractable conflict that has led to habituation, affecting people at the psychological level, and changing the relationships between different social groups. In Na Ngam Subdistrict, it has been found that there were some changes in social interactions among the Buddhists in the social space. Examples of this can be seen in the transformation of the temple area into a military camp, the announcement of access control measures, as well as the control of the community area utilization in daily life. It is this phenomenon of isolation from social spaces that Kraus (2000) considered as a process of transformation from being neighbors to having a political relationship through social isolation, whether the isolation from political, geographical, or economic spaces. This ultimately led to a change in people's relationships within the community in terms of a new perception and understanding of the conflict among the Buddhists. In fact, the conflict in their perception has been changed from being the relationship between the Thai state and the Malay Muslims who followed the ideology of separatism to the polarization of the Buddhists and the Muslims in abnormal situations. Moreover, new patterns of social interactions in the area of daily violence could also be found.

### 2.3 Thai Buddhists' Transformation to a Political Identity

During the time of continuous violence, various projects have been carried out at the community level, such as the Village Security Team Network (VST) and the Volunteer Defense Corps (VDC). An important project that went into every Buddhist community was the Village Civil Volunteer Project, initiated by deploying a military structure. Those who wanted to



become a Village Civil Volunteer needed to receive training every year. The Village Civil Volunteer welfare fund was also established. These volunteers had to undergo pieces of training on firearm use, village guarding and inspecting, and suspect monitoring, all of which were trained by the military. When they were in the community, it was necessary to have their eyes and ears open to look after things for the military. They all would have a red walkie-talkie radio using a specific frequency range to send the news to the rangers.

Therefore, the Village Civil Volunteer Project aimed not only to improve the quality of life and safety of the local Buddhists but also to transform the locals' Buddhist identity to the Thai state identity. At the same time, the Buddhist citizens have been transferred the status of being adversaries of the Muslims, thus transforming relationships within the area into a political dichotomy in such a way that the Buddhists have become a main force of the Thai state. On the other hand, it was impossible to avoid the violent actions against the Buddhists in the area. Until 2007, the operations of the separatists and that of the Thai state had led to the clashes that frequently occurred in the community area.

Mr.Mai (Personal communication, February 11, 2020) said that:

"That year, there was a man called Uncle Ruam, who had a crippled leg. He went to his coconut plantation as usual. Uncle Ruam could speak Malay, and his coconut plantation was next to that of the Muslims, so they always helped each other. But in the end, Uncle Ruam was killed, with his throat being cut off with an ax. The killer(s) took his head. We had no idea whom we were protecting ourselves from. We thought that probably in

one day, it could be us who was the victim. Uncle Ruam never harmed anyone. He was disabled and could even speak their language."

This was the incident that many people referred to as the violence that made them feel that the fields and plantations were no longer a safe place.

This is the reason why the Buddhist farmers chose to work in the fields and plantations adjacent to the Buddhist neighbors. The plots next to those belonging to the Muslims were abandoned. In addition, they adjusted the time to cut the rubber to be the time before dawn breaks and to transplant rice seedlings late in the morning. Before that, they would sometimes transplant rice early in the evening as people in the past did. Moreover, the Buddhists also sold their fields and plantations in areas where violence had occurred. Some were willing to sell them to the Muslims at the break-even prices, especially the rice fields in Village No. 1 and Village No. 6, which were located in Muslim communities. More Buddhist people announced to sell their houses and land that were located in Muslim communities. Therefore, the remaining Buddhist farming lands were enough only for family consumption, not for making income as in the past.

In 2007, the incidents of bombings and shootings in the market area drove Chinese vendors to leave. Later, the Buddhists went to do business there, but they often encountered similar events, namely the burning of a shophouse rented for selling goods and the threats, so they decided to leave the market as well. Due to the ongoing violence, the Ka Pho market is filled almost entirely with Muslims. This transformation of the use of space resulted in most Buddhists adjusting their way of life, such as avoiding going to the Kapo market or Muslim villages. This

has even affected the religious space in which the light-waving rite is held during the day instead of at night.

The ongoing violence has created a gap in the relationship between people in Na Ngam Subdistrict. The incidents often occurred on main roads and the areas connected to the Muslim communities. But during the investigations, it happened that no Muslims came to testify to the police. These are the things that affect the feelings of people. However, many stories have revealed that some Buddhists could survive violent incidents thanks to the warnings of their Muslim friends. The dilemma of the situation resulted in a relationship in which people were not certain whether their neighbors could be trusted entirely amid these violent situations. While the relationship between Buddhist and Muslim neighbors had changed, the Buddhist neighbors became a small military unit, causing suspicions towards each other. The intimacy and sociality between these two groups of people who followed different religions became something unusual and needed to be kept an eye on.

What happened in the community is people reduced or refrained from physical contact or separate their areas of occupation, education, and self-development at an individual level through the creation of boundaries in communication. But in order to maintain a relationship, they would send things to participate in important rituals but did not dare to visit each other and spend time together. All of these are what they have learned and developed themselves in a new way to live in the midst of these violent situations.

The transformation from the Thai Buddhist identity into the political identity led to polarization, which intensified

the conflict. This is connected with the expansion of conflicting issues, leading to more confrontation between the two sides. This is what contributed to the formation of the conflict in the first place. All of these led to a new perception and belief that came with the preparation for collisions or violent actions from the opposite side. As a result, the relationship between the two groups was broken off. People avoided face-to-face interactions and all kinds of communication, such as avoiding giving information or mentioning the other side in a negative way (Mitchell, 2005). And it was this situation that led to the relationship dynamics in which some Buddhist groups chose to cut off ties with their Muslim neighbors and opted for a new identity, such as by becoming a village volunteer.

In the situation of violence that went hand in hand with the victim's loss, Armed (2014) argues that in this conflict and violence, the political conflict was shrunk and embodied into their identity, resulting in the frozen identity of being an adversary. What remains is the political adversaries through the limitation in terms of the use of space in the Buddhists' daily lives. This demonstrates that they had already embraced the identity of the Thai state as a political adversary in the context of political conflicts and embodied such identity into themselves.

Therefore, these changes in the way of life led to changes in the identity of the Buddhists in the three southern provinces that they became a 'Thai Buddhist,' with a new meaning and the status of being a political adversary who served in the militia group in the area of the Thai military.

All of these situations have led to a change in the sense of community, both in the spatial dimension and daily

interactions, in which people have shifted their role from being a neighbor to being a 'non' neighbor. In other words, the community identity that people once shared has changed because of the phrase 'Buddhist community.' It is a relationship dynamic that is like a barrier in the relationship among the people of Na Ngam Subdistrict that continues to break apart in the midst of violence.

Probably, there are many situations in which the stories of coexistence among different groups of people become a mere account of the 'lives in the past.' The violence that happened to Buddhists has gradually destroyed the relationship of Na Ngam people over and over. Every time I interviewed people about their livelihood in the past that they shared with the Muslims, the first answer would always be that how they lived in the past was not different from today, living separately without interdependence. If I continued asking how they lived together in the old days, most of them would need time to think. It took them different amounts of time to return to their memories. But from discussions with them throughout the research period, I found that the Buddhists were more or less able to tell stories about their relationship with their Muslim friends who lived in the same community. As a researcher who has been studying and exploring the relationship capital of this community, I would like to present what I have found in the hope that this capital still exists and one day it will be revived.

## **Conclusion**

The violence that began with the incident of gunmen raiding a military arms depot in 2004 has caused the Thai state to focus on the military process and the enforcement of special

laws in order to control the area and the Thai state's dissenters to cause ongoing violence. This situation contributed to the changes in the landscape of the three southern border provinces into the region of violence. This prolonged situation of violence has brought the conflicts that arose in the three provinces into the state of intractable conflict. These intractable conflicts have led to the state of being habituated and have affected people's minds and behaviors on a psychological level. As a result, there have been changes in people's individual identities and the relationships between different groups of people through the process of identity change. In fact, their identity has been transformed from being the Buddhists in the community to being the Thai Buddhists or part of the Thai state's militia by joining the village security volunteers, which is a political identity. This led to changes in social interactions on individual and group levels, from being neighbors who had interactions in agricultural, commercial, and educational spaces to being adversaries who followed different political ideologies. This has contributed to social isolation and broken social relations within the community. As a result, the barriers in the relationship between the Buddhists and the Muslims have been formed in a new way of life, resulting in the shrinking of spaces and political relations to the level of people's daily lives.

## **Recommendations**

### **1. Policy Recommendations**

From these situations, the Thai government, the Ministry of Defense, and the Separatist movement must abolish political and military operations involving the tactic of community infiltration. The communities and people should not

be brought into part of the militia in order to restore the identity of being a community member of the locals.

## 2. Action Recommendations

2.1 Government agencies, the Separatist movement, the civil society, and people in the three southern border provinces must create safe social spaces, such as community areas, commercial areas, and religious places so that people in the area can have confidence in fostering social interactions between different groups of people without the control of the military and political authorities from all parties.

2.2 The public sector has the right to access, search for, and examine facts and information about incidents of violence and loss. The local public should be informed of all facts in detail as soon as possible and the state should not monopolize the provision of information because only a thorough examination of the situation and comprehensive presentation of information will lead to a resolution and an understanding of these intractable conflicts in the area.

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# Factors Predicting the Organizational Loyalty Among Private School Teachers in Hat Yai District, Songkhla Province

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## Abstract

This study examined the relationships among several factors of organizational loyalty which included perceived organizational support, interpersonal relationships, and

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psychology. The participants were 234 private school teachers in Hat Yai District, Songkhla Province. The instrument used was a 5-point Likert Scale questionnaire covering five parts: general information, perceived organizational support, interpersonal relationship, happiness at work, and organization commitment. The R program was utilized to determine the mean and standard deviation. Meanwhile, Pearson's correlation coefficient was administered to investigate the relationships among the factors. The results revealed that:

1. Happiness at work had a positive relationship with organizational loyalty of private school teachers in Hat Yai, Songkhla (level of significance: 0.001).

2. Job advancement, relationships with the colleagues and principals, and organization commitment had a positive relationship with the organizational loyalty of private school teachers in Hat Yai, Songkhla (level of significance: 0.01).

3. Policy, administration, and work environment had a positive relationship with organizational loyalty of private school teachers in Hat Yai, Songkhla (level of significance: 0.05).

4. Compensation, benefits, and Job security had no relationship with organizational loyalty of private school teachers in Hat Yai, Songkhla.

**Keywords:** private teacher, perceived organization support factors, interpersonal relationship, psychological factors, Songkhla

## บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษานี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างปัจจัยการรับรู้การสนับสนุนองค์กร ปัจจัยความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างบุคคล และปัจจัยจิตลักษณะกับความภักดีต่อองค์กรของครูโรงเรียนเอกชนในอำเภอหาดใหญ่ จังหวัดสงขลา กลุ่มตัวอย่างเป็นครูโรงเรียนเอกชน 234 คน ในอำเภอหาดใหญ่

จังหวัดสงขลา เก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลโดยใช้แบบสอบถาม 5 ส่วน ได้แก่ ข้อมูลทั่วไป ปัจจัยการรับรู้การสนับสนุนจากองค์กร ปัจจัยความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างบุคคล ปัจจัยความสุขในการทำงานและปัจจัยความผูกพันต่อองค์กร วิเคราะห์ข้อมูลด้วยโปรแกรมด้วยคอมพิวเตอร์โดยใช้โปรแกรม R เพื่อหาค่าเฉลี่ย ส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน และค่าสัมประสิทธิ์สหสัมพันธ์ของเพียร์สัน ผลการศึกษาพบว่า

1. ความสุขในการทำงานมีความสัมพันธ์เชิงบวกกับความภักดีต่อองค์กรของครูโรงเรียนเอกชนในหาดใหญ่ จังหวัดสงขลา มีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ 0.001

2. ความก้าวหน้าของงาน ความสัมพันธ์กับเพื่อนร่วมงาน ความสัมพันธ์กับหัวหน้างาน และความผูกพันต่อองค์กรมีความสัมพันธ์เชิงบวกกับความภักดีขององค์กรที่ระดับที่มีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ 0.01

3. นโยบายและการบริหารและสภาพแวดล้อมในการทำงานมีความสัมพันธ์เชิงบวกกับความภักดีขององค์กรที่ระดับนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ 0.05

4. ค่าตอบแทนและสวัสดิการและความมั่นคงในงานไม่มีความสัมพันธ์กับความจงรักภักดี

**คำสำคัญ:** ครูโรงเรียนเอกชน ปัจจัยการรับรู้การสนับสนุนจากองค์กร  
ความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างบุคคล ปัจจัยจิตลักษณะ จังหวัดสงขลา

## Introduction

To make positive progress, an organization should attempt to enhance its personnel's organizational loyalty. They are the key success in the completion of various organization tasks. The progress of an organization depends on both the organization itself and its personnel, which are considered mutually supportive. Personnel's loyalty to the organization could trigger working dedication which could further lead to the organization's success.

An organization must show love and care for its personnel (Business Ethics, 2012). When they do not receive attention or feel less

important, they may perform their duties reluctantly or may even want to resign from their job. An organization will also suffer if its employees show a lack of loyalty. They do not quit the job yet do not perform the assigned tasks to the fullest. When resources are squandered on salaries, benefits, and training of new personnel, an organization may not be able to achieve its goals effectively (Kaewkhunthod, 2007).

The Office of Private Education, Songkhla Province is an important educational organization. It trains young generations to become good and qualified people. This in turn affects the progress of the country. Private educational organizations may have more flexibility than those of the government. However, they still encounter some obstacles in the administration of their educational practices. One of which is personnel resignation. According to a study conducted with government school teachers (2013-2015), more than 200 teachers were transferred from schools per year (Teacher Removal Control Registrations, B.E. 2013-2015, Songkhla Primary Educational Service Area Office, District 2). In the private education sector, an average of four to five teachers quit their teaching job at schools per year, which has impacted both schools and students. Problems related to teacher resignation, including school transfers, might be due to the school policy, human resource management, justice, and salary (Sukhothai Thammathirat University, 1997). Transfers and resignations cause a lack of continuity in teaching, which directly affects students. Students may have difficulty adjusting to a new teacher. Therefore, it is in the interest of the school administrator to retain the loyalty of teachers to maintain quality, efficiency, and effectiveness in the organization. To enhance personnel's loyalty, an organization needs to support its personnel with good salaries and management. Fostering interpersonal relationships in the organization is also important because good working relationships create a happy and positive work environment,

leading to loyalty, unity, and success (Muenchana, 1995). Support from management in the workplace will promote satisfaction and efforts to work in a positive direction (Kim and Lee, 2009). A happy employee will tend to be loyal and thus will stay. Pengsawang (2010) found that happiness at work suggests personnel's satisfaction with who they are and what they are doing. Happy employees will be cooperative, enthusiastic, and feel good physically and mentally (Pengsawang, 2010). In contrast, unhappy workers will disappoint. A satisfied employee will feel connected to the organization and want to continue working (Mapoppan, 2001). Taking into account this background issue, the present study aimed to reveal factors that could foster loyalty in educational personnel in private schools.

## **Research Hypotheses**

Perceived organizational support, interpersonal relationship, and psychology had correlation with the organizational loyalty of private school teachers in Hat Yai District, Songkhla Province.

## **Literature Review**

### **1. Organizational Loyalty**

Employees are the core of an organization. The success or failure of the organization is attributed to their performance. It is of prime importance that the employees should be loyal to their organization and do not actively search for other alternative opportunities. Loyalty, as a general term, can be defined as a person's devotion or sentiment of attachment to a particular object, which may be another person or a group of persons, an ideal, a duty, or a cause (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1998). "It expresses itself in both thought and action and strives for the identification of the interests of the loyal person with those of

the object" (Safra, 2007). In recent times, employees are provided with many employment opportunities which attract them to shift jobs often. However, from the organization's point of view, there is a loss incurred as the organization has spent resources on the employees to make them more competent. So, the organization performance is enhanced, leading to a better gross output. The economic performance of organizations is becoming ever more dependent on the participation, commitment, and more generally, loyalty of their employees.

Loyalty has become one of the vital concerns for organizations, especially in the context of the economic tensions related to the 'psychological contract' between employers and employees (Naus et al., 2007; Sverke & Goslinga, 2003). Loyalty can be defined as "a strong tie that binds an employee to his/her company even when it may not be economically sound for him/her to stay there" (Logan, 1984). Employee loyalty is "a deliberate commitment to further the best interests of one's employer, even when doing so may demand sacrificing some aspect of one's self-interest beyond what would be required by one's legal and other moral duties" (Elegido, 2013). The definition of loyalty can correspond to the following expressions: "relation of trust, resistance to the adoption of opportunistic behavior faced with an outside job offer" (Dutot, 2004); "significant length of service in the company, less inclination to search for outside job offers and a strong sense of belonging" (Peretti & Igalens, 2015); or "a feeling of belonging" combined with staying in the organization over the long term. An employee's loyalty to the occupation, his/her emotional investment, and the regularity of his/her commitment to the organization, are key factors that determine the longevity and the performance of organizations (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008).

