A Needs Analysis of English for Hospitality among Accommodation Service Providers in Khanom District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province.

Jittima Choopun[1], Supornphan Konchiab[2*], Supacha Kongmuang[3] and Natnalin Srikhiew[4]

[1] College of Industrial Technology and Management, RUTS, Nakhon Si Thammarat
[2] Faculty of Business Administration and Liberal Arts, RMUTL, Chiang Mai
[3] College of Industrial Technology and Management, RUTS, Nakhon Si Thammarat
[4] College of Industrial Technology and Management, RUTS, Nakhon Si Thammarat
[*] Email: supornphan@rmutl.ac.th

Received *September 29, 2025* ***Revised*** *June 23, 2026* ***Accepted*** *June 30, 2026*

Abstract

This qualitative study examined English communication needs of accommodation service providers in Khanom District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province. The objectives were to: (1) examine the importance of English communication in accommodation services; (2) identify communication challenges and coping strategies used by accommodation service providers; and (3) propose practical implications for English for Hospitality training. The participants were 20 accommodation service providers purposively selected from hotels, resorts, and pool villas in Khanom District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province. The group consisted of 18 accommodation service providers and 2 owners who were directly involved in guest services. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using qualitative content analysis. The findings revealed that English was essential for daily service encounters, particularly in front office tasks such as reservations, check-ins, check-outs, and providing information to international guests. The main communication challenges were understanding diverse English accents and using job-specific vocabulary. To cope with these challenges, participants used translation applications, self-directed learning, vocabulary recording, and workplace-based practice. The findings also showed a need for practical, flexible, and task-based English training that focuses on service communication, hospitality vocabulary, nonverbal communication, and local tourism information. A blended training format combining online courses with printed handbooks was recommended to accommodate irregular work shifts. This study suggests that English training for hospitality staff, developed from a needs analysis, can help improve staff confidence, service quality, and the competitiveness of emerging tourism destinations.

Keywords: English for Hospitality, Needs Analysis, Accommodation Service Providers, Hospitality Staff, Training Implications

Introduction

Tourism is one of Thailand's leading economic sectors, attracting approximately 35.5 million international visitors in 2024 (Department of Tourism and Sports, 2024). The country's rich cultural diversity, natural attractions, renowned cuisine, and warm hospitality continue to drive the expansion of hotels and service-related businesses. Within this context, English communication has become a key requirement for hospitality staff, as it directly influences service quality and customer satisfaction. Proficient English communication not only allows staff to interact more effectively with guests but also contributes to visitor satisfaction and repeat business (Akram, 2024).

Despite the overall growth in tourism, a persistent challenge remains. Pinsirikul et al., (2023) found that hotel employees frequently encounter English communication difficulties, especially in listening and speaking, which affect smooth interactions with international guests. Similarly, according to Rattanapong et al. (2021), many hospitality staff lack sufficient English proficiency, which can hinder communication with foreign guests and affect service quality.

Addressing this gap needs English training programs designed to meet the practical demands of hospitality work. Perhaps, ongoing language development and communication training for tourism staff can be part of the solution to improve their English proficiency and service performance (Pinsirikul, et al. 2023). Therefore, a systematic needs analysis is crucial, as it identifies the skills most essential for staff, the problems they encounter, and the strategies that can inform the design of training programs for industry needs.

Khanom District in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province exemplifies these dynamics. Recognized as one of Southern Thailand's emerging tourism destinations, there are around 500,000 visitors annually, with international arrivals steadily increasing. Its attractions are marine tourism (e.g., pink dolphin watching, beach activities), eco-tourism (e.g., firefly watching, mangrove visiting, waterfalls, caves, and national forests), and cultural tourism (e.g., the Coral Pagoda Cloth Offering and rituals honoring Luang Pu Thuat). This growth has been accompanied

by an expansion of the hospitality sector, ranging from budget accommodations to luxury pool villas. However, like many local destinations, Khanom District faces the challenge of ensuring that its hospitality workforce, particularly frontline staff, possesses the English communication skills necessary to serve more diverse guests effectively.

As mentioned earlier, tourism plays an important role in Thailand's economy. As the tourism and hospitality sectors continue to expand, English communication has become essential for hospitality staff, particularly when providing services to international guests. Effective English communication can improve service quality, guest satisfaction, and the image of tourism businesses. However, many hospitality staff encounter difficulties in using English, which may affect their ability to communicate with foreign guests and deliver quality service. This issue is particularly relevant to emerging tourism destinations such as Khanom District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province. As the number of international tourists increases, hospitality staff are expected to use English in various real-life service situations.