## 2. The Perceived Organizational Support (POS)

The concept of POS was formally first developed in organizational literature by Eisenberger and colleagues in 1986. The theorists focused on the analysis of the organizational support formation; in addition, they studied the effects and consequences of organizational support on the personal and organizational field. Organizational support is a kind of help or support that the staff needs to accomplish the job. From the staff viewpoint, some auxiliary factors include enough budget, suitable equipment, and facilities for doing the job, the availability of high-quality products, and enough supply of human resources. In studies related to organizational development, perceived organizational support is considered an organizational commitment prerequisite. Perceived organizational support can affect staffs' manner and their relationship directly or indirectly. If there is not enough staff support from the organization, problems will appear; therefore, the manager should check the problems carefully so that if the problem is about the financial shortage, human resources, equipment, or facilities, to determine, he/she can supply the necessary resources reasonably by cost evaluation. The manager should review the goals and should avoid blaming the staff for a situation that is out of their control (Rezaeian, 1995). Today, after more than two decades of research in this field, it becomes more and more important; the research in this field is expanding very fast. For the first time, Eisenberger and his teammates introduced the concept of perceived organizational support in the *Journal of Applied Psychology* in 2008. According to the definition of Eisenberger et al., the staff feels supported by an organization when the organization considers the value of their cooperation and emphasizes their welfare. The theory of social transmission is considered a fundamental theory of organizational support. According to this theory, in a social relationship when someone does a favor to another person, the other person feels it necessary to

reciprocate the favor. The bigger this favor and help is, the greater the tendency to reciprocate. Researchers believe that there is also a social exchange between employees and employers because the organization is a source to meet the needs of employees. Therefore, the exchange relationship between employees and employers seems to be true. The organizational support theory claims that an employee generates a general viewpoint of the amount of organizational support toward themselves, so they pay attention to their goals and their fulfillment as much as they receive support. In other words, when the organization attends to employee welfare, they reciprocate this attention with more loyalty and better function.

The following are the perceived organizational support consequences 1) When employees feel they are supported by the organization, loyalty to the organization will increase. 2) Some of the organizational support effects related to the job environment are like job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is identified as staff's attitudes and general positive reactions to the job. When the staff feels that the organization supports them, their job satisfaction and happiness are increased. 3) Organizational support also contributes to increased commitment and participation in work. 4) Increased perceptions of organizational contributions to employees drive functional growth and employees' tendency to stay in the organization. On the other hand, it causes a decrease in occupational pressure and aggressive behavior such as willingness to leave the job or leaving the job. When the staff sees more perceived organizational support, it affects their functions; the feeling of organizational support causes a decrease in the occupational pressures, and it decreases the tendency to leave the job. (Zaki, 2006)

### 3. Interpersonal Relationship

FIRO was the theory proposed by Schutz in 1958 to describe and explain individual behavior and the interaction of people, i.e., the



interpersonal relationship, with simple but comprehensive characteristic orientations. To be applied empirically, FIRO was operationalized as FIRO-B (FIRO Behavior). Since FIRO's development, its measures had been widely adopted in social psychology research (Furnham, 1990; Furnham, 1996; Hurley, 1990). In his FIRO theory, Schutz (1966) proposed that interpersonal relationships could be measured by a person's intention to interact with others. He argued that a person's intention to interact with others could be measured in three dimensions including inclusion, control, and affection. Each of these dimensions has two behavior directions; expressed and wanted behavior. Thus, there are six dimensions in FIRO—Expressed Inclusion, Wanted Inclusion, Expressed Control, Wanted Control, Expressed Affection, and Wanted Affection. Based on this framework, the expressed behavior describes the extent of a person's willingness to include, control, and love others, while the wanted behavior describes the extent of a person's willingness to be included, controlled, and loved by others. FIRO could be extensively applied to all situations where interpersonal relationships are investigated (Schutz, 1966). Its theoretical applications could be viewed by many persons involved in interpersonal relationships from three different levels—individual level (one person), family level (more than two persons), and group level (more than two). While individual-level applications described mainly one's orientation in the three dimensions, which provided the foundations to analyze his or her social behaviors, family-level applications mainly deal with how family members' orientations in the three areas influence their relationships inside and outside the family. Group level applications focus mainly on the match of group members' orientations in the three dimensions, namely, the group compatibility effect on the group performance (Di Marco, 1974; Hill, 1977; Ilgen et al., 1974), effectiveness (Fisher et al., 1995; Smith et al., 1975), and efficiency (Hewett et al., 1974).

#### 4. Commitment

The concept of organizational commitment has attracted a great deal of interest in the human resource management and psychology literature. For example, employee commitment and loyalty are central features in the high-performance workplace literature in which they are seen as mediating factors linking different types of human resource management and employment practices to enhanced performance. In this paper, we focus on affective commitment, which, according to Allen and Meyer (1990), refers to the "...employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization." "Employees with a strong affective commitment continue employment with the organization because they want to do so." Meyer et al. (1993, 2002) argue that strong affective commitment to an organization arises because employees share values with both the organization and its members, and it is therefore predicted to be positively associated with job performance. Moreover, establishing a committed and loyal workforce may be associated with enhanced firm performance through less opportunistic behavior on the part of employees (Green, 2008) or through influencing their supply of effort, and hence output. Employees' decisions over their supply of effort play a key role in various incentive models of worker compensation (Lazear, 2000) as well as in the efficiency wage literature (Akerlof, 1982; Akerlof & Yellen, 1990). Employee commitment and loyalty thus arguably play an important role in the principal-agent issues surrounding the separation between the ownership and control of an organization. The costs associated with delegated decision-making depend on the extent to which the interests of the principal and agent differ (Aghion & Tirole, 1997; Athey & Roberts, 2001). In so far as employees who exhibit commitment and loyalty towards their employer may have interests that are aligned with those of their employer, the agency costs often associated with the employee-employer relationship are reduced.

## 5. Happiness at Work

Happiness is an important issue that needs to be noticed, especially in the world of work. When employees feel happy in the workplace, they will be committed to working so that the money is no longer the main concern. Due to the importance of this matter, several surveys were conducted to determine whether employees were happy or not, especially in carrying out their work. A survey of the productive employees in the UK aged 25-34 years found that employees felt unhappy with the rhythm of work they did compared to the employees in the other age groups. Another Jobstreet survey (Hari, 2017) conducted simultaneously in Indonesia, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, found that the happiness level of employees in Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, and Vietnam increased compared to the previous year. By contrast, the happiness level in the Philippines, Thailand, and Hong Kong declined. These employees felt that their situation would not improve in the next six months. In Indonesia alone, out of 100 people, 71% say that they were happy with their current job. The three main factors that make employees happy in their work are the location of the workplace, the relationship among co-workers, and the company's reputation. On the other hand, workers were unhappy due to a lack of career development, leadership, and training from the company. Based on the results of the survey, it seems so important that the company creates a happy work environment. Stress, unhappiness, and psychological stress in the workplace are related to low productivity, decreased performance, increased absenteeism, increased sick leave, high turnover rates, and increased costs of healthcare (Warr, 2007). This is related to how mental health and the psychological well-being of employees in the workplace are studied in positive psychology. The goal of positive psychology is to help people to enjoy their lives (Gavin & Mason, 2004). This included achieving their happiness, especially in the workplace. In the past decade, happiness has been the most important focus of positive

psychology research. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) focused on individual happiness, positive conditions, and optimism. Their findings became the origin of the study of happiness in the workplace and are the opposite of previous studies, which were more focused on depression, stress, pessimism, and negative experiences (Gupta, 2012).

Happiness appears in the form of pleasant moods and emotions, well-being, and positive attitudes and has attracted attention in psychological research (Fisher, 2010; Gupta, 2012). Happiness generally refers to the positive emotions and activities, which are felt by individuals. (Seligman, in Wulandari & Widyastuti, 2014). The individuals who work with happiness are the individuals who always have positive feelings. That is because the individual knows best how to manage and influence the world of his/her work to maximize performance and provide satisfaction in work (Wulandari & Widyastuti, 2014). Happiness in the workplace refers to employees' satisfaction with their work and life (Wesarat et al., 2015). Employees who feel happy in the workplace tend to be more focused on working and increasing their productivity. Happy employees bring their happiness from the office to their home; likewise, they also transfer their happiness from home to the office (Wesarat et al., 2015).

## **Research Methodology**

### **1. Population**

The participants were teachers in private schools under the Office of Private Education, Songkhla in 2020. A total of 1,271 teachers were selected from 37 schools. The followings were the properties of the teachers participating in the present study: 1) Worked at 37 private schools in Hat Yai, under the Songkhla Provincial Private Education Office, 2) Performed teaching and had teaching experience of 3 years or more, and 3) Consent and cooperated in this research.

The subjects of this study were 250 teachers from private schools in Hat Yai, Songkhla. They were selected using multi-stage sampling as follows: Stage 1) Classification of school size (S, M, L) in 37 schools using the criteria of the Office of the Private Education (1999). S=8 schools, M=7 schools, and L=22 schools. The number of teachers was 52, 80, and 1139, respectively. Stage 2) Six schools were selected from each school size through simple random sampling. The total number of samples selected in this study was 220 teachers. Stage 3) Proportional stratified random sampling of the population in each school size was performed (according to Hair's concept). See Table 1.

**Table 1**  
The Information of Samples Selection

<b>School size</b>	<b>Number of schools</b>	<b>Number of schools</b>	<b>Number of subjects</b>
<b>S</b>	8	2	12
<b>M</b>	7	2	19
<b>L</b>	22	2	219
<b>All</b>	37	6	250

## 2. Research Variables

The primary variable was the teacher's loyalty to the organization. The independent variable was the perceived organizational support factors (policy and administration, compensation and benefits, job advancement, working environment, and job security), Interpersonal relationship factors (relationships with colleagues, and relationships with the principals), Psychological factors (organization commitment, and happiness at work)

### 3. Instruments

The research instrument was a questionnaire with five parts covering:

- (1) personal questionnaires
- (2) perceived organizational support
- (3) interpersonal relationships
- (4) commitment and happiness at work
- (5) organizational loyalty.

The questionnaire developed by the researchers was tested for quality based on the normal criteria for result interpretation using the five points rating scale. The following tools were used: (a) Study-related concepts and research to be used to define the terminology of the variables to be measured, including creating comprehensive questions, (b) Three experts in the field checked the questionnaire for content validity. The questions in the questionnaires were evaluated by IOC based on the score range from -1 to +1. Items lower than .50 were revised and those higher than .50 were reserved. Items with the results between .67 and 1.00 were used. (c) The questionnaire was used to experiment with a non-sample population of school teachers, not less than 45 people. The confidence value was 0.71-0.93.

In addition, this study obtained approval from the Center for Research Ethics in Human in Social and Behavioral Sciences, Faculty of Nursing, Prince of Songkla University Hat Yai Campus (project number 2021–St–Libarts – 020 (Internal).

### 2. Data Collection and Data Analysis

Two steps were carried out to collect the data. These included distributing a set of questionnaires to 250 respondents. The survey which consisted of questions to examine the 5 parts was sent to the Office of Private Education, Songkhla Province so that it could coordinate with sample schools. Secondly, the return of information

coordinate with sample schools. Secondly, the return of information back to the researchers was facilitated by the Office of Private Education, Songkhla Province. A total of 234 completed questionnaires were analyzed statistically. 16 samples were not processed due to their incomplete responses. An R program was used to analyze the mean, standard deviation, and the relationships among perceived organizational support, interpersonal factors, and psychology with organizational loyalty of private school teachers were analyzed using Pearson's correlation coefficient.

### 3. Interpretation Criteria for Mean Values

The researcher employed the interpretation criteria proposed by Best (1981) for mean values of predictors and variables where 1.00-1.80 meant lowest while 1.81-2.60 meant low. 2.61-3.40 was moderate and 3.41-4.20 was high. Meanwhile, 4.21-5.00 meant the highest.

The criterion for interpreting the correlation were 0.00-2.00 (lowest), 2.01-4.00 (low), 4.01-6.00 (moderate), 6.01-8.00 (high), and 8.01-10.00 (highest).

## Findings

The samples in this study were 234 private school teachers in Hat Yai District, Songkhla Province. They were males and females in equal numbers (44.44%) and unspecified (11.11%). The samples were in the age range of 31-40 years (36.32%), followed by 20-30 years (28.63%), over 41- 50 years (22.65%), and 51-60 years (12.39%), respectively. Most of them were married (46.15%). 45.30% were single. Divorced/separated/widowed were 8.55%. Regarding their education, most of them had a bachelor's degree (71.79%). Master's degree made up 25.21% of the sample. Only a few held higher education titles (2.99%). Nearly a half of the sample worked between 3-5 years (44.44%). Meanwhile, 43.16% had more than 6 years of working experience. Less than a quarter of the sample taught 0-2 years (12.39%), respectively.

The findings were that there was a high level of loyalty, with an average of 3.54. There was a high level of perceived organizational support. These included working environment (3.59), compensation and benefits (3.54), policy and administration (3.53), job security (3.53), and job advancement opportunities (3.51). The interpersonal factor was also high, including relationships with colleagues (3.60) and relationships with the principals (3.56). In addition, it was found that psychosomatic factors were at a high level in both organizational commitment (3.52) and happiness at work (3.50) as shown in table 2 below.

**Table 2**

Descriptive Statistics of Outcome Variable (Organizational loyalty of private school teachers) and Predictor Variables

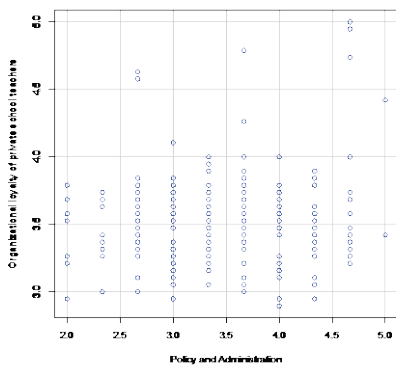
Variables	Mean	S.D	Interpretation
<b>Outcome</b>			
Organizational loyalty of private school teachers	3.54	0.34	High
<b>Perceived organizational support factors</b>			
Policy and Administration (X <sub>1</sub> )	3.53	0.71	High
Compensation and Benefits (X <sub>2</sub> )	3.54	0.65	High
Job advancement (X <sub>3</sub> )	3.51	0.58	High
Working environment (X <sub>4</sub> )	3.59	0.65	High
Job security (X <sub>5</sub> )	3.53	0.64	High



Variables	Mean	S.D	Interpretation
<b>Interpersonal relationship factors</b>			
Relationship with colleagues (X <sub>6</sub> )	3.60	0.47	High
Relationship with principals (X <sub>7</sub> )	3.56	0.55	High
<b>Psychological factors</b>			
Organizational commitment (X <sub>8</sub> )	3.52	0.39	High
Happiness at work (X <sub>9</sub> )	3.50	0.41	High

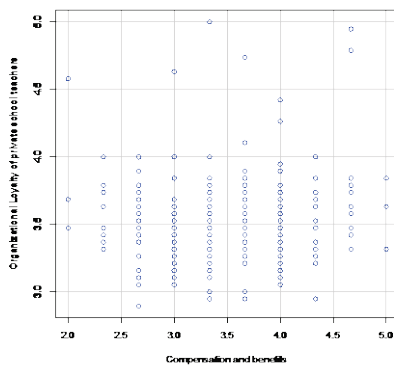
A few variables positively correlated with organizational loyalty at a statistically significant level of .001. These were happiness at work ( $r=0.35$ ) (Figure 9), job advancement ( $r=0.19$ ) (Figure 2), relationship with colleagues ( $r=0.22$ ) (Figure 6), relationship with principals ( $r=0.20$ ) (Figure 7), and commitment with the organization ( $r=0.21$ ) (Figure 8). There were two variables with statistical significance at the .05 level: policy and administration ( $r=0.14$ ) (Figure 1) and working environment ( $r=0.14$ ) (Figure 4). The variables that were not related to organizational loyalty were compensation and benefits (Figure 3) and job security (Figure 5).

**Figure 1**  
Policy and Administration



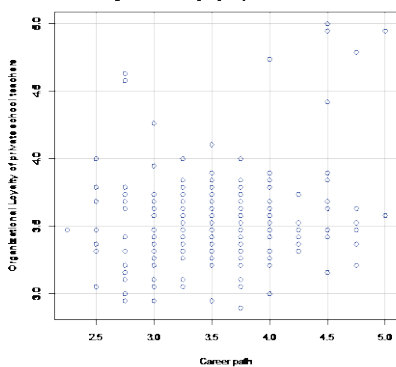
Note: ( $r=0.14$ ,  $p=0.031$ )

**Figure 2**  
Compensation and Benefits



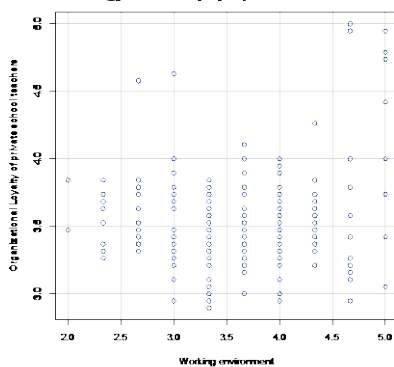
Note: ( $r=0.06$ ,  $p=0.335$ )

**Figure 3**  
Job Advancement



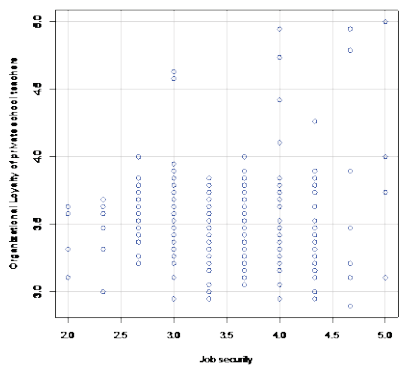
Note: ( $r=0.19$ ,  $p=0.003$ )

**Figure 4**  
Working Environment



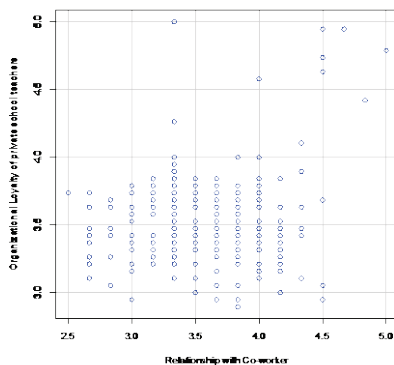
Note: ( $r=0.14$ ,  $p=0.029$ )

**Figure 5**  
Job Security



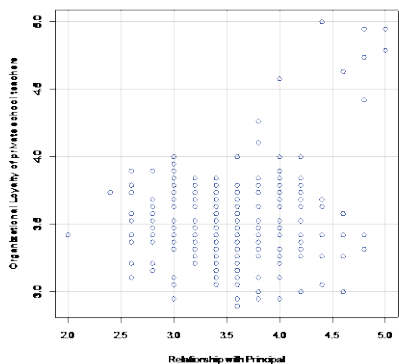
Note: ( $r=0.09$ ,  $p=0.184$ )

**Figure 6**  
Relationship with Colleagues



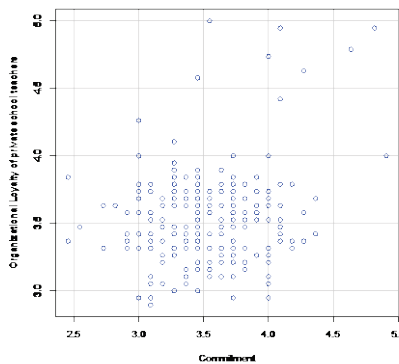
Note: ( $r=0.22$ ,  $p=0.001$ )

**Figure 7**  
Relationship with Principals



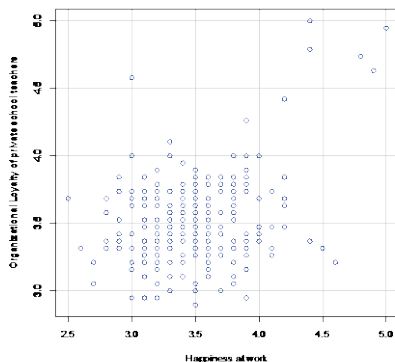
Note: ( $r=0.20$ ,  $p=0.002$ )

**Figure 8**  
Organizational Commitment



Note: ( $r=0.21$ ,  $p=0.001$ )

**Figure 9**  
Happiness at Work



Note. ( $r=0.35$ ,  $p=0.000$ )

## Discussions

This study found that seven out of nine variables related to organizational loyalty were statistically significant as follows.

(a) Policy and administration. Teachers perceived that schools with high policy and administrative support could build their loyalty to the schools. As the research of Srira (2021) suggested, policy and administration had the most effect on loyalty because employees were encouraged to work through policies and administration.

(b) Job advancement. It was positively correlated with loyalty and statistically significant. Having the opportunity to advance in work could promote loyalty. This is consistent with the finding of Phramaha (2021) in which job advancement was one of the processes to foster loyalty among educational personnel.

(c) Working environment. It was positively correlated with organizational loyalty and was statistically significant. Teachers' performance was increased with proper equipment and tools.

According to Blau's (1964) reciprocity concept, when organizations could support readiness to work, employees would have a positive attitude toward the school resulting in teachers feeling bonded with the school and wanting to stay.

(d) The interpersonal relationship factor. Relationship with colleagues had a positive correlation with loyalty and was statistically significant. Good relationships with colleagues could affect teachers' feelings of satisfaction with the school. Pumpaka (2022) suggested that the coexistence of a large number of people is needed to build relationships for a livable company, to work smoothly, and make employees happier.

(e) The relationship with the principals. It was positively correlated with organizational loyalty and was statistically significant. If teachers and administrators have a good relationship with each other, schoolwork will be more productive. The good relationship comes from their respect and dignity for each other, causing teachers to trust administrators. Phothonng (2014) found that success-oriented supervisors and an atmosphere that emphasizes success at work influenced employee engagement with the organization.

(f) Psychological factors. These were also related to organization loyalty. Organizational commitment was positively correlated with organizational loyalty and statistically significant. This is due to teachers' feeling that they are involved with the school in all areas. The feeling of being a part of the school could emerge as the school provides a high level of support. It may be the attitudes and values that teachers have that give them a sense of loyalty to the school. This is in line with the concept of organizational commitment by Allen and Meyer (1990) which states that attachment comes from three forms: mental patterns, behavioral expression, and the norm of the person.

(g) Happiness at work. It was positively correlated with loyalty to the organization and was statistically significant. Happy teachers would love their work and their organization. Kobkhuntod et al. (2019) found that creating happiness at work helped retain valuable personnel in the organization.

This study was inspired by the phenomenon of a high turnover rate that emerged among private school teachers in Songkhla province. There was a shortage of teachers at schools and a lack of continuity in the development of children in the future. Therefore, the present study was conducted to determine the factors that would encourage teachers to build loyalty to the organizations. It found that the perceived organizational support factors (policy and administration, job advancement, work environment), interpersonal factors (colleagues, principals), and psychological factors (organizational commitment, happiness at work) were associated with teachers' loyalty. Two factors that did not boost loyalty to the organization were compensation and benefits, and job security.

Happiness at work was associated with the highest level of organizational loyalty. Therefore, executives or stakeholders can create a working atmosphere and encourage teachers to be happier at work to help reduce the loss of teachers at schools. It was found that compensation and benefits, and job security were not related to loyalty. It was due to less flexibility in teacher-based salaries and were not factors that had a positive correlation with teacher loyalty. Concerning job security, private school teachers were employees with limited contracts, causing instability in the job.

Organizations should be aware that providing support to teachers demonstrates their appreciation of the teachers' efforts and dedication. This includes compensation and benefits and job advancement opportunities. These will make teachers satisfied and

create loyalty to the organization. This will affect their performance and of course, the organizations. In addition, studies have shown that a good co- worker relationship can improve teachers' job satisfaction. Therefore, organizations should accommodate collaboration. This may be considered a policy or project that will strengthen interactions among colleagues and will encourage teachers to bond with the organization. For future research, an educational model or program that strengthens teachers' loyalty should be investigated, which may be used as part of personnel development policy.

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# **Local Tourism Management Occupational Standard and Professional Qualifications for Elevating People in Tourism to an International Standard**

**มาตรฐานอาชีพและคุณวุฒิวิชาชีพ  
สาขาการจัดการการท่องเที่ยวในท้องถิ่นเพื่อยกระดับบุคลากร  
การท่องเที่ยวในท้องถิ่นสู่ระดับสากล**

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## **Abstract**

This research aims to construct and identify professional competencies for people operating activities involved with local tourism to be utilized for elevating and developing competencies of professionals in local tourism in accordance with the needs of entrepreneurs and align with tourism development trends. The samples were 39 key informants involved with local tourism, entrepreneurs, communities, government agencies, business sector, and associations related to tourism. A qualitative approach was employed as a research methodology through a document study, in-depth

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ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์ ดร. และรองคณบดีฝ่ายวางแผนและพัฒนา คณะการจัดการการท่องเที่ยว สถาบันบัณฑิตพัฒนบริหารศาสตร์ ประเทศไทย

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interview, focus group discussion, and workshop to construct the occupational standard and professional qualification for local tourism. Functional analysis technique was applied to analyze and identify the components of the occupational standard including functional map, key purpose, key role, key function, unit of competence, and element of competence, before the levels of professional qualifications were set. The results revealed that local tourism management occupational standard and qualification framework could be categorized into 6 groups in tourism profession, which were local accommodation operator, local food entrepreneur, local products and souvenirs entrepreneur, local storyteller, local tourism experience designer, and local tourism marketer, comprising of 45 competencies which were required for professionals or personnels who were in local tourism. Besides, these sets of competencies can be utilized as guidelines for developing capacity of local people in tourism communities further.

**Keywords:** occupational standard, professional qualification, competency, local tourism

#### บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาและกำหนดสมรรถนะทางอาชีพของบุคลากรที่ดำเนินกิจกรรมเกี่ยวกับการท่องเที่ยวในท้องถิ่น เพื่อใช้ยกระดับและพัฒนาผู้ประกอบการอาชีพในการท่องเที่ยวท้องถิ่นให้มีสมรรถนะสอดคล้องกับความต้องการของผู้ประกอบการและการพัฒนาการท่องเที่ยว โดยมีผู้ให้ข้อมูลจำนวน 39 คน ประกอบด้วยบุคลากรที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการท่องเที่ยวในท้องถิ่น กลุ่มผู้ประกอบการ ชุมชน หน่วยงานภาครัฐ หน่วยงานภาคเอกชน สมาคมที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการท่องเที่ยว วิธีการวิจัยใช้วิธีการวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพ โดยศึกษาจากเอกสาร การสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึก การสนทนากลุ่ม การประชุมเชิงปฏิบัติการ บันทึก

และการเก็บข้อมูลในการจัดทำมาตรฐานอาชีพและคุณวุฒิวิชาชีพ โดยใช้เทคนิควิเคราะห์หน้าที่ จัดทำแผนภาพหน้าที่งาน ความมุ่งหมายหลัก บทบาทหลัก หน้าที่หลัก จัดทำหน่วยสมรรถนะ สมรรถนะย่อย พร้อมทั้งกำหนดระดับคุณวุฒิวิชาชีพ ผลการวิจัยพบว่า ได้กำหนดมาตรฐานอาชีพและคุณวุฒิวิชาชีพ สาขาการจัดการการท่องเที่ยวในท้องถิ่น จำแนกเป็น 6 อาชีพ คือ ผู้ประกอบการที่พักท้องถิ่น ผู้ประกอบการอาหารท้องถิ่น ผู้ประกอบการของที่ระลึกและผลิตภัณฑ์ท้องถิ่น นักเล่าเรื่องท้องถิ่น นักออกแบบประสบการณ์ท่องเที่ยวท้องถิ่น และนักรถลาดท่องเที่ยวท้องถิ่น ซึ่งประกอบด้วยหน่วยสมรรถนะทั้งหมด 45 หน่วยสมรรถนะที่เป็นความสามารถและทักษะของผู้ประกอบอาชีพหรือบุคลากรในการท่องเที่ยวท้องถิ่นที่จำเป็นต้องมีในการทำงาน โดยสมรรถนะเหล่านี้สามารถใช้เป็นแนวทางยกระดับศักยภาพแก่คนในชุมชนท้องถิ่นต่อไป

**คำสำคัญ:** มาตรฐานอาชีพ คุณวุฒิวิชาชีพ สมรรถนะ  
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## Introduction

Thailand has plenty of valuable natural resources, arts and culture, and history with the uniqueness of each region that attracts tourists (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2017). The tourism economy is one of the country's top revenue earners. In 2018, there were 38 million foreign tourists, an increase of 7.54%, and the revenue from foreign tourists revenue was 2,007,503 million baht, increasing of a 9.63% rise, (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2019) that were from various sectors, including travel, accommodation, souvenirs, restaurants, retails and services, and local businesses. Many sectors have gradually expanded their direct and indirect tourism-related activities ranging from accommodation in large-scale hotels to local



accommodation, including a rising number of restaurants and other hospitality to attract tourists.

Nowadays, as alternative tourism is becoming more diverse, local communities have become tourist service providers offering their local identity by presenting their unique and distinctive locals, including the nature, history, culture, tradition, ways of life, and conservation as a selling point, by adding more value into tourism activities and delivering different learning experiences for tourists in cultivating sustainability and benefiting to locality. The growth of local tourism and greater numbers of tourist arrival, the revenue is generated for the country and distributed to local people. At present, a large number of people are in the tourism-related jobs in the local area. The Tourism Economic Report No. 7: (Tourism and Sports Economic Division, Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2017) revealed the number of local communities all over the country that were recognized as tourism community as follows:

**Table 1**

Numbers of Tourism Community in Thailand

<b>Local Community in Thailand</b>	<b>Total</b>
Tourism Community in North Region	82
Tourism Community in South Region	63
Tourism Community in Central Region	62
Tourism Community in Northeast Region	57
OTOP Nawatvithi Tourism Community	3,273
Tourism Community Enterprise	1,268

Sources: Tourism and Sports Economic Division, Ministry of Tourism and Sports (2017)

As shown in the table, numbers of tourism communities are able to develop their potential and elevate local tourism as a selling point to attract more tourists. Therefore, this research studies were conducted to establish occupational standards for workers in the local tourism to identify the necessary competencies for operating activities, working, or conducting businesses in local tourism. The framework could be used as a guideline to enhance the skills, knowledge, and ability of local people to meet the needs of entrepreneurs to improve the service quality, safety, as well as tourist confidence. This study was conducted by an academia: National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), in collaboration with professional experts in tourism community and related agencies to set up the professional standard, which identifies the levels of competence of a person in local tourism career and sets its professional qualification that is used for competence certification.

According to the literature review, there was no attempt to investigate occupational competency for local tourism which is continuously expanding. Then, local businesses and local communities are required to develop their capacity to accommodate more tourists due to the community tourism development in many areas (Ministry of Tourism and Sports & Dasta, 2016) This research results will be utilized in identifying the competencies needed to perform tasks and carry out activities in local tourism with a standard.

In this study, the researcher collected data from stakeholders and analyzed tourism development trends and the context to classify the main occupation groups for setting the occupational competencies. The preliminary result reveals occupational groups related to local tourism, by integrating from literature review, the framework of the tourism industry, and community research of the relevant government agencies. The main groups of local tourism businesses were categorized as follows: 1) local restaurants, 2) accommodation in the community areas,

3) souvenirs and local products, and 4) local tour operators, while the key workers for local tourism are: 1) Planners/Marketers/Public Relations Officers and 2) Local Interpreters. The local tourism components are divided into 6 main occupations; Local accommodation entrepreneur, Local food entrepreneur, Souvenir and local products entrepreneur, Local storyteller, Local tourism experience designer, and Local tourism marketer. These occupation groups possess a significant role in driving local tourism which covers all the business and activities in the local tourism value chain such as travel and tourism service, accommodation, restaurants, souvenirs, tourism activities, experience creation, tourism marketing, public relations and tourism development strategy (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2017).

## **Objectives**

1. To study the professional competencies in local tourism under the needs of entrepreneurs, the context of tourism development, the occupational standards and professional qualification pattern for Thai local tourism

2. To identify the professional competencies for local tourism personnel in enhancing and developing competence to local tourism professional standard

## **Research Methodology**

The research aims to study the competency for constructing the occupational standards through a small group discussion and a focus group discussion with those skillful and working in local tourism with much experience. The competencies in performance required for operation were collected (Thailand Professional Qualifications Institute, 2019), and proceed by the following procedure and methodologies of national framework and scheme.

The qualitative research was employed to support the study; secondary data such documents, online resources, to focus on the professional standards, competency framework, and related professional research. In addition, in-depth interviews, focus group discussion, and workshop were also conducted to collect the primary data from experts and professionals. The research covers workers or employees in local tourism including entrepreneurs, tourism communities, government agencies, businesses, and associations related to local tourism. The occupational competency analysis employed the Functional Analysis (FA) technique and structural interview in integrating with the research process of occupational standards and professional qualifications formulation as follows:

1. Study and analyze data related to the competency of the target occupation groups, occupational standards of foreign countries, for instance, Indonesia, HongKong, Switzerland, and Australia, to be used as a guideline for the preparation of career standards and competency analysis.

2. Identify and set the occupational standard conferring to the theory and concepts of competencies study

3. Apply functional analysis techniques from beginner to advance jobs levels by conducting a focus group discussion with experts in each of the 6 occupations and analyzing the Functional Map consisting of Key Purpose, Key Role, and Key Function of each occupation as follows:

- Key Purpose refers to the scope of work at the professional level and represents a career goal that is different from other occupations.

- Key Role refers to the scope of work in each occupation group to achieve the Key Purpose of the occupation

- Key Function refers to the scope of duties and responsibilities of a specific group of tasks that person can perform to achieve the key role

- Units of Competence (UOCs) refers to the scope of the outcomes of tasks, with the beginning and end, can be done by one person

4. Identify the Unit of Competence of each occupation by conducting workshops, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with professionals in each occupation group to collect and identify the Unit of Competence of each occupation, Element of Competence, and determine the competency level of each occupation according to the criteria and pattern of the Thailand professional qualification institution. However, only the findings of unit of competence are exclusively presented excluding the assessment details. Then, record the primary data to be analyzed for identifying occupational standards and professional qualifications. Accordign to the selection criteria, the key informants must be workers with more than 5 years of work experience in the 6 occupation groups, or persons working in the local tourism as a developer, entrepreneur or employer. The key informants of each occupation group are as the following: 6 persons in local accommodation operators, 7 persons in local food entrepreneur, 6 persons in souvenir and local product entrepreneur, 6 persons in local storytellers, 8 person in local tourism experience designers, and 7 persons local tourism marketers. The in-depth interviews were proceeded 2 times for each occupation, 12 interviews in total, and the focus groups discussion was conducted 4 times for each occupation group, total 24 group discussion.