Meanwhile, limited published research has examined English communication needs and problems of hospitality staff in Khanom District. Without a clear understanding of their actual needs, English training programs may not fully respond to the practical communication demands of the local hospitality context. The findings are expected to provide a basis for developing an English communication training program that can enhance staff confidence, service quality, and the competitiveness of this emerging tourism destination.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study were to:

1. examine the importance of English communication for accommodation service providers in Khanom District;
2. identify the English communication challenges and coping strategies used by accommodation service providers; and
3. propose practical implications for English for Hospitality training based on the needs of the local accommodation sector.

Literature Review

1. English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a branch of applied linguistics that emphasizes the design of language instruction according to learners' needs in academic, occupational, and professional contexts. Rather than focusing on general

language ability. ESP prioritizes the alignment of course content, teaching methodology, learning materials, and assessment with the communicative demands of particular disciplines or workplaces (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998).

English for Specific Purposes has been classified into several areas, including English for Academic Purposes (EAP), English for Occupational Purposes (EOP), English for Vocational Purposes (EVP), English for Science and Technology (EST), and English for Medical Purposes (EMP), depending on learners' target contexts and purposes for using English (Prodanovska-Poposka, 2022).

2. English for Tourism Purposes (ETP)

English for Tourism Purposes (ETP) and English for Hospitality Purposes (EHP) have become important subfields of ESP due to the continued growth of global tourism and service industries. These areas are context-based because learners are expected to use English in real service encounters, such as welcoming guests, giving information, handling requests, responding to complaints, and providing travel-related assistance. Therefore, ETP and EHP require not only general communicative competence but also mastery of tourism-related discourse, guest-host interaction patterns, polite service expressions, and specific vocabulary.

Lin et al. (2013) proposed an ESP curriculum for hospitality and tourism that included key professional areas such as Food and Beverage, Hotel Services, Air Flight Services, and Tour Guiding, demonstrating the need to design English courses around authentic workplace functions. More recently, Hsu et al. (2025) explored the use of an augmented reality (AR)-assisted learning environment for tourism English and found that technology-enhanced, task-based learning involving simulated guest interactions could improve learners' speaking and listening abilities in tourism contexts.

These findings suggest that ETP and EHP courses should be practical, interactive, and grounded in authentic communicative situations in order to prepare learners effectively for professional roles in tourism and hospitality.

3. Needs Analysis in ESP Course Design

Needs analysis is regarded as a basic stage in ESP curriculum development because it ensures that language instruction is directly connected to learners' real-world communicative requirements. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) classified learner needs into three categories: necessities, or what learners must know in order to function effectively

in the target situation; lacks, or the gap between learners' current proficiency and the required competence; and wants, or learners' own perceived needs and preferences. Through the identification of necessities, lacks, and wants, teachers and course designers can determine which language skills, vocabulary, tasks, and situations should be prioritized in instruction. In this sense, needs analysis serves as a basis for designing practical ESP courses, selecting relevant materials, and developing workplace-oriented learning activities (Wongkittiporn, 2024).

Previous studies in tourism and hospitality contexts have consistently shown that English communication needs are closely related to actual service tasks and workplace interactions. Putri et al. (2022), investigated English needs of hotel employees and found that the most important language functions included providing service, giving information, and offering help, while spoken communication was reported as the most challenging area. Similarly, Thi and Cheng (2024) examined the opinions of hotel and vocational school stakeholders and reported that speaking and listening were the most essential skills for guest interaction, cross-cultural communication, and service delivery. Their study also indicated that fast speech, unfamiliar accents, and hospitality-specific vocabulary were major communication problems for learners and service staff.

In addition, Namtapi (2022) studied English needs of tourism personnel and found that essential communicative tasks included greeting guests, giving directions, providing information, and offering or requesting help. The study also identified several communication challenges, including difficulty understanding foreign accents, limited vocabulary, grammar knowledge, and cross-cultural awareness. Based on these findings, Namtapi (2022) recommended that English training for tourism personnel should emphasize listening practice with diverse accents, hospitality-specific vocabulary, and cultural information. Likewise, Jantawong et al. (2023) studied tourism staff and found that although reading and writing also created difficulties in communication with tourists, staff prioritized listening and speaking skills because these were considered the most critical skills for effective service encounters. These studies highlight what English language skills are most needed to ensure effective service and guest satisfaction. Following this, focusing on how training can be designed to support the communicative demands of the hospitality business.