5. Employ content analysis for data analysis and collect data from focus group discussions and in-depth interviews to compare, analyze and synthesize for common competencies through encoding data, sorting the essence, and arranging the information in term of

working operations, then, interpreting and grouping data for analyzing competencies with Functional Analysis technique.

6. Arrange the public hearing meeting with stakeholders from related sectors, especially entrepreneurs, workers and experts in occupation, associations, government agencies, and private sector, while a meeting with experts was held to present the results of the study. This allowed the researcher to obtain suggestions and collects data to improve competencies in occupational standards firmly to assure the accuracy and reliability of the study results.

## **Literature Review**

Competency is the intrinsic attributes of a person that affect the performance of work, which includes knowledge, skills, and abilities that expressed through personality, behavior, and traits that drive people to work better (McClelland, 1973). In terms of professional competency study, in UK and Europe, the competency concept focus on the adequate and necessary competency for working to meet standards or average attributes, which will be used for setting the national vocational qualification for the professional worker. On the contrary, unlike McClelland's (1973) definition in American approach, competency refers to ability of high-performance individual or employees. (Akaraborworn, 2006) Hence, this study of local tourism competency identification will define competency as the ability to work adequately at the average of standard level in the Thai context according to Thailand Professional Qualification Institute's pattern.

The previous competency study of tourism workers mostly presented the professional jobs position in tourism industry side such as hotels, tour operators, tour guides, etc. Nevertheless, in the local tourism area, there are no explicit competency studies for local people or community. Form the Australia national occupation standard, the study

has identified some of tourism and hospitality competencies that are close to local tourism scope, classified into groups of core competencies in tourism, product planning and development, sales and marketing, general customer service, general ministration, and defined sub-competency in each group such as develop and improve local knowledge up-to-date, assess tourism opportunities for local communities, working with colleagues and customers, etc. (Australian National Training Authority, 1998). While, Indonesia provides the competency-based training courses for ecotourism guide included: basic of guiding, technique of guiding, interpretation, ecotourism travel planning, basis of service, impact of tourism, safety procedure, first aid, guiding Practice, etc. (International Labour Organization, 2013), and also provide the professional competency standard for tourism business sector. Moreover, an example of HongKong competency standard in tourism business sector identification found that competencies of the service industry (Catering) divided the function area into 5 groups: professional management skills, professional skills for the table section, professional skills for the production, section sale and services skills, and generic skills. Likewise, the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Tourism Professionals identified only competencies for job positions in tourism and hospitality sectors (Association of Southeast ASEAN Nations, 2018) From the previous results mentioned, the example studies can be used as a framework for classifying and analyzing the competencies needed in performing local tourism operations. However, in Thailand context, there is no study in terms of working competencies for individuals or workers directly, the existing studies focused at tourism community capacity level; such as participatory management competencies, (Esichaikul, Chansawang, & Montriwat, 2018) or the competencies of tourism group leaders (Ruanggoon & Namsao, 2020), etc.

For the arrangement of occupational standards and professional qualifications, there are related term definitions according to the professional qualifications system as follows:

Occupational Standard is referred to the identification of competencies at the personal level in occupation, which Thailand Professional Qualifications Institute (TPQI) is responsible for providing the studies and set up the competency level in various professional fields to meet with universal standard, and organized a system for certifying competence, knowledge, expertise and professional skills of persons by the competency assessment according to occupational standards under the professional qualifications system, to increase the manpower capability of the country (Thailand Development Research Institute, 2016).

Professional Qualification is stratified into 8 levels in the framework. The first level of professional qualification identified basic competencies, and the highest professional qualification identified the most specialized competencies (Thailand Professional Qualification Institute, 2019). The components of the qualifications framework defined the scopes of competency in 4 core dimensions composed of knowledge, skills, application, and ethics and responsibility, the competencies and qualifications level in occupational standards will be classified consistently with professional qualifications framework.

Professional qualifications framework is the structure for competency identification scales at each qualifications levels in occupational standard, function as the common criterion and description used for determining each professional qualifications level in occupational standards, not specific for only occupation. The framework classified in 8 levels in accordance with the ASEAN



Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF) and Thailand National Qualification Framework. Each level describes the criteria of required knowledge, skills, and preferable attributes, scope of responsibility, expected outcomes, innovation, and level of work difficulty; for example, a person at the entry-level may not be able to innovate but can perform the jobs according to performance criteria, in which, at a high level, individuals will be able to create innovations ( Thailand Professional Qualification Institute, 2019) . The classification of competency level and general description of professional qualifications at each level are as follows.

**Table 2**

Description of Professional Qualification Framework in 8 Levels

Level	Description
Level 1	Competent in performing basic routine tasks by orders under close supervision context and focus on tasks.
Level 2	Competent in professional working skills followed by instructions and procedures and solving regular problems under the guidance of supervisors.
Level 3	Competent in technical apply the principles and work to meet standards, Solve technical problems on the job site with the manuals using, understand and explain working information with the right principle to control the quality of work under the guidance of supervisors.
Level 4	Competent in technical professional tasks and solve professional problems in unpredictable contexts, apply the principles of problem-solving and decision-making in duties on their own, coordinate to control the quality of the work.

Level	Description
Level 5	Competent in technical professional tasks and problem-solving in the general changing context, able to think critically and analyze the situations on their own, leadership, manage the productivity of work, communicate and coaching, and supervise the colleague to achieve the work plan.
Level 6	Competent in managerial and problem-solving in a complex and changing context by using knowledge or innovation to develop work system, consultation with experience and expertise.
Level 7	Competent in managerial and problem-solving in a complex and unpredictable context, develop and expand the knowledge or innovation in professionals to develop their organization or groups systematically.
Level 8	Competent in creating new knowledge or innovation, propose the problem-solving ideas in complex and unpredictable contexts, outstanding performance, visionary, be recognized in the national level or higher, give advice or opinions with skillful and responsible, and professional spirit for society

Source: Thailand Professional Qualifications Institute (2019)

## Findings

The result of competencies identification for the local tourism management occupational standard is constructed from analyzing the related occupational standards from other countries as a model for setting competencies by task and performance with a combination of the knowledge, skills, and attributes used in working as the components, and classified these competencies into various levels under the scope of

a professional qualification framework. The data analysis through focus group discussions with people in 6 occupations, in-depth interviews, and workshops showed that the competencies used in the operation of the 6 occupations comprised of 45 units of competency and they could be classified according to the definitions given in each competency level of the professional qualification framework. The results of study are shown in Figure 1.

1. The results of local accommodation operator competencies from the focus group discussions with 6 experts, in-depth interviews, and workshops were classified into professional qualifications level 2, 3, and 4, consisting of 7 competencies as follow: Level 2 involves with the ability to 1) operate services followed by procedures in local accommodation, and 2) manage accommodation to be clean and hygienic; Level 3 involved with the ability to 3) manage accommodation to be comfortable and safe, and 4) manage accommodation to be environmentally friendly; and Level 4 involves with the ability to 5) apply universal design concepts to manage local accommodation environment, 6) design and decorate accommodation to reflect local identity, and 7) develop people to fit with the service system that reflects local identity.

2. The results of local food entrepreneur competencies from the focus group discussion with 7 experts, in-depth interviews, and workshops were classified into professional qualifications levels 3, 4, and 5, consisting of 11 competencies as follows: Level 3 involves with the ability to 1) manage the environment in a local food cooking facility, 2) manage safety in local food cooking and production, 3) prepare local food material and ingredients properly, 4) serve local food for customers with a friendly manner, and 5) communicate

information, values, history, quality of local food to customers; Level 4 involves with the ability to 6) manage local food cooking facility according to food sanitation principles, 7) arrange local food decorations uniquely, 8) operate cooking local food according to traditional wisdom, and 9) operate cooking local food with sanitary and safety; and Level 5 involves with ability to 10) set local food prices fairly, and 11) develop the quality of local food service to employees

3. The results of souvenirs and local products entrepreneur competencies from a focus group discussion with 6 experts, in-depth interviews, and workshops were classified into professional qualifications levels 4, 5, and 6, consisting of 9 competencies as follows: Level 4 involves with ability to: 1) design souvenirs and local products based on identity and local Thai wisdom, and 2) design packaging to add more value and pricing for souvenirs and local products; Level 5 involves with ability to: 3) control the production process of souvenirs and local products to meet standards, 4) study the market needs of souvenir and local products, 5) calculate and set the selling price of souvenirs and local products, 6) create souvenirs and local products brands; and level 6 is 7) maneuver the marketing strategy for souvenirs and local products, 8) penetrate new markets and expand the old market segment, and 9) develop souvenirs and products that unique and meet the changing market demands.

4. The results of local storyteller competencies from the focus group discussion with 6 experts, in-depth interviews, and workshops, were classified into professional qualifications levels 2, 3, and 4, consisting of 7 competencies as follows: Level 2 involves with ability to 1) develop the personality of local storyteller, 2) communicating to raise awareness of tourists; Level 3 involves with ability to 3) develop attributes of local storyteller, 4) support learning activities for tourists to

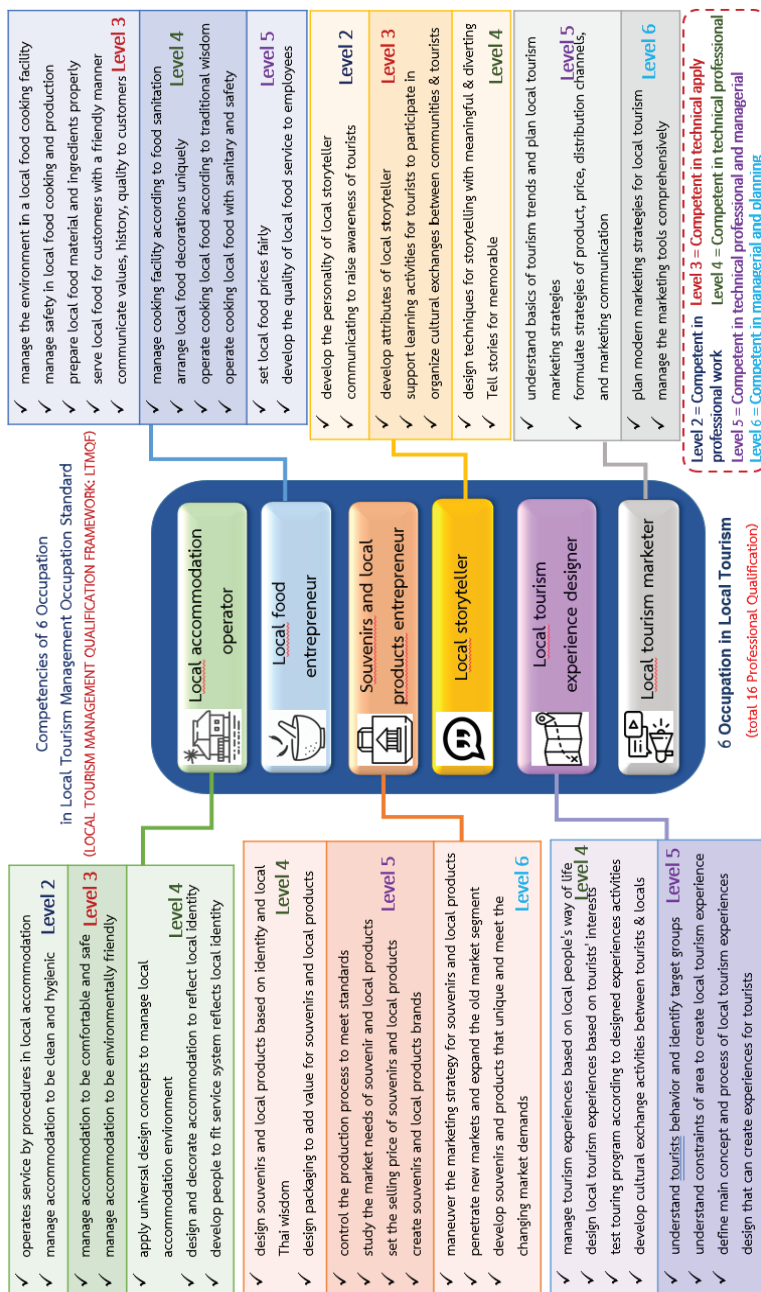
participate in, 5) organize cultural exchanges between communities and tourists; and Level 4 involves with ability to 6) design techniques for local storytelling with meaningful and diverting, 7) Tell stories for memorable.

5. The results of local tourism experience designer competencies from focus group discussion of 8 experts, in-depth interviews, and workshops, were classified into professional qualifications levels 4, and 5, consisting of 7 competencies as follows: Level 4 involves with ability to 1) manage tourism experiences based on local people's way of life, 2) design local tourism experiences based on tourists' interests, 3) test touring program according to designed local tourism experiences activities, 4) develop cultural exchange activities between tourists and local people; and Level 5 involves with ability to 5) understand tourists behavior and identify target groups, 6) understand the constraints of the area to create a local tourism experience, 7) define the main concept and the process of local tourism experiences design that can create experiences for tourists.

6. The results of local tourism marketer competencies from focus group discussion of 6 experts, in-depth interviews, and workshops, were classified into professional qualifications levels 5, and 6, consisting of 4 competencies as follows: Level 5 involves with ability to 1) understand the basics of tourism trends and plan local tourism marketing strategies, 2) formulate strategies of product, price, distribution channels, and marketing communication; and Level 6 involves with ability to 3) plan modern marketing strategies for local tourism, 4) manage the marketing tools comprehensively.

However, the researcher has presented the results of the study to stakeholders for validation in order to fulfill the results more complete and reliable. In which the results of the public hearing with more than 100 stakeholders and presentation to 9 experts have additional opinions in adjusting some competency name to be more concise by cut off the extension details, revised the written language to make it easy for the local communities to understand and suitable for utilization, and add more details on cross-cultural learning between tourists and locals. The researcher has readjusted the competency name according to the above research results and can be summarized as shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**  
Finding of 6 Occupation Competencies



Source: by Author

## Conclusion and Discussion

The identified competencies from the research findings were consistent with other tourism competencies from relevant studies in which fundamental knowledge and understanding about each occupation competency categorizing are crucial. These include understanding the conditions and restrictions of the tourism area, understand the fundamentals of tourism trends and plan the strategies, and etc. This is in line with what has been found in the Indonesian curriculum, (International Labour Organization, 2013) that competency of ecotourism guide includes ecotourism travel planning, Impact of Tourism, which is essential for managerial competencies such as competency of local tourism experience designer and local tourism marketer who requires in-depth technical competence to think analytically, solve problems, and assess the situation to make decisions, especially, local knowledge which is required to be applied in designing and communication. These competencies are consistent with a study in Australia (Australian National Training Authority, 1998) of which the results showed that the improvement of local knowledge to be up-to-date and assessment of tourism opportunities for local communities are the core competencies in tourism, while souvenir and local product entrepreneurs must have basic knowledge in producing and designing which can maintain the local identity. In the meantime, it is necessary for local accommodation operators to have knowledge about local identity to manage accommodation and the environment to be comfortable and hygienic, while providing services that can represent the local identity. In addition, local food entrepreneurs have to recognize the value, history, and quality of local food, as well as, local storytellers who need to have proper knowledge and understanding of their locality to tell a meaningful local story.



The required competencies of a local accommodation operator is similar to the general hotel service competencies which focus on providing accommodation and environment which are clean, hygienic, and environmental friendly, where personnel are required to conform to various standards at the community level. This differs from general hotel jobs in that it focuses on managing the environment and designing accommodation to represent the local identity, which is suitable for personnel and resort operators, homestays in community, or local lodges. This competencies group is similar to the souvenirs and local products entrepreneur competencies since the required skills and knowledge are similar to those general product design and development skills, differences in the context of local resources or production processes focusing on reflecting local identity through local products and branding, which is suitable for souvenir shop entrepreneurs, craftsman community, local product manufacturers, or community products.

From the results found that the competencies of local food entrepreneurs combined with competency group that consistent with a study in HongKong (Qualifications Framework Secretariat, 2013) Function Area that categorized competencies of food service (Catering) function area into 5 groups, include: service and sales, table setting skills, food production skills, and management skills. Although the context of local food entrepreneur differs from the service sector, the components or job competencies are similar since the expected outcomes of the competency are aligned to the local tourism context such as; serve local food to customers with friendly, communicate information, values, history, quality of local food to customers, manage the environment in a local food cooking

facility, operate cooking local food with sanitary and safety, set local food prices fairly, etc. These competencies are suitable for in restaurants in local areas, tourism communities, and local product shops.

The competencies of local storyteller was consistent with a study of ecotourism guide competencies in Indonesian (International Labour Organization, 2013) which found that some jobs characteristics are alike and personnel are required to have a basic understanding of how to work such as basic of guiding, techniques for guiding, interpretation, interesting technique of storytelling. Most of the knowledge and skills are basic operation competencies. These competencies are suitable for individuals in the local tourism communities who are responsible for communicating locality to the visitors, local wisdom scholars, community storytellers, local interpreters, community leaders, or local guides.

Furthermore, the data analysis revealed that competencies of local tourism experience designers and local tourism marketers are consistent with other research in Thai community context (Esichaikul, Chansawang, & Montriwat, 2018) in which the participative management competency of tourist attractions in the community were examined and it was found that the required competencies were similar including marketing and public relations, service creation, enhancing tourist attraction management experiences. For example, the findings are consistent with the research of Ruanggoon, & Namsao (2020) who studied the competency of cultural tourism group leaders and found that communication skills and marketing ability are required capacity for community leaders who are the key person groups in working context of local tourism scope. The consistent competencies are distributed in the professional qualification level 4, 5, and 6, of these two occupations namely: design local tourism experiences based on tourists' interests, plan modern marketing strategies,

manage the marketing tools comprehensively which are management competency and suitable for people who design tourism programs and travel routes, tourism activity developer in the community area, tourist attraction owner, or related people promoting or marketing for local tourism.

## **Implication**

### **1. Implication for future research**

For further competency study aiming to set local tourism-related occupational standards in other occupations, the new forms of tourism activities or operations that emerge from the adaptation of tourism and the new coming or revised standards should be considered, including the ability to manage the carrying capacity to identify the necessary competencies for adaptation of workers and local people in both local tourism communities and local business.

### **2. Practical Implication**

In applying the results of this study, related development agencies can consider using the competencies in this occupational standard to design training courses or practice-based learning at the local community level by involving experts in transferring practice to local people or workers in local tourism. In addition, the communities and local entrepreneurs are able to apply these competencies set according to occupational standards as a guideline for competencies training and self-development further.

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# Examining Contradictions within the Term ‘Sustainable Development’, Including the Case of the ‘Thai Sufficiency Economy’

การทบทวนความขัดแย้งภายในแนวคิดการพัฒนาที่ยั่งยืน  
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## Abstract

This article discusses the contradictions of the term ‘sustainable development’ by comparing the different positions—locational and chronological—and the different socio-cultural and personal contexts of people involved in sustainable development. Before the emergence and global recognition of a fixed definition of sustainable development in 1987 by the Brundtland Commission, or known as the ‘Brundtland’ definition, its meaning was contested for a long period. Sustainable development is, indeed, an approach which emphasises two often contradictory schools of thought: one concerned with limiting the excessive consumption of natural resources; the other

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focused on material development for economic growth and human well-being, but dependent on the availability of natural resource consumption. The terminology of sustainable development remains rather controversial and subject to tension. It may take a considerable effort beyond placing two problematic development terms and their related concepts together to ensure reconciliation between environmentalists and development economists. On the other hand, there are other perspectives to viewing the terminology of sustainable development as inherently contradictory. Sustainable development can be more or less straightforward, deeper or shallower, or broader or narrower than either certain local cultural definitions or the definition by the Brundtland Commission. Such local cultural definitions potentially have their ways to balance uneven development and creating their practices to cope with development. Illustrating this argument is a specific case study of the Thai sufficiency economy.

**Keywords:** sustainable development, sufficiency economy, self-contradictions in the concept of sustainable development

### บทคัดย่อ

บทความวิชาการนี้ อภิปรายแนวความคิดการพัฒนาที่ยั่งยืนซึ่งคงความขัดแย้งภายในตัวเองอยู่ โดยอาศัยการพรรณนาที่ยกเอาความแตกต่างทางบริบทในแง่ของตำแหน่งแห่งที่ เวลา สังคมวัฒนธรรมและความเป็นอัตวิสัยของปัจเจกบุคคลมาอภิปราย ว่ามีส่วนกำหนดให้เกิดการรับรู้และเข้าใจ รวมถึงการเรียกชื่อที่แตกต่างกันออกไป ก่อนหน้าการบัญญัติความหมายสากลของการพัฒนาที่ยั่งยืนหรือที่รับรู้กันในนามว่า “บรันท์แลนด์” ขึ้นในปี พ.ศ. 2530 ความคิดหลวม ๆ เกี่ยวกับการพัฒนาที่ยั่งยืนได้รับการอภิปรายและถกเถียงกันอย่างกว้างขวางบนฐานความขัดแย้งสำคัญสองประการ ประการแรกคือท่ามกลางนักวิชาการที่ให้ความสำคัญ

แก้ทรัพยากรธรรมชาติก่อน และกังวลว่าการนำทรัพยากรธรรมชาติมาใช้อย่างไม่จำกัดนั้น คือที่มาของความไม่ยั่งยืน ประการที่สองคือหมั่นศึกษาการที่เชื่อในความมุ่งหมายต่อการพัฒนา ว่าการกินดีอยู่ดีของมนุษย์ ต้องเริ่มจากการนำทรัพยากรธรรมชาติมาใช้เพื่อพัฒนาทางเศรษฐกิจก่อนเป็นสำคัญ ด้วยความขัดแย้งดังกล่าวทำให้เกิดความพยายามพัฒนาแนวความคิดการพัฒนาที่ยั่งยืนที่เป็นสากลขึ้นมา เพื่อให้เกิดจุดประนีประนอมและเป็นบรรทัดฐานในการสร้างความสมดุลระหว่างกระบวนการพัฒนา ในขณะที่เดียวกันปรากฏอีกมุมมองหนึ่งที่เสนอทางเลือกในการมองแนวความคิดพัฒนาที่ยั่งยืน เป็นผลมาจากความเชื่อที่ว่า การพัฒนาที่ยั่งยืนนั้น หากมองจากฐานความแตกต่างทางบริบท เช่น สังคมและวัฒนธรรม เป็นต้น แนวความคิดดังกล่าวอาจตื่น ลึก หนา บางไม่เท่ากันในแต่ละบริบท โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่ง อาจแตกต่างออกไปจากความหมายสากลหรือ “เบิร์นส์แลนด์” ดังนั้นการพัฒนาที่ยั่งยืนอาจสามารถมองได้อีกแง่ผ่านปฏิบัติการการพัฒนาของสังคมวัฒนธรรมท้องถิ่นเฉพาะ ที่รับรู้และให้คุณค่ากันเองภายใน ว่านั่นสื่อนัยของการเป็นการพัฒนาที่ยั่งยืนแล้ว เพราะถึงแม้จะมีชื่อเรียกแตกต่างกันออกไป แต่ทว่าจุดประสงค์ของการพัฒนานั้น อาจไม่ได้แตกต่างไปจากความหมายสากลนัก ตรงที่ยังคงเน้นการสร้างสมดุลในการพัฒนาเป็นหลักอยู่ บทความนี้ยกตัวอย่างแนวความคิดเศรษฐกิจพอเพียงของประเทศไทยประกอบการอธิบาย

**คำสำคัญ:** การพัฒนาที่ยั่งยืน เศรษฐกิจพอเพียง ความขัดแย้งภายใน  
แนวความคิดพัฒนาที่ยั่งยืน

## Introduction

The fact that people engage with sustainable development from different positions, within diverse locations and periods, presents a challenge to establishing a general norm of sustainable development (Bernstein, 2001; Connelly, 2007;



Hadden & Seybert, 2016; Krook & True, 2010; Redclift, 1987; Srivastava, 2011). This author is especially interested in positioning because different personal positions arguably determine individuals' different perceptions of what sustainable development is, including one's own. This is especially the case as it binds together two seemingly mismatching concepts, namely economic development and environmental protection. Interpretations of these and concerns over them arguably depend on the socio-cultural and personal contexts of those reflecting on them. Some may see environmental issues as a crucial concern, while others may see economic development as the most important for human well-being.

In this article, therefore, the author makes an effort to critically discuss the contradictions of the term 'sustainable development' by comparing the different positions—locational and chronological—and the different socio-cultural and personal contexts of people involved in sustainable development. The author also proposes an indigenous sustainable development concept in a Thai context called the 'sufficiency economy' as a specific example supporting his argument. In this article, there are two scales by which sustainable development is defined: first, the global definition known as the Brundtland definition; second, a local definition, the Thai sufficiency economy. This article begins with a brief overview of the concept of global sustainable development. It then argues what the contradiction of terms within the definitions are and how these are caused by the different perspectives and positions of those who view it. Illustrating this argument is a specific case study of the Thai sufficiency economy.

## **Brief Overview of the Concept of Global Sustainable Development**

Before the emergence and global recognition of a fixed definition of sustainable development in 1987, its meaning was contested for a long time. Sustainable development is an approach which emphasises two often contradictory schools of thought: one concerned with limiting the excessive consumption of natural resources; the other focused on material development for economic growth and human well-being, but dependent on the availability of natural resource consumption (Connelly, 2007; Hadden & Seybert, 2016; McMichael, 2016; Redclift, 1987; Srivastava, 2011). In other words, it suggests the balancing of an economic growth-oriented approach, the wise consumption of natural resources, and social equality.

Before 1987, many scholars (Brandon & Lombardi, 2005; Carley & Christie, 2000; Elliott, 1999; Hamstead & Quinn, 2005) contested what was meant by sustainable development because the term was relatively ambiguous in its potential definitions (Bulkeley et al., 2013; Connelly, 2007; Hadden & Seybert, 2016; Redclift, 1987; Srivastava, 2011). A clearer definition of global sustainable development followed the report on sustainable development by the World Commission of Environment and Development (WCED) called the Brundtland Commission (Connelly, 2007; Hadden & Seybert, 2016; McMichael, 2016; Redclift, 1987; Srivastava, 2011; WCED, 1987). This is generally called the Brundtland definition:

Sustainable Development is development which meets the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. (WCED, 1987, p. 16)

Through time, there has been an expansion of goals in terms of global sustainable development. Progress to date towards combating climate change has been defined by the UN's roadmap to the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (SDGs 2030). Climate-resilient development has become a growing demand for an integrated approach for sustainability, economic growth, and an equitable human environment (Arora & Mishra, 2021).

Recently, the Glasgow Conference of the Parties 2021 (UK partnering with Italy), or COP26, was one of the largest and most significant summits on the issue since the 2015 Paris Agreement. COP26 made some progress, for example on cutting emissions through a declaration on zero-emission vehicles to promote greener transport and by acknowledging deforestation. Central to its aims was that almost 120 nations took part in adopting the 'Climate Pact', which directly related to the Paris Agreement's rulebook and continued apace to keep the aims of the treaty alive to reach the decarbonisation of the global economy (Arora & Mishra, 2021).

In terms of international politics, during this period of the abovementioned climate regime, there have been changes in the landscape of the structure of the international system. In brief, the US was obviously in a hegemonic position, as its dominance in the West was given global scope by the collapse of the USSR in the dying days of the Cold War. 'Hegemonic acquiescence' rather than leadership would best describe US policy. Before the Obama presidency, the last time the US had been prepared to play a leading environmental role was in the negotiation of the 1987 Montreal Protocol on stratospheric

ozone. The development of the climate regime did not follow the usual contours of world politics in other respects. The regime has its distinctive patterns of interest- based alliances and sources of ‘issue structural’ power. The major states normally allied with the US have been divided between the EU, which assumed a leadership role in implementing the Kyoto Protocol from 1997 to 2005 and the ‘Umbrella Group’, comprising the US, Canada, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. The Group itself has been split between outright opposition to the Kyoto Protocol or lukewarm adherence (Vogler, 2020). However, there has been a synergy across sustainability and climate regimes. This merging of regimes contributes toward a prevalence in the international power structure and pattern of interests.

### **The Contradiction of Terms within the Definitions**

The term ‘sustainable development’ remains controversial and subject to debate. It may take a considerable effort beyond placing two problematic development terms and their related concepts together to ensure reconciliation between environmentalists and development economists (Bulkeley et al., 2013; Connelly, 2007; Redclift, 1987). Material development through an economic growth-oriented approach arguably places people or the environment in second place, while a counter-growth approach may place people or the environment first in a development process. To put the terms ‘sustainable’ and ‘development’ together implies an attempt to be proportionate between economic growth and the environment and people, even though these are relatively difficult to combine. There is no material development that neither uses up natural resources nor harms the environment, nor are there any environmental or human protections that do not involve some simultaneous obstruction of material development (Connelly, 2007; Hadden & Seybert, 2016; Redclift, 1987).

However, there are other perspectives to viewing the term ‘sustainable development’ as inherently contradictory. To begin with, the different socio- cultural positions that people involved in sustainable development occupy probably determine their perceptions of it (Connelly, 2007; Hadden & Seybert, 2016; Redclift, 1987, Srivastava, 2011). Such perceptions may include both their meaning and the process by which it is enacted. Possibly this is because acceleration of growth-oriented development in one location differs from that in another. Simultaneously, environmental protections and conceptions of social justice in one location are likely to be different from others. (Connelly, 2007; Hadden & Seybert, 2016; Srivastava, 2011).

This author believes that the term ‘sustainable development’ can be contested within every culture dealing with uneven development between economic growth, environmental protection, and social justice. The words and concepts of ‘sustainable’ and ‘sustainability’ vary in each sociolinguistic culture. Therefore, both may be defined either consistently or inconsistently with other cultures or the seemingly objective language of the Brundtland definition. Sustainable development can be more or less straightforward, deeper or shallower, or broader or narrower than either other cultures’ definitions or that of Brundtland (Connelly, 2007; Hadden & Seybert, 2016; Srivastava, 2011).

Such cultures potentially have their ways to balance uneven development and create their practices to cope with development (Hadden & Seybert, 2016; Piboolsravut, 2004; Srivastava, 2011; Villalba, 2013, Watene, 2016). In practice, the ways to take action on sustainable development in one particular location may also be distinct from others. The process and measurement of sustainable development in one specific location are potentially different from others, the author

believes, depending on their social contexts surrounding sustainable development including the equality of income distribution, the quantity of pollution and severity of social inequality. Some contexts may support local components as the main mechanism for moving sustainable development forward, while others may emphasise governmental power and its authority to drive it. Some countries may take more seriously the UN's SDGs to indicate the level of their sustainable development. In contrast, others may create their indicators and employ such indicators to measure it in their ways. Some may be very subjective in how they measure sustainable development.

Furthermore, others may never talk about the Brundtland definition, instead deploying their practice that reflects their indigenous interpretation of sustainable development. Different positions in various locations, therefore, are relatively significant both for shaping people's perception of sustainable development and the different ways of practising it. It depends on one's particular socio-cultural contexts and the domestic circumstance of the acceleration of development (Connelly, 2007; Hadden & Seybert, 2016; Redclift, 1987, Srivastava, 2011). Sustainable development is rather fluid in definition if we view it from different positions. The author, therefore, argues that viewing sustainable development from the point of view of local perspectives results in awareness of the great diversity of its definitions and enactment.

The different positions within a particular period and location of a person engaging in sustainable development also probably contribute to their distinct responses to sustainable development. (Connelly, 2007; Hadden & Seybert, 2016; Redclift, 1987, Srivastava, 2011). As the acceleration of economic development and the environmental protection and social justice in each time are different, there are therefore variations in the length of time during which

economic development occurs and the environmental protection and social justice that occur between periods. This applies to every location dealing with uneven development because each person and location experiences differently their personal, social, and global contexts over different periods. At a particular time, some may focus on economic-growth development when facing a global or national economic crisis. Some may emphasise instead the protection of the environment and social justice when good economic development has been established, but the environment and social justice are deteriorating (Hadden & Seybert, 2016; Redclift, 1987; Srivastava, 2011).

Hadden and Seybert (2016) demonstrate that if there were an international economic crisis, governments coping with uneven development would be likely to focus their sustainable development on ongoing growth-oriented economic development. One particular example these authors introduced was a sub-concept of sustainable development; the ‘green economy’, introduced in 2012. This concept reiterates the wise use of natural resources within an economic development process. However, such a concept probably remains focused on economic development. To this author, however, the idea of a green economy was solely the repetition of development that was split disproportionately between encouraging further economic growth and producing only limited protections for the environment and social justice during the ongoing global economic crisis.

Within the Brundtland definition, different experiences in time also exacerbate the contradictions within sustainable development ( Bernstein, 2001; Hadden & Seybert, 2016) . Brundtland concerns intergenerational equality; however, this author believes that the term ‘future generations’ is rather

problematic. Such generations are not yet born and they do not occupy a particular time, existing vaguely far in the future. Sustainable development within the Brundtland definition is probably only something that legitimately serves the economic, environmental, and social development of present-day people. It seems to be a definition that prolongs periods (Bernstein, 2001; Hadden & Seybert, 2016). In contrast, what is required is a solid definition of what future generations should be concerned with.

### **Illustrating the Argument Through a Case Study of the Thai Sufficiency Economy**

The Brundtland definition is formally known as a milestone of development for sustainability, while the philosophy of the sufficiency economy in Thailand is a philosophy for applying and putting it into practice as a means and an end for a certain development goal, for example in terms of new farm management (new theory agriculture). Nevertheless, in this section, there are a few issues to address.

Firstly, Thai governments have responded to the call for global sustainable development by formulating national development policies regarding sustainable development. Each Thai government from 1972 to 2021 espoused agreement with each global sustainable development conference. After the first 1972 UN Conference on Human Environment in Stockholm, one result was that the Thai government was to be a regional office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) for the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP). The Thai government started institutionalising and legitimising its structure and national laws to accommodate and respond to global agreements on the practice of sustainable development. The first national act of environmental promotion and protection was enacted in 1975 and was developed to fit



both national and international contexts over time. Furthermore, the Thai government contributed to the trajectory of global sustainable development, participating in all conferences ( 1992 UNCED, 1997 Rio+5, 2002 Rio+10, 2012 Rio+20 and COP26) to report national progress and to revise any obstructions to the process (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1994; Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, 2013; Silva et al., 2022).