Although previous studies on English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and

English for Tourism Purposes (ETP) have emphasized the importance of designing English instruction based on learners' real needs and workplace contexts, most have focused on major tourist destinations, large hotels, or formal educational settings. Limited research has examined English communication needs in smaller and emerging tourism destinations such as Khanom District, where tourism services are diverse and locally based. This study addresses this gap by investigating the English needs, challenges, and proposing training formats of tourism and hospitality staff in Khanom District. The findings can be used to develop a locally relevant English for Hospitality training course that improves staff confidence and service quality.

Research methodology

1. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore the English communication needs of accommodation service providers in Khanom District. A qualitative approach was appropriate because the study aimed to obtain in-depth information about participants' experiences, communication problems, coping strategies, and training preferences.

2. Participants

The participants comprised 18 accommodation service providers from hotels, resorts, and pool villas, as well as two pool villa owners in Khanom District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province. Most participants were between 21 and 30 years old and had two to three years of experience in accommodation services, while nearly half had four to five years of experience. Their English proficiency was self-assessed as moderate.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their direct experience in communicating with guests, as well as their availability and willingness to participate. The service staff were primarily responsible for guest-facing tasks, including reservations, check-ins, check-outs, providing information, and responding to guest requests. The two pool villa owners were also included because they were directly involved in daily service communication and staff development within small accommodation businesses. These work responsibilities require practical English communication skills that can be applied in real hospitality service situations.

3. Research instruments

This study employed a semi-structured interview for data collection. The questions were open-ended and aimed to gather information about

participants' English language skills needs and training preferences. The main topics included the importance of English in accommodation services, problems in communication and solving strategies, training experience, preferred English for Hospitality training content, format, duration, and other suggestions. The questions were reviewed by three experts in English language teaching and curriculum design to ensure content validity and appropriateness.

4. Data collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 20 participants. The interviews were conducted in Thai to allow participants to express their experiences clearly and naturally. With participants' consent, the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for qualitative analysis.

5. Data analysis

The data were analyzed through qualitative content analysis. First, the interview transcripts were read repeatedly to gain an overall understanding of the data. Second, statements related to English use, communication problems, coping strategies, and training preferences were identified and coded. Third, similar codes were grouped into broader categories. Fourth, the categories were developed into themes corresponding to the research objectives. The main themes were: (1) the importance of English communication in accommodation services; (2) English communication challenges and coping strategies; and (3) preferences for English for Hospitality training. To enhance trustworthiness, the themes were checked against the interview data, and representative quotations were selected to support the findings. To protect participants' confidentiality, pseudonyms such as Wanisa, Sawitree, and Jenjira were used when quoting individual responses.

Research Results

Finding 1: The importance of English language skills for accommodation service providers

The participants consistently emphasized that English communication was important for accommodation services, particularly in interactions with international guests. As Kiat, the pool villa owner pointed out *"Guests come from different countries, so English is very important for communicating with them".*

English was frequently used in front office tasks, including reservations, check-ins, check-outs, giving information about rooms and facilities, answering questions, and responding to guest requests. Frontline roles such as reception required particular proficiency, with Jenjira emphasizing that

"*English is needed everywhere in the resort, especially at the front desk*". Participants also reported that English was used more often during the high tourist season. As Wanisa noted, "*During the high season, I have to use English every day, especially when foreign guests come to stay"*.

Listening and speaking were identified as the most important skills because most service encounters required immediate oral communication. As Sawitree, stated, "*Here we use English a lot. Most staff can speak it*". Although participants reported that they could usually manage simple and routine conversations, they still needed further improvement to communicate more confidently. As Wanisa, explained, "*We use English every day, but in hotels it's more for the job. I pick it up from working and learning by myself. Writing? Not really important. What we need is English for real talking with guests*".

The findings indicate that English is an essential skill for accommodation service providers, particularly in guest-facing roles where staff must communicate directly with international guests. Although participants were able to use English for simple and routine tasks, their responses suggest a need to further develop practical English for Hospitality, especially listening and speaking skills used in real service encounters. Therefore, improving English for Hospitality should focus on workplace-based communication that reflects the actual duties and situations experienced by accommodation service providers.