According to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment ( 2013) , Thailand claimed that the concept of the sufficiency economy delivered by His Majesty King Bhumibol was compatible with global sustainable development. The summary of this philosophy below presents a particular Thai perspective concerning the definition of the sufficiency economy in terms of such development. In each global conference on sustainable development, the sufficiency economy was reported as the framework for and the practice of sustainable development within a Thai context, as summarised by the following language from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (2013), Noy (2011), Piboolsravut (2004), Wanasilp and Tangvitoontham (2015):

Development of the country must proceed in stages. First of all, there must be a foundation with the majority of the people having enough to live on by using methods and equipment which are economical but technically correct as well. When such a secure foundation is adequately ready and operational, then it can be gradually expanded and developed to raise prosperity and the economic standard to a higher level by stages.

Secondly, the term ‘sufficiency economy’ can be debated in terms of actual practices that are being addressed. It is likely to be envisaged as a subjective and protracted term within the context of sustainable development. This is apparent when we view the sufficiency economy from different positions in space and time of the people involved in it in practice.

On one hand, people living in different socio- cultural locations are likely to have different senses of the sufficiency economy. The most problematic word and concept within it is ‘sufficiency’. In regions where there is a rapid acceleration of economic- growth development and fierce competition in markets, for example, within Thai urbanised areas ( Camfield et al. , 2013), people’ s sense of sufficiency may be bound to economic activities and is probably interpreted from within an economic perspective. This is because people in these locations potentially have more economic understanding and values from living in fiercely competitive markets. Therefore, sufficiency for them is likely to be a feeling of having enough money for day-to-day needs from their earnings. Whether people feel they have enough money is relatively subjective depending upon their perspectives. Sufficiency in these contexts, therefore, is distinct from how it may be viewed in rural areas (Jitsangaun, 2008).

For people living in rural Thailand, where the prevalent religious practice is Buddhism, a sense of sufficiency may be very significant for their feelings and lives. Sufficiency in these contexts may be interpreted as close to the Buddhist philosophy and be understood as a principle for daily living focused on intense care and appropriate conduct. The sufficiency economy in this case is more in line with Buddhist economics, which sees smallness as beauty (Schumacher, 1993). Sufficiency in these contexts is more profoundly bound to agrarian everyday life and is further engaged with religious and social values which are subjective. Well-being might include whether a person feels they have enough concerning land rights,

agricultural commodities, water and food supplies, and even a sense of destiny, rather than merely having enough money. Therefore, the sufficiency economy in these areas is likely not to be confined to an economic perspective ( Jitsangaun, 2008; Noy, 2011; Wanasilp & Tangvitoontham, 2015).

On the other hand, the social and personal contexts that encompass each person and location potentially change over time. This produces different conditions within each person and location at various particular periods. Experiences people have gained over time from particular social and personal contexts also possibly shape people's perceptions of sufficiency. For a pauper, having enough clean water to drink defines sufficiency for them. But if that pauper becomes a billionaire, where earning a thousand million baht is required to ensure the survival of their business, for example, such massive capital reflects what sufficiency means for them. Sufficiency thus depends on the social and personal contexts of a particular period in one's life, leading ultimately to different socially constructed meanings of sufficiency (Jitsangaun, 2008; Noy, 2011; Wanasilp & Tangvitoontham, 2015).

The roles played by different social and personal contexts and the changes in people's status at different periods of their lives contribute to the sufficiency economy being much more fluid in its meaning and subjective in its interpretation. This makes it difficult to measure the level of sufficiency of each unit of measurement (including each person, household, community, and country) across different locations and periods and also across different social and personal contexts of such units. This can be claimed to be the most recent controversy within the idea of the sufficiency economy, with no sign of its resolution ( Jitsanguan, 2008; Noy, 2011; Piboolsravut, 2004; Wanasilp & Tangvitoontham, 2015).

Thirdly, the contradictions contained within the idea of the sufficiency economy are also similar to those of sustainable development. For example, the sufficiency economy may cause a decline in businessmen's motivation to obtain optimal profit, due to feeling sufficient. Similarly, sustainable development may cause developers to consistently be concerned about how they exploit natural resources and to feel uncomfortable enough to not reach optimal economic development. A final result of this is that there is potentially not enough productive development to enable people to live better. In addition, a considerable effort has been put into matching two problematic terms and concepts together, where a contradictory tension exists between desiring more economic growth and desiring better compliance with human, social, and environmental protection (Connelly, 2007; Hadden & Seybert, 2016; Redclift, 1987, Srivastava, 2011). Theorisation of both the sufficiency economy and sustainable development probably ensures that the people engaged with either will feel conflicted and frustrated by the conflicting discursive and practical elements.

Lastly, there is a critical discussion to address. The contradictions inherent in the term 'sustainable development' and the illustration through the Thai sufficiency economy imply that sustainable development is not merely the Brundtland definition. Sustainable development can encompass ideas as diverse as the Thai sufficiency economy, the Ecuadorian *Buen Vivir*, and the *Māori* philosophy on nature, as long as they suitably serve each community's social and human contexts for those in particular periods. Sustainable development viewed in this manner can belong to everyone, and the term can be relatively flexibly applied because it is fitted to each local context (Connelly, 2007; Hadden & Seybert, 2016; Piboolsravut, 2004; Redclift, 1987; Srivastava, 2011; Villalba, 2013; Watene, 2016). Sustainable development from local perspectives is relatively powerless

and does not make efforts to dominate other formulations of sustainable development. In contrast, global sustainable development, in forms like the Brundtland definition, is pronounced from a superior position that attempts to order, organise and ultimately dominate other types of sustainable development ( Bulkeley et al. , 2013; Connelly, 2007; Hadden & Seybert, 2016; Redclift, 1987; Srivastava, 2011).

Trying to create a globally generalised form of sustainable development is rather unworkable for achieving any formulation of its core values in practice. This is because each person and location has its own experiences and solutions to deal with uneven development, depending on different socio-cultural and personal contexts as well as time factors (Connelly, 2007; Hadden & Seybert, 2016; Redclift, 1987, Srivastava, 2011). Frequently, senior development figures have been playing with language at a discursive level, rather than engaging at a more practical level to make more contributions to the world (McGregor, 2009; McKinnon, 2008).

However, this author understands that some may not agree with attempts to apply contextual-chronological understanding to each type of sustainable development. This is because such arguments may sound as if they are excessively simplifying and reducing an explanation of actual social phenomena into general universal claims and conclusions. The author also does not intend to imply that sustainable development is impossible. The goal was to illustrate the politics across discursive and practical issues over sustainable development.

## **Conclusion**

Given the discussion of the tensions within the term ‘sustainable development’ and the particular example of the Thai sufficiency economy, it is clear that the formulation of

sustainable development is controversial and hence the term is contradictory. The uneven balancing between economic development and protecting the environment and social justice shows an attempt to cram together two combative terms and concepts: ‘sustainability’ and ‘development’. Their inherent contradictions mean that their norms can in particular be contested on a discursive level, even when there is an omission of what sustainable development means at a practical level.

However, there have been considerable attempts to globally order and organise norms of sustainable development, which led to the Brundtland definition. Such a definition, therefore, has dominated other indigenous norms, even though these types of indigenous sustainable development were already compatible with Brundtland in practice. The author does not see the application of Brundtland’s definition of sustainable development as a panacea which can cure anomalous symptoms resulting from uneven development wherever and whenever they happen to occur. This is because the different positions in locations and time occupied by people engaged in sustainable development ensure that they will have distinct views of how it should be performed, which may or may not overlap with common definitions and norms. Therefore, the definition of sustainable development is relatively subjective, being dependent upon one’s position. Furthermore, the conclusion is that the term sustainable development contains a contradiction, as demonstrated by reference to scholarship and Thailand’s sufficiency economy.

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# The Spiritual Buddhist Arts and the Ashtamangala of Tibet

พุทธศิลป์ทางจิตวิญญาณและอัฐมวงศแห่งทิเบต

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## Abstract

The paper aims to describe and analyze pieces of evidence of the influence of ancient Tibetan Buddhist art on Tibetan culture. The Ashtamangala symbol appears in the design of printed furniture and various complex murals in the Buddhist architecture. The Tibetan Plateau artists apply the painted Ashtamangala symbols to represent the arts of soul. The findings revealed that religious elements are prevalent in many historic artefacts developed before the mid-twentieth century, and commonly found in, for example, thangkas (Tibetan Buddhist painting on fabric), murals, and miniature bronze sculptures, and

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big statues made of clay, plaster, and wood. These findings imply that the Tibetans believe in the connection between the myth of the Ashtamangala and Buddha's life and his power. The most prevalent interpretations of each symbol include the Precious Parasol (PP), the White Conch Shell (WCS), the Two Golden Fish (TGF), the Knot of Eternity (KE), the Vase of Great Treasures (VGT), the Victory Banner (VB), the Lotus Flower (LF), and the Dharmachakra (DHA). Every symbol reflects the spiritual and vigorous arts and culture of the Tibetan.

**Keywords:** Ashtamangala, Buddhist art, spiritual, Tibetan Buddhism

## บทคัดย่อ

บทความนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อบรรยายและวิเคราะห์หลักฐานที่เกี่ยวข้องกับอิทธิพลของพุทธศิลป์ทิเบตอันเก่าแก่ที่มีต่อวัฒนธรรมทิเบต สัญลักษณ์อัฐมวงศปรากฏอยู่ในการออกแบบเครื่องเรือนที่พิมพ์ออกมาและภาพจิตรกรรมฝาผนังอันซับซ้อนในสถาปัตยกรรมพุทธ ศิลปินที่ราบสูงชาวทิเบตประยุกต์การวาดภาพสัญลักษณ์อัฐมวงศเพื่อเป็นตัวแทนของศิลปะแห่งจิตวิญญาณ จากการศึกษาพบว่า องค์ประกอบทางศาสนามีพบอยู่ทั่วไปในงานศิลปะทางประวัติศาสตร์ส่วนใหญ่ที่พัฒนาก่อนกลางคริสต์ศตวรรษที่ยี่สิบ มักพบในวัตถุข้าวของต่าง ๆ เช่น หังกา (ภาพวาดพุทธศิลป์ทิเบตบนผืนผ้า) จิตรกรรมฝาผนัง ประติมากรรมสำริดขนาดจิ๋ว รูปปั้นดินเผาขนาดใหญ่ที่ทำด้วยดินเหนียว ปูนปลาสเตอร์ และไม้ การค้นพบนี้บ่งบอกเป็นนัยว่า ชาวทิเบตเชื่อมโยงตำนานของอัฐมวงศเข้ากับพุทธประวัติและพลังของพระองค์ การตีความที่แพร่หลายที่สุดของแต่ละสัญลักษณ์ ได้แก่ ฉัตรอันวิจิตร เปลือกหอยสังข์สีขาว ปลาทองคำ เงื่อนสัญลักษณ์แห่งนิรันดร์ แจกันแห่งสมบัติ ธงชัย

ดอกบัว และ ธรรมจักร ทุกสัญลักษณ์สะท้อนถึงวัฒนธรรมทางจิตวิญญาณและความแข็งแกร่งทางศิลปะและวัฒนธรรมของชาวทิเบต

**คำสำคัญ:** อัฐมมงคล พุทธศิลป์ จิตวิญญาณ พุทธศาสนาแบบทิเบต

## Introduction

The Spiritual Buddhist Art was created with an aim to transmit the Buddhist philosophy through material objects that connect the world of the spiritual and the mundane. Tibetan Buddhists were open to the world after the political revolution in China conquered Tibet in the 1950s (Smith, 2019), which was the decade of Tibetans' migration to Nepal, India, and Western countries such as America, Canada, Germany, and England and their arts were brought along with them. The uniqueness of Spiritual Buddhist can be found in drawings representing the spiritual life of Tibetan Buddhists. The abundance of Tibetan Buddhist symbols encapsulates the traits of Buddha's enlightenment mentality that manifests as the absolute awareness of knowledge and compassion.

This analysis investigates the intricate symbolism found in Tibetan art, so many of these symbols predate the existence of ancient India and its introduction of Buddhism to the society. The symbolic meanings at numerous levels of complexity are included in the history of these ancient symbols as well as their incorporation into Mahayana Buddhism and Vajrayana Buddhism through Indian Vedic history (Lopes, 2019).

The Ashtamangala of Tibetan or the Eight Auspicious Symbols is the main topic of this study as it is one of the most complicated metaphysical systems ever created. Attempting to express symbolic meaning in a simple and obvious manner seems to be no easy

undertaking. The most excellent reference source and previous study is the Glossary of key Tibetan terminology in *A Handbook of Tibetan Culture* (Brown, 2020; Coleman, 1995; Deng, 2016; Jenkins, 2019; Liu, 2019).

## **The Spiritual Buddhist Arts**

Buddhism entered Tibet in the seventh century and remained there until the end of the eighth century. It had been declared the state religion. During the persecutions of the invaders, the influence of Buddhism declined from the ninth to the tenth century and was revived in the late tenth century (Kværne, 2020). It gradually became dominant as it introduced the so-called “later dissemination of the Buddhist faith” (Coleman, 1995). Many Tibetan monks traveled to the birthplace of Buddha in India (Coleman, 1995). Indian experts were welcomed to give lectures and offer lessons in the first few hundred years during this new enthusiasm and Tibetans commenced studying the Indian faith (Coleman, 1995).

Tibet’s great geographical territory has been influenced by its neighbors, India, Kashmir, Nepal, northern Burma (Myanmar), China, and Central Asia (Kotan). This can be seen in the diversity of Tibetan Buddhist art. However, in the late eleventh and the early twelfth century, the Indian Pala became the artistic inspiration. From the thirteenth century onward, Nepalese painters were responsible for painting the thangka and making sculptures for Tibetan donors. Nepalese arts were evident in the painting of peace displayed in Buddhist and spiritual handicrafts (Zhang, 2021). In the fourteenth and the fifteenth century, Nepalese art was finally integrated into the Tibetan art (Brown, 2000).

Buddhists make different kinds of sculptures and paintings as a form of meditation. The worshipper's idea toward the divine is supported or strengthened by the external appearances or images. Images are also commissioned for a variety of reasons, including celebrating a birth, encouraging wealth, wellness, longevity, honoring, and promotion. People believe that contribution to a respectful portrait bestows merit that will lead to the enlightenment on both the donor and the recipient. Laypeople are also encouraged to seek the enlightenment through images in temples and domestic shrines.

### 1. Architecture

The Tibetans have been preeminent in architecture. Tibetan workers built numerous temples along the path from Tibet to Nepal when they migrated. Most villages have at least one small Buddha hall or temple. The scenario of Tibetans looked unique and illustrated their nation even outside of the motherland. The artworks were completed by hand from the base to the top of the building. The outstanding colors, such as carmine, contrast sharply with the white interior to represent spiritual art. Decades later, the spiritual art gradually declined in the twentieth-century industrialization due to the prevalence of modern machines and printing modernization.

All Tibetan architects have exceptional senses when it comes to construction and utilizing the natural features of the land. The few remaining shrines and tiny monasteries left after the Chinese Communist rule exhibit such architectural mastery. This highlights the tremendous artistic loss caused by the Chinese Communist rule and the subsequent demolition of religious structures during the aggression in 1959 (Pallis, 1967). The Larunggar Monastery was the largest Tibetan

Buddhist institution with nearly 40,000 monks, including visiting monks, nuns, and students. With its destruction, 11,500 monks and nuns were forced to leave the monastery (Agnihotri, 2020).

Tibetan architecture, inspired by Tibetan people's emotions and mindsets, is a cultural phenomenon. It is also influenced by Tibet's unique natural environment (Van der Linden, 2021). Tibetan architectural elements express the harmony between humans and nature that can only be accomplished by a hardy ethnic group living on the plateau for a long period (Hung, 2021). The palace construction is yet another watershed moment in Tibetan architectural history. It progressed through three stages of development, i.e., castle art, palace art, and art combining palace and monastery art (Pakhoutova, 2021). The well-known Potala Palace and the Yumbulagang Palace are two excellent examples of Tibetan palace architecture.

**Figure 1**  
Potala Palace



Source: Jarvis (2006)

## 2. Paintings

Paintings generally depict natural figures and characteristics that symbolize the root of Tibetan art. They also portray Tibet's religious history and enigmatic images of the supernatural. The temple's inner wall murals are covered with religious historical scenes and symbols of the supernatural, particularly one showing the circle of life or Mandala. Early Tibetan murals show a distinct style of Buddhist art. Their pureness and perfection are akin to those of India's cave temples. In 1948, the great scholars, Anakarika Govinda and Li Gotami, saved one of the world's priceless record, the tracings of paintings in the historic temples in Tsaparang, Western Tibet (Xue et al., 2021).

The thangkas are paintings on rolls of colored papers coupled by fabric in Chinese patterns depicting the outstanding spiritual art of Tibetan painting branches (Ma et al., 2021). They show the greater demand for surface expression in human forms through shaping in suitable line and color refinement. This type of painting has been steadily declining since the turn of the century following the decreasing demand of buyers. In later decades, thangkas are produced for marketing or trading. Lama was taught mural paintings and increasing thangkas products that changed the spiritual art into the monastic practices through intended meditation. Most famous interior paintings are spiritual art done by Lama as a form of spiritual exercise (Zhu, 2021).



## Figure 2

Thanka: The Spiritual Print of Tibet



Note: An original photograph by Author, March 25, 2018

### 3. Woodwork

The woodwork is usually a part of architectural construction of the building found in, for example, pillars and window frames. Many home items also apply this woodwork technique. The most notable one can be seen in the building of small folding tables known as *chogtse*. Chests and cupboards in Tibetan homes (Figure 3) are also generally decorated with exquisite woodwork in floral designs. Outside and within the home, similar decorations may be found on friezes and pillars. *Tsampa*, Tibetan roasted barley flour, is usually stored in jars with painted lids. Other smaller objects include stools, tobacco boxes, altars, and women's cosmetic boxes and incense boxes called *gurner* (Figure 3). The woodwork is ingrained in the way of life as every Tibetan has a wooden tea bowl kept in the pocket of the belt above the sash. Also typical is a wooden tea bowl kept in the pocket of the belt

above the sash on their waist. These tea bowls are wonderfully crafted and fetch great sums when made of very exquisite figured wood. They are crafted and mounted in silver line or decorated with Ashtamangala. Recently, it has been done in the Mongolian rather than the Tibetan style and more popular in the country's northeastern regions.

### Figure 3

Tibetan incense box, *gurner*, with Eight Ashtamangala Symbols carving and painting decoration



Note: A photograph by WorthPoint (n.d.)

Finally, sturdy wooden carved boards cover the Buddhist texts to protect and reprove two sides of the text before its being wrapped in silk or cotton. The boards are carved wood; some decorated or highlighted with gilding, whether handwritten or printed. The blueprint is carved from sturdy wood to print scriptures of Buddhist doctrine. To make numerous copies, they must be printed from wooden blocks. It is often encased between gorgeously carved boards depicting intricate figure compositions with Buddhas in prominent locations. Many of these carvings must have been lost in the destruction of books by the Chinese Communist rule as part of their anti-religious campaign. However, a few specimens gathered by foreign tourists have found their way into museums.

#### 4. Metalwork

Metalwork plays an important role in Tibetan daily life. A big teapot is used by every Tibetan family and at the temple from dawn to dusk. The handle and the body feature flowers, tiny spots, and vine patterns (Kasdorf, 2018). Numerous small teapots are embellished with fine silver bands. This combination of metals is a favorite Tibetan crafting technique. The spout is usually fashioned with integrated jaws or bones of sea animals. Metal handwork is also found in a handle piece of furniture or items such as a pocketknife, container, utensil, and ware.

Similarly, copper or silver teacups are designed and generally have lids to fit with Chinese porcelain or jade cup. There is an engraving characteristic of Tibetan art in various types of knives and weapons, such as hilts and sheaths. That is categorized in various styles and is made of metalwork. Tibetan men often carry long dagger-like knives, versatile tools used for cutting meat and hunting while traveling. Eastern Tibet's Khambas, noted in the history of warriors with a strong sense of locale and personal independence, wielded a large bladed sword.

#### **Ashtamangala** (བཤ་མེས་ རྟགས་ བརྒྱད)

Ashtamangala or eight auspicious Buddhist symbols have several religion signs, including ones from Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism. The signals or “symbolic attributes” (Tib. *bkra shis rtags brgyad*) are comprised of eight parts. These include a parasol, a pair of golden fish, a treasure vase, a lotus, a white right-spiraling conch shell, an endless knot, a banner of victory, and a golden wheel. There is an early claim in Indian history that the eight auspicious symbols are the hornet signs for the monarchy. The symbols are used in custom or dressing and sacred items such as crowns, rings, necklaces, staffs, potteries, thrones, mirror frames, banners, lamps, and palace

ornaments. They are also found in Hindu traditional handwriting and painting such as in the body paint and the sacrifice tools. It was popular to add these symbols in the rite and ceremony for god worship.

Similar eight auspicious symbols accepted in Jainism include *swastika*, *shrivastava*, *nandyavart*, *vardhamanak*, *bhadrāsana*, *kalash*, *minyugal*, and *darpan*. The golden wheel is replaced by a pair of fly whisks (Skt. *chamara*) in the Nawar Buddhism (a new sect that appeared in the eighteenth century in India), forming a variant of Ashtamangala in Nepal (Karunaratna, 1980; Robert, 2003).

According to the Vajrayana myth, the earth goddess *sthavara* (Tib. *Sayi Lhamo*) offered a vase of treasure full of elixir to Buddha. Later, Brahma and Indra saw the Buddha's enlightenment and offered a golden wheel and white conch shells. They are frequently depicted on the left and right sides respectively of the Buddha's Enlightenment Throne in the painting. Buddha footprints were always shown as early Buddhist aniconic portrayals of his footprints. The eight emblems of good luck are the endless umbrella (*chattra*), the knot (*shrivastava*), the lotus (*padma*), the flask (*kalasha*), golden fishes (*matsya*), the banner (*dhvaja*), the conch (*shankha*), and the wheel (*chakra*). These eight symbols can be seen in the surfaces of familiar items (Figure 4), such as metalwork, wall panels, carpets, and silks of the highest quality among other sacred and profane Buddhist items. The eight symbols are held in the claws of a pair of dragons on a gorgeous Chinese brocade pattern (Figure 5). They are also usually painted on the ground in strewn flour and magnificent colors to welcome visiting religious dignitaries and guests to the celebrations or Buddhist functions at the monasteries.

#### **Figure 4**

Ashtamangala on the door



Note: A photograph by Christopher J. Fynn (2015)

#### **Figure 5**

Ashtamangala in The Claws of a Pair of Dragons in Chinese Brocade Pattern



Note: A detail of a photograph by The Metropolitan Museum of Art (n.d.) showing the back and the sleeves of the Dragon Robe from Ming dynasty (1368-1644), Wanli period (1573-1620)

1. The precious parasol (PP) (Skt. *chatra*; Tib. *gdugs*) (Robert, 2003)

PP is a historic emblem of both protection and kingship. It symbolizes protection from the heat of suffering in both the body and the mind as its shadow connotes the protection from the scorching heat of the sun, which is a metaphor of the evil within, for example, desire, sensuality, grabbing, and anger. Other references to PP include protection from sicknesses, negative energies, and evil spirits. The royal parasol (*chattra*), a huge parasol (*atapatra*), and victory banner (*dhvaja*) are part of the combating chariots in the ancient Indian warfare. The umbrella was originally made of silk stretched over a permanent frame with spokes. The modern folding umbrella or parasol, with bamboo spokes and an oiled paper canopy, was invented in China around the fourth century.

The parasol was a symbol of secular riches or the monarchy. The bigger the number of parasols carried by bearers in an opulent dignitary retinue was, the higher position in his society. Early Indian Buddhism embraced the emblems of the thirteen royal umbrellas as a metaphor for Buddha's dominion as the chakravartin or universal king. The Buddha's or Tathagata stupa's conical spire is comprised of thirteen piled umbrellas. Early non-figurative representations of the Buddha often depicted his footprints, throne, parasol, and Bodhi tree. Honor and respect are naturally represented by a parachute rising above the head. The myth claims that the king of the Nagas presented Buddha with an umbrella decorated with gold and jewel illuminating the realm of *chattra*, wonderfully tinkling bells, and a sapphire handle. In Vajrayana Buddhism, Buddha is frequently depicted with an intricate and huge umbrella (*atapatra*) that represents goddess *Sitatapatra* (Tib. *gdugs dkar*).

Buddhist descriptions of a thousand-spoked umbrella have a symbolic affinity to the Hindu thousand-petalled lotus (*Sahasrara Padma*) at the crown *chakra*, with its axle-pole representing the central channel. The Tibetan parasol is fashioned by a spoked wooden frame with a dome-shaped silk cover and suspending silk pendants or valances after the royal Indian and Chinese predecessors. Its purpose is to protect against the heat rather than the rain. In English, parasol and umbrella mean to hold off the sun and a little shade, respectively. The Sanskrit term *chattra* means mushroom, pointing towards the parasol's capped mushroom and stem shape (Hyytiäinen, 2008). A traditional Tibetan parasol's structure is comprised of a thin round timber frame with eight, sixteen, or thirty-two thin curving ribs. White, yellow, or multicolored silk passes through the center of a long wooden pillar ornamented with metal lotuses, vases, and gems from the circular edge of the frame silk and skirts with eight or sixteen silk pendants that are folded or pleated. The pendants are usually fashioned from folded silk brocade strips stitched together in a single (Geary & Shinde, 2021), double or triple valance design, and they hang to the same level as the pleated skirting. Parasols in the shapes of octagons and squares are also widely used. They symbolize the eight noble paths and four noble truths. A square parasol invariably crowns the sedan chair in which dignitaries and important lamas are carried in procession (McGirk, 1995). As they are spiritual leaders and representatives of the Tibetan people, they shall use both the material categories of the silk and peacock-feather parasols in their ritual ceremonial occasions.

## 2. The white conch shell (Skt. *shankha*: Tib. *dung dkar*)

Early Hinduism categorizes the conch into male and female. The male or *Purusha* is a thicker-shelled and globular-shaped conch and the female or *Shankhini*, a longer and thin-shelled conch. The fourfold caste division is also used as the classification criteria for

conches: the smooth white conch represents the *Brahmin* caste, the red conch the *Kshatriya* or warrior caste, the yellow conch the *Vaishya* or merchant caste, and the dull grey conch the *Shudra* or laborer caste (Haluwalia, 2021). Since time immemorial until nowadays, India's rare white conch shell has been used as the first horn trumpet in several necessary functions to send out the sound of victory.

The conch shell was chosen as a symbol of religious sovereignty and the truth of Dharma by Vedic Brahmanism and subsequently Buddhism. One of Buddha's thirty-two major signs is three conch-like curves on his throat representing Buddha's deep echoing voice. Conch shells can also be found on the feet, palms, arms, legs, chests, and foreheads of persons who have been favored by the gods. In the Himalayan region and on the Tibetan Plateau, ancient conch shells have also been discovered because this elevated area was once an ocean. The marine conch is a spiraling white shell with a thick crust and a wide frontal hole that belongs to the *Strombidea* species of gastropod mollusks (Liverani et al, 2021). The Vamavarta is a left-spiraling conch with a left-opening. The auspicious blowing horn is made by cutting off the tip of the right-spiraling white conch (Tib. *dung dkar g.yas'khyil*). As a Tibetan ritual instrument, the right-hand whirlwind thus generates a sound that symbolizes the proclamation of the Dharma (Weber, 2017). Usually, the conch shell used in a ritual must be decorated with a metal mouthpiece and a decorative metal casing in copper, bronze, silver, or gold. Conch shell earrings and finger rings are worn by certain *siddhas* or *yogins* as they are believed to possess astrological properties related to an affinity with the moon's planetary influence. The ears of elephants were frequently adorned with hanging conch-shell earrings, *shankhakila* or conch spikes. The Sanskrit word *kundala* means both earring and spiral coil, and is derived from the same root as *Kundalini*, the coiled serpent goddess.



3. The two golden fish (TGF) (Skt. *suvarnamatsya*; Tib. *gser-nya*)

The Sanskrit term *matsyayugma* means the pair of fish. It originates from the ancient pre-Buddhist symbols of India's two main sacred rivers, the Ganges and the Yamuna. The two golden fish symbolize the moon and the solar and the breathing rhythm alternating between inhalation and exhalation. In Buddhism, golden fish also symbolize happiness as they have complete freedom in the water. They represent fertility and abundance because they can reproduce quickly. The fish normally swim in pairs, and in China, the pair of fish signifies spousal loyalty. Fish are staple food in China, so a pair of fish is a traditional bridal present. The Hun word *yu* is a homophonic pun implying both fish and enormous wealth. Two golden fish are frequently represented as carp, which are revered in East Asia for their majesty, magnitude, and longevity.

At sacred lakes, such as Tsho Perna in northwest India, which is believed to be the birthplace of Padmasambhava, the giant golden carp eagerly accept food from the pilgrims' hands. The pair of fish is a common auspicious symbol found in the Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist tradition. In Buddhist art, the two golden fish represent mercy, congeniality, gregariousness, and compromise, but in Hinduism, they represent *yoni* or the female sexual organ.

4. The knot of eternity (KE) (Skt. *shrivatsa*; Tib. *dpal be'u*)

*Shrivatsa* is a Sanskrit word that means the Beloved Shri, the name given by Vishnu to Lakshmi. It is originally an eight looped knot, but it is generally transmitted in the form of an auspicious triangular sign or the majestic curl of Vishnu. Krishna is Vishnu's eighth incarnation or *avatara* who wears the Shrivastava on his chest. Vishnu's devotion is symbolized by Lakshmi's insignia on his heart because she is the goddess of wealth and fortune. This hair curl is

also known as *nanayavarta*, which means coil of bliss. It is shaped like a swastika or Greek hooked cross. The *naga* symbol, which depicts two or more entwined snakes forming an iconic knot shape, is another early Indian form of the unending knot. Buddha's infinite wisdom and compassion are symbolized by the eternal knot, which has no beginning or end. As a secular symbol, it represents the basic fact of life as continuity or dependent origination (*Paṭiccasamuppāda*).

The relevance of the knot is explained by the positive form of Tibetan belief. It is coherent between *mantra* and *yantra* with symbolic happiness, especially in the Tantric sect of Mahayana in the mid-age of Buddhism. The *nandyavarta*, based on the lunar *swastika*, is believed to lead to happiness and other positive emotions such as delight, comfortableness, joy, and exultation. With an S shape, as well as Indian and Chinese ideal remarks as Buddha, the symbol is mostly on the center of the chest of the Buddha images and often interlaces each other as a knot. In Chinese tradition and belief, the knot symbol represents longevity, love, care, harmony, and continuity. As a symbol of the Buddha's mind, it represents his endless compassion and wisdom, and in the controversy of Dhamma, it represents the knots of the twelve links of dependent origination or *Paṭiccasamuppāda*.

5. The vase of great treasures (VGT) (Skt. *nidhana kumbha*; Tib. *gter gyi bum pa*)

The vase of great treasures or the inexhaustible treasures, also known as the precious gold vase, is a replication of a typical Indian or Tibetan earthenware pot with a flat base, round body, narrow neck, and fluted top. A typical Tibetan treasure vase is an extremely ornate gold vase with lotus petal designs radiating from its various components and a single burning diamond or cluster of jewels projecting from the upper entrance.

The gold sacrificial vase (Tib. *gter chen po'i bum pa*) was adorned with a multitude of valuable gems. The vase of treasures, a symbol of wealth deities, must be decorated with a silk ornament from the Divine Realm around its neck, and have its mouth wrapped. It is sealed with the root of a wishing tree, which contains the water of immortality and yields a variety of valuable goods, and has the virtue of naturally occurring manifestation like a sacred vase of limitless treasures. Vases of prosperity are constantly put on temples and mountain trails, or buried at fountains to attract fortune and foster environmental harmony. The treasure vase, triple pennants, hanging tassels, banners, and flags are all depicted in the artwork. Three golden treasure vases support flagstaffs adorned with diamonds and draping silk valances in the upper half of the drawing. The triple pennant (Tib. *phan rtse*) insignia, hung above a treasure jar, is usually put above the outside wall in the geometric mandala arrangement, along with the victory banner and parasol, as an auspicious symbol. The three gems are the three *Yanas*, which represent the three aspects of body, speech, and thought; victory over the three kingdoms is represented by the triple pennant. On ritual objects like the Damaru, Khatvanga, trident, and triple banderole, triple pennants are frequently shown. When nine pennants are depicted, they may represent the nine *Yanas*. These comprise the three common *yanas* of the *shravaka*, *pratyekabuddha*, and *bodhisattva* (or Mahayana); the three outer *yanas* of *kriya*, *charya* and *yoga tantra*; and the three inner *yanas* of *anuttarayoga*, *mahayoga* and *atiyoga* (Kimura, 1978). A jeweled pole with two triple pennants, separated into nine colorful portions, is hanged in the first vase on the left. An intricate circular hanging banner of silk valances is seen in the second center design of a double-handled treasure vessel (Skt. *pataka*; Tib. *ba dan*). The dissolving point, sun and moon emblem, and the insignia of the triple-eyed gem, with four gold-mounted diamonds radiating below, crown the peak of this banner. A circular frieze of silk

valances hangs from this jeweled finial, with four groups of triple pennants radiating in four directions. Hanging diamonds strung on gold chains hang below the valances.