Finding 2: English communication challenges, coping, and learning strategies

Although most participants were able to communicate in English, they reported several communication challenges. The most common difficulty was understanding different English accents, as Anong admitted, *"I can speak some English, but sometimes I don't understand guests, especially with strange accents."* Another major challenge was limited hospitality-specific vocabulary. As Kewalin explained, *"I don't know enough specific vocabulary used in hotel work."*

To cope with these communication problems, participants reported using both coping and learning strategies. The most common strategy was the use of translation applications, especially Google Translate. For example, Chunya explained, *"If I don't understand, I just use Google Translate and show the translation to the guest".* Similarly, Kewalin stated, *"When I meet guests who don't use English, like French, Spanish, Russian or Israeli tourists, I solve the communication problem by using a translation application".* The

widespread reliance on these tools was also reflected in Anong's response, *"In the resort we use English in all situations, in every department. Some staff can speak, but sometimes we can't really catch what guests are saying. If there's a problem, we just use the phone translator. The main goal is to improve English so we can serve guests better."* In addition, Ball, the pool villa owner noted "*When we have communication problems, we should use our phones to help or showing pictures to make things clearer*". These responses show that technology plays an important role in helping staff manage multilingual communication in real service situations.

Participants also used self-directed learning strategies to improve their English. They searched for English content online, wrote down useful vocabulary, memorized frequently used expressions, and learned from repeated workplace interactions. As Saowanee noted, *"I try to improve myself when I have free time. I usually look up content on the internet, write down the vocabulary, and memorize it. Most of the words are ones I use again and again."* These strategies demonstrate that participants were motivated to improve their communication skills despite irregular schedules and limited access to formal training. This is supported by the opinion of the pool villa owner, as Kiat pointed out "*Staff should practice English all the time because it is the language they need to use in their job, especially when serving foreign guests*."

Finding 3 Preferences of English for hospitality course or training program

The participants expressed positive views about their previous English training experiences and demonstrated strong interest in continuing such programs on a regular basis. Prangthip emphasized the practical benefits of past training, stating, "*I joined training before and it was really good. I could use it in my work right away. I'd like training every month, or maybe every three months*". Jenjira also suggested that training should not be limited to front office staff, stating that "*housekeeping and kitchen staff should also get training*."

In terms of the training content, participants noted that English training should be practical and directly applicable to their daily work, with a focus on business and hospitality vocabulary, service communication, giving local tourism information, asking for guest information, offering assistance, and nonverbal communication. As Kewalin noted, "*I think the training should include business vocabulary and service communication*," while Prangthip added, "*The training I really need is service communication, because I can actually use it in my work*".

They also stressed the importance of nonverbal communication, with Kewalin suggesting, "*In my opinion, the training should also include gestures. If I can use gestures with speaking, it will feel more natural and make communication easier*".

Participants also wanted training that included local tourism information because accommodation staff are often asked to recommend attractions, transportation, and nearby destinations. Nantiya stated, "*I'd like more practice in giving service information, like recommending tourist attractions or offering to help guests get to other places, for example, Koh Samui.*" This indicates that English for Hospitality training in Khanom District should include not only hotel language but also destination-related communication.

In terms of training format, participants preferred flexible options that could accommodate shift work. Online training was considered convenient because staff could learn without leaving the workplace. Kiat noted "*I prefer online training because it does not interrupt work, especially for small resorts with only a few staff*". Nantiya remarked, *"I prefer online training because it's more convenient, and it should focus on communication,"* while Anong added, "*If staff have to attend onsite training, it may not be practical. In resorts we don't have much free time and can't set a fixed schedule*". However, participants also accepted that online training alone might not be sufficient. Many preferred printed handbooks as reference materials. Saowanee explained, "*Training sessions are not very convenient since we work in shifts. I'd rather have a handbook, because after training I might not remember everything*". Similarly, Kewalin noted, "*I'd like to join training and also have a handbook*". Echoing this view, Jenjira, Kewalin, and Chunya agreed that they wanted a handbook they could study whenever needed.

Furthermore, regarding training schedule, participants pointed out that opportunities to attend training were often limited because of heavy workloads in resorts. To address this, they suggested scheduling training sessions during the low tourist season, when staff have greater flexibility. As Wanisa explained, "*There are very few chances for staff to attend training. The best time might be during the low season*". Participants also suggested regular training once a month or every three months, with staff taking turns attending. As Prangthip proposed, "*I'd like training once a month or every three months. It would be good if staff could take turns attending*". This is supported by

the pool villa owner, Ball stated, "*Due to work schedules, staff may not be able to attend several days of training. Therefore, self-study would be a more practical way for them to improve their English*". Overall, the findings suggest that an appropriate English for Hospitality training program should be practical, workplace-based, flexible, blended, and inclusive of staff across departments.