6. The victory banner (VB) (Skt. *dhvaja*; Tib. *rgyal mtshan*)

In Sanskrit, *Dhvaja* means flag, banner, ensign, or blazon. It is a victory banner or insignia (Mohapatra, 2020). The first victory flag was employed in ancient Indian battles as a military standard and on the chariots of famous soldiers. The victory banner is an ensign of the champion. Krishna's chariot had a garuda-topped banner, Arjuna's a monkey device, and Bhishma's a palm tree insignia. The *dhvaja*, also known as Shiva's banner, has a symbol of the lingam, or sign of his erect phallus as the giver of seed. The *dhvaja* was also the name given to the *khatvanga* (Surpi, 2021), a skull-topped staff carried by *Shaivite Kapalika* or skull-bearing ascetics. Early Buddhism embraced the victory banner as a symbol of enlightenment and Buddha's victory over the devil's army full of demon warriors wearing their *dhvaja* insignia. The flag of victory is thought to symbolize the eleven techniques of eliminating defilement in Tibetan Buddhism. The Buddha's teachings lead to the growth of knowledge, wisdom, compassion, meditation, and ethical vows, the abandonment of false, beliefs and spiritual ambition, skill, and sacrifice, and the oneness of the three meditations. A list of eleven distinct variants of the victory banner is described in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition as having the power to prevail over the evil. The *dhvaja* was used as a military standard or banner in ancient Indian battles and many of them were designed to terrorize the adversary. The *Makara* is a victory banner comprised of several figures, such as crocodile, tiger, wolf, otter, goose, cat, peacock, frog, snake, scorpion, and tortoise (Tadvalkar, 2015). An early Buddhist emblem is in the ornamentation of the stupa where four *Makaradhvajās* are placed in the four directions to symbolize Buddha's victory over the four *Maras*. The four *Maras* (Skt. *chaturmara*; Tib. *bdud bzhi*) are the demons, namely the *Mara* of five aggregates (Skt. *skandhamara*; Tib. *phung po' i bdud*);

the *Mara* of emotional defilements (Skt. *kleshamara*; Tib. *nyong mongs pa'i bdud*); the *Mara* of death (Skt. *mirtyumara*; Tib. *chi bdag gi bdud*); and the *Mara* of divine pride and lust (Skt. *devaputramara*; Tib. *lha'i bu' i bdud*) or the demon of desire and temptation (Robert, 2003, p. 13).

The victory banner is supposed to be raised at top of Mount Meru. In terms of the mandala, this represents the Buddha's victory over the entire universe. An early form of the Mount Meru's victory banner of the ten directions is described as a triple pennant. The crescent moon and sun are at the peak of this victory banner's jeweled handle. The triple pennant is made of colored silk and carries the symbols of the three victorious creatures of harmony. It hangs below the crescent moon's jeweled support. *Dhvaja* is considered an attribute of several deities in Vajrayana Buddhism, particularly Vaishravana (Tib. *nam thos sras*) and the great protector king of the north. Vaishravana is associated with Kubera, the *yaksha* spirits's monarch, as a wealth deity, whose warlike form carries a victory banner and a jewel-spitting mongoose symbolizing the acquisition of wealth through victory. Vaishravana's secret form wields a victory banner fashioned from a tiger's head and skin. As a symbol of triumph over fury and hostility, a tiger skin apron is usually included in victory banners. In Buddhist ceremonies in Tibet, flags are typically fashioned of cylindrical wooden handles embellished with small, jeweled parasols and vertically adorned with layers of silk curtains, colorful cloth strips, jeweled ornaments, and silk scarf. The traditional triangular copper tip is hammered on the top of pillars and the victory banner into the monastery's four corners and the temple's roof to signify the Buddha's triumphant *dharma* that extends to all four directions and his victory over the four devils. A succession of hanging aprons of beaten metal descends from the parasol, ringed by *repousse* nets of hanging diamonds on the roofs of protector chapels or tiny temples. In the Nyingma or Bon traditions, a little victory sign hanging with black silk from a smacked copper frame and a trident is also on exhibit regularly.

## 7. The lotus flower (LF) (Skt. *padma*; Tib. *pad rna*; *chuskyes*)

The lotus blossom is an emblem of beauty, love, and compassion. It displays its beauty and aroma, attracting and nourishing bees to make honey. Tibetan art is full of flowers motifs (Wang, 2021) which surround deities and bloom widely on the landscape as symbols of the heavenly realms. In the traditional arts of China and Tibet, the chrysanthemum represents autumn, the plum bloom winter, the peony spring, and the lotus summer. Stylizations of these four flower motifs are also used in the Tibetan art. They result in various hybrid forms of leaves and flowers that look like an artistic rather than a botanical representation (Tin, Anh, & Thien, 2021). The five lotus varieties are also symbolic representations of various flowers, including daisies, pomegranates, hollyhocks, jasmines, poppies, gardenia, wild rose, saffron, oranges blossoms, peach blossoms, plum blossoms, and magnolias. The exotic Indian flower species are all popular flowers that inspire visionary innovation such as the wild orchid, *ashoka*, coral, white and yellow *champaka*, or frangipani. Small Tibetan alpine flowers, such as the blue Himalayan poppy, safflower, and flower of Tara, are also painted as meadow flowers. Affiliations with specific flowers are also assigned to some deities. The goddess Vajravarahi, for example, wears a red *karavira* (oleander) flower garland around her neck, which was traditionally worn by a deceased king. Flowers of the white *champaka* or *naga* (*nagakesara*) tree are an attribute of Maitreya. The delicate flowers of the *udumbara* or glamorous fig tree, and the blue *utpala* lotus, are attributes of many deities such as Tara and Avalokiteshvara.

The pink lotus (*padma*) is the most common hand-held lotus, but lotus of other colors such as scarlet (*kamala*), white (*pundarika*), and blue (*utpala*) are also available. A single leafed stem is held between the fingers of a deity or a lama to support hand-held lotuses. Just below the lotus root, this stem splits into three. The fully blossoming lotus is on

the center stem, a fruit with abandoned leaves on the right stem, and an unopened bud on the left stem. These three stems represent the Buddhas of the three times: the fruit of the past (*Dipankara*), the open blossom of the present (*Shakya*), and the potential bud of the future (*Maitreya*). Flowers, clouds, water, rocks, and sky are typically shaded with meticulous gradations in a skillfully painted thangka. Long periods are required to achieve the most delicate shading of these components. If a painted flower has been shaded a hundred times, it is thought to be perfect.

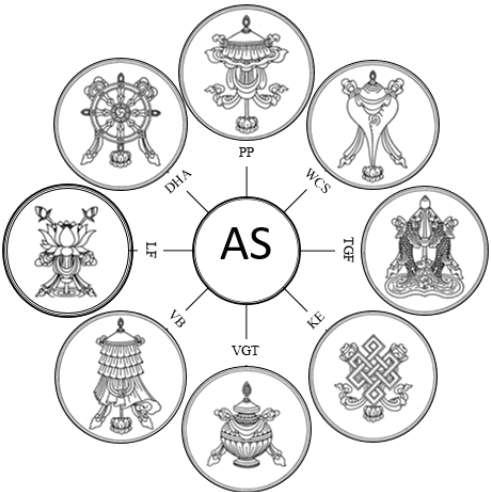
#### 8. The Dharmachakra (DHA) (Skt. *chakra*; Tib. '*khor-lo*)

The wheel represents creation, sovereignty, protection, and the sun in ancient Indian culture. It first appears as a solar symbol on clay seals discovered at early Indus Valley or Harappan archaeological site. The six-spoked wheel, known as *Sudarshana Chakra* in Vedic Hinduism (Mitkari, 2019), is Vishnu's major attribute. It compares Vishnu to the sun and the central hub around which the phenomenal universe's wheel of creation and preservation revolves. The wheel, like the revolving wheel of the sky, depicts mobility, continuity, and change that always move forward. A wheel of Indian sharp blades was rolled into the enemy's lines, slung on a rope as a violent rotating weapon, or flung like a discus as an ancient Indian weapon. The radiating poles of a cart or chariot wheels and the blades of the wheels are made of six, eight, or twelve spokes.

Buddhism utilizes the wheel as a symbol of the Buddha's teachings and refers to it as a *Dharma Chakra* or The Wheel of Dharma. *Chakravatin* or spinning the wheel represents an ability to cut through all obstacles and illusions. *Dharmachakra* (Tib. *chos kyi 'khor-lo*) means the wheel of dharma or wheel of spiritual transformation in Tibetan. The wheel's dynamic rotation mirrors the rapid spiritual transformation revealed through Buddha's teachings. It also symbolizes the rotating weapon of change (Le, 2021) that destroys the devil,

especially one of human minds such as desire, passion, libido, and lust. In addition, it represents the conquest of all obstacles and deceptions. Buddha’s first discourse was the first turning of the wheel of dharma, revealing *dharma* of the Four Noble Truths, which include the reality of suffering, its origin, and its end as well as the truth of the Noble Eightfold Path, which leads to the cessation of suffering. His subsequent discourses at *Rajghir* and *Shravasti* are the second and third turnings of the wheel of *dharma*. The center of the wheel symbolizes moral discipline, the spokes analytical insight, and the rim contemplative concentration. The Buddha’s Noble Eightfold Path of the Aryas or virtuous creatures, which encompasses appropriate knowledge, thought, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and concentration, as well as the eight directions, is represented by the eight prongs (Figure 6).

**Figure 6**  
The Tibetan Eight Auspicious Symbols



Note: Reprinted from Beer, R. (1999). *The Encyclopedia of Tibetan Symbols and Motifs*. Shambala Publications.



## Conclusion

This paper aims to describe and analyze the Art and Ashtamangala in Tibetan culture by looking at several pieces of historical and spiritual art. All of the arts and crafts have been influenced by the religious root that has long been integrated to the Tibetan minority's lifestyle. This can be seen in the Tibetan Buddhist artefact such as the thangka, and the religious practices, sacred rite, palace, painting, woodwork, and metalwork.

The Ashtamangala, originating in the Buddhist background that illustrates Buddha's life and his teaching, merged into Tibetan life as an element of their spiritual part. The secular and ritual ceremony directly influences the enlightenment in life. Ashtamangala points to the know-how as hornet signs linking Buddha, Deva, and human beings. It may suggest a belief in the supreme power of god and an ideology for happiness of both the present and the after- death world, or even reincarnation within Samsara until nirvana.

The Ashtamangala is used in custom or dressing and sacred items such as crowns, rings, necklaces, staffs, potteries, thrones, mirror frames, banners, lamps, and palace ornaments. Tibetan Buddhists employ the Ashtamangala in their household and public art. Although various sources may describe the symbols differently, the overall explanation can be summarized as follows: the parasol, white conch shell, two golden fish, treasure vase, victory banner, lotus symbol, and *dharmachakra*.

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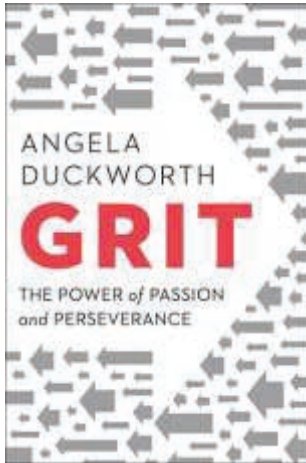
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## Book Review

### Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance



Written by: Angela Duckworth

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Angela Duckworth is a well-known professor and psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania who applies psychology to live up other people's lives, especially children. Duckworth is also the co-founder of Character Lab, an organization whose chief goal is to further advance the practice and science of character development for children. Before her academic career, she was a management

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consultant at McKinsey & Company. *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance* is her first book, containing 13 chapters and divided into three parts. Many illuminating ideas are discussed and reinforced with narratives and personal insights.

## **Part I: What Grit Is and Why It Matters**

Duckworth discusses straightforwardly her main thesis on grit as the key to success in any undertaking. She emphasizes that the concept cuts across different fields like education, military, work, contests, sports, etc. Here, the author defines grit as “perseverance and passion for long-term goals.” She then highlights how imperative grit is in one’s life since it determines one’s destiny. Interestingly, she points out that, as manifested in many of her studies, grit is a better determiner of success in life than IQ.

Backed up by research, Duckworth contends that whenever we think that a student is talented, we start to pay special attention to them and expect more from them. We tend to want them to be excellent, and that expectation can turn into a self-fulfilling prophecy. To elaborate, adults have this kind of natural liking to, for instance, shows that feature talented kids like *The Voice Kids*, *MasterChef Junior*, and *Little Big Shots*. No wonder adults prefer kids who are endowed with brilliance.

The same is true in the field of education. Teachers might not notice that they favor immediately the students who are intelligent, talented, and can easily pick up lessons. Though it seemingly is not harmful, this bias which is not known at the conscious level of a teacher can negatively impact the striving students. When we do not become aware of this, the gap between the talented and the striving becomes wider and wider.



If we put further attention to the brilliant ones and expect the striving ones to be mediocre or fail, then we are becoming unfair to them. The two types of students deserve justifiable attention and expectations to succeed. Whether a student starts as fair or excellent in a taught skill, he or she should never be left behind. This discovery and other psychological research should be made known to teachers to prevent problems in teaching and other educational innovations.

Furthermore, Duckworth proposes that something that is never natural can become second nature simply by doing it over and over. Nowadays, we commonly discount grit. We would rather avoid hard work if there is a shortcut. We want an easy way and desire immediate achievements. We do not want to delay our gratification. This can probably be traced to the fact that we live in a society where almost everything is instant.

If a student without grit focuses on getting high grades in grammar, he or she will abhor rigorous practice and rely on stress-free means like cheating on a test. The student may be gratified at the moment he or she achieves higher grades, but surely this will create repercussions in the future. We need to teach everyone, most especially students, to value grit by telling them that all talented and expert people today practice over and over. They may, at times, fail, but they did not surrender and still go through the process of improving themselves. Manifesting this virtue is crucial if we truly want to become skillful. Becoming aware of such matters can positively impact their view on learning and their learning habits.

## **Part II: Growing Grit from the Inside Out**

Substantiated by a longitudinal study, Duckworth's suggestion shows that the overbearing faculty and parents deter children's inherent drive. On the other hand, children whose parents

allow them to choose whatever they want would most likely cultivate interests, which they later identify as passion. When children become interested in a certain play, game, or subject, they focus their whole attention on it and enjoy the process. Parents must value such autonomy.

If parents always interrupt choices made by children and assert their own predilections, they then smother their children's budding interests. Though parents may sincerely think of the welfare of their children, such intrusion might negatively affect them as their children will not be able to explore and harness their curiosity on their own.

Parents, therefore, should support their children in the games and subjects they like by providing them with resources that will advance their skills and knowledge. Teachers and school administrators should realize this too. They must do the same by not spoon-feeding and imposing clubs and activities on students. In this way, education is personalized and shaped in accordance to students' penchants which, hopefully, may foster their dazzling talents and skills.

Duckworth reinforces the insights of two prominent psychologists who study the development of children. According to Bodrova and Leong (2006), children would get to learn the adults' responses, such as frowning and flushing of cheeks, when they themselves create mistakes. Through such responses, adults teach children the concept of embarrassment and shame. They might also unwittingly teach children negative things such as viewing mistakes as noxiously bad, and this is perhaps due to ignorance or lack of awareness on the part of the adults.

Therefore, adults need to radically improve themselves before engaging in the noble profession of teaching. When teachers do not become aware that their actions influence the thinking of students,

otherwise known as implicit curriculum in the jargon of educational studies, the latter's self-esteem and perception of learning might be in jeopardy. Teachers must learn to rectify the errors in learning calmly and without negative reactions. Such acknowledgment may affect education as a whole.

### **Part III: Growing Grit from the Outside In**

Duckworth also recommends that if one wants to be grittier, he or she must find a group with a gritty culture. If one wants a gritty organization, its leaders should strive to create such gritty culture first. Environment plays an immense role in the education of any individual as we are social creatures and learn immediately from our surroundings. It is inherent that we easily absorb the actions and nuances of social interactions.

Leaders, teachers, and administrators should understand this. This invisible force, also known as culture, is a way of life at school: it can result in the success or failure of students and the school in general. Therefore, the latter should be aware of the prevailing culture at school and make necessary interventions when they see an aspect that is damaging to the organizational welfare and should, at the same time, reinforce the strengths that make it grittier. The task of making the school grittier lies in its leaders. They should deliberately devise ways to realize it and make sure that they start them. Culture is transmissible. So, it will surely reach students and other school stakeholders.

Duckworth also issues a caution: people with grit know the alluring charms of complacency, but none should be worth swapping in exchange for achieving potential. We adults must recognize that grit, as Duckworth emphasizes, is a tool for success. It is not easy since the world lures us with habitual comfort and brain vegetation put forward by easy access to almost anything. If it is hard, then we tend to easily give up. We want to instantly be gratified.

We mythologize those who are successful and increasingly become passive. We think that they succeed because they are inherently gifted and talented. After all, we only see their achievements and not the matters behind the screen such as their sacrifices and their repetitive practices. Adults, particularly those working in the field of education, should debunk this fallacy. If teachers create a gritty culture in educational institutions, students will work on their capacities, fueled by discipline and an intense desire to be the best version of themselves. Teachers and school administrators, thus, must help their students to acquire a laser-like focus on learning a skill or knowledge. No matter how complicated it is, when broken down and coupled with grit, everything can be learned.

## **Conclusion**

Though the main thesis of this book is novel since many authors already talked about similar topics before (e.g., Marshall, 2006; Mischel, 2006), Duckworth makes it compelling because she supports it with her research and scientific undertakings of others. She also infuses it with vivid narratives and examples that further strengthen her proposition. Commendable are the lessons garnered from this book, which can cut across various disciplines, but, most importantly, in the arena of education.

It is helpful if we also make use of psychological findings from this book. For teachers, it can help them plan and set up strategies to promote grit in their teaching, so that they can provide students with meaningful learning experiences. For students, it encourages them to focus on grit rather than grades because grit is more beneficial to them in a long run. For school administrators, this book can empower them to deliberately improve the school culture, to make it grittier to produce graduates who can keep pace with the 21<sup>st</sup>-century world. Last but not least, this book is also helpful to everyone who works with children and youth.

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