Discussion

1. Importance of English language skills for accommodation service providers and hospitality

The findings confirm that English communication is not a supplementary skill but a core professional requirement for accommodation service providers in Khanom District. Participants used English daily in front office tasks such as reservations, check-ins, check-outs, and providing service information, with usage becoming more frequent during the high tourist season. This finding is consistent with Rahayu et al. (2021), who demonstrated that hotel staff across departments (e.g., front office, housekeeping, and food and beverage) depend on continuous English use to ensure smooth and effective guest services. Similarly, Rattanapong et al. (2021) found that accommodation staff in Prachuap Khiri Khan required high levels of English proficiency to maintain service quality standards. In addition, Akram (2024) and Tiansoodeenon et al. (2023) both emphasized that English proficiency functions as a prerequisite for effective guest interaction in the tourism industry, directly influencing guests' perceptions of service quality and overall satisfaction. Together, these studies indicate that when staff are unable to respond to guest requests accurately and politely, service quality may be affected regardless of other operational strengths.

Listening and speaking skills are essential for enabling accommodation service providers to respond promptly and appropriately in real-time service situations. The participants regarded these two skills as the most important and frequently needed because most guest interactions occur through direct oral communication. In face-to-face encounters, staff must be able to understand guests' questions, requests, accents, and concerns quickly, and then provide clear, polite, and accurate responses. This is consistent with Wongkittiporn (2024), who identifies oral interaction as the primary communicative mode among frontline service staff. Thus, the English needed in accommodation services goes beyond basic conversational ability. It involves contextualized and task-

specific oral communication, such as confirming reservations, explaining facilities, giving directions, handling complaints, and responding to unexpected guest needs. However, while participants could manage routine service encounters, they tended to face difficulties when dealing with unfamiliar accents and limited hospitality-specific vocabulary. These challenges indicate the need to improve practical listening and speaking skills that reflect authentic workplace communication.

2. English communication challenges coping, and learning strategies

Although many participants reported a moderate level of English proficiency, the communication challenges they faced were not simply related to overall language ability. Rather, these difficulties reflected a gap between general English knowledge and the specific communicative demands of accommodation work. Two major challenges faced by accommodation service providers were understanding diverse English accents and using hospitality-specific vocabulary in real-time service situations. These problems were most noticeable when staff had to respond immediately to guest requests, explain hotel services and facilities, give information about local attractions, or provide transportation details under time pressure.

Accent comprehension was a particularly significant challenge because Khanom District receives international visitors from a wide range of linguistic backgrounds, and staff cannot rely on familiarity with only one variety of English. This finding is consistent with previous studies that identified listening comprehension and pronunciation variation as common difficulties among tourism and hospitality staff (Namtapi, 2022; Pinsirikul et al., 2023; Rattanapong et al., 2021). The vocabulary gaps were also task-specific rather than general, suggesting that their difficulties reflected an unmet need for domain-specific language development rather than low overall proficiency. It can be said that general English training is not sufficient preparation for hospitality work, and that language development in this context must be grounded in authentic occupational situations (Jenkins, 2007; Matsuda, 2003).

The most common coping strategy reported by participants was the use of translation applications such as Google Translate, particularly when communication broke down in multilingual encounters involving guests who did not use English as their first language. This reflects a growing trend in the hospitality

industry, where digital and AI-supported translation tools are increasingly used to reduce language barriers (Kumawat et al., 2025; Rancati et al., 2025). While these tools provide a practical solution in some situations, it is important to recognize their limitations. In more demanding service (e.g., handling a guest complaint, confirming a booking detail, or addressing an urgent need), relying on a translation application may lead to delays or misunderstandings. It may also reduce the quality of interpersonal communication that is central to hospitality service. Translation tools are therefore best understood as a short-term support rather than a substitute for genuine communicative competence.

Alongside technology use, participants demonstrated learner autonomy through a range of self-directed learning strategies, including searching for English content online, noting useful expressions, memorizing frequently used vocabulary, and practicing through repeated workplace interactions. Previous studies have similarly highlighted the value of self-directed and technology-supported learning in English development in tourism and hospitality contexts (Hsu et al., 2025; Munpru & Sittiwa, 2022). However, it is worth considering whether participants engaged in self-directed learning primarily out of genuine preference or because formal learning opportunities were largely unavailable to them. The operational constraints of shift-based work (e.g., irregular hours and high-season demands) may leave self-study as the only accessible option for many staff. This suggests that the responsibility for English development should not rest with individual staff alone, but should be shared with the organizations that depend on this competence to maintain service quality.

3. Future English for hospitality course or training

The findings of this study point to four key areas that should inform the design of future English for Hospitality training for accommodation staff in Khanom District. These areas emerge directly from the communicative needs, challenges, and learning preferences identified across the three findings, and they address both the content and delivery of training provision. Firstly, regarding training content, the findings consistently show that participants needed English for specific, recurring service situations rather than for general communication purposes. This indicates that a task-based approach is most appropriate, in which communicative tasks mirror the daily work of accommodation staff and hospitality-specific vocabulary is developed through meaningful service scenarios. This is

consistent with ESP principles, which emphasize that course content should be shaped by learners' actual occupational needs (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

Secondly, listening and speaking were the focus skills, as these were the skills most frequently required in real service encounters (Namtapi, 2022; Putri et al., 2022; Thi & Cheng, 2024). Particularly, listening English as a lingua franca should be integrated in the training so that staff develop familiarity with the range of accents they encounter in real service interactions. Training that relies solely on standard native-speaker models will inadequately prepare staff for the multilingual reality of Khanom District's tourism environment (Jenkins, 2007; Matsuda, 2003).

Thirdly, nonverbal and intercultural communication would strengthen the practical applicability of any English for Hospitality programs in this context. As participants noted, combining gestures with spoken language can make communication feel more natural and effective. Guest perceptions of service quality are shaped not only by language accuracy but also by body language, facial expressions, politeness, and cultural sensitivity. These communication dimensions are rarely addressed in conventional language training but that are central to guest satisfaction (Kappina et al., 2021; Tiansoodeenon et al., 2023).

Lastly, regarding training format and delivery, the findings suggest a blended approach that combines online modules with printed reference materials. This format is suitable for accommodation staff because it offers flexibility for those working irregular shifts, which often limit their access to formal learning opportunities. While online modules allow staff to learn at their own pace, printed handbooks can support long-term retention that staff can review and apply language directly in the workplace. This recommendation is consistent with previous research showing that blended and technology-supported formats can promote flexible, lifelong English learning in hospitality contexts (Hsu et al., 2025; Munpru & Sittiwa, 2022). To increase accessibility, Scheduling training during the low tourist season and adopting a rotating attendance system would help ensure that staff from all shifts and departments can participate, making training more inclusive and operationally realistic. As Tiansoodeenon et al. (2023) noted, inclusive training across roles can maximize its impact.

Conclusion and implications

This study confirmed that English communication is a core requirement for accommodation service providers in Khanom District, particularly in frontline roles involving direct guest interaction. While participants recognized its importance and showed motivation for self-improvement, most had developed their English through workplace experience and self-study rather than structured training, reflecting a lack of institutional support for language development. The findings also revealed that challenges with accent comprehension and hospitality-specific vocabulary indicated a gap between general English ability and the specific demands of accommodation work. Staff would further benefit from developing verbal and non-verbal communication strategies, intercultural awareness, and metacognitive skills to support more effective and independent language learning.

The findings of this study carry several practical implications for English for Hospitality training in Khanom District and in comparable Thai tourism destinations. Firstly, training content should prioritize task-based service communication, hospitality-specific vocabulary, and listening practice that reflects English as a lingua franca, alongside verbal and non-verbal communication strategies. Second, a blended delivery format using online modules and printed handbooks is most appropriate for shift-based staff, supported by resources that encourage ongoing self-directed learning. Thirdly, training should be scheduled during the low tourist season with rotating attendance to maximize participation across departments, extending beyond front office staff to include all guest-facing roles. Finally, accommodation businesses and local training providers should institutionalize English training as a regular, planned commitment rather than an occasional activity, recognizing staff language development as a strategic investment in service quality and the long-term competitiveness of Thailand's tourism and hospitality industry (Rahayu et al., 2021).

Limitation and Recommendation

A key limitation of this study is its relatively small sample size of 20 accommodation staff in Khanom District, with only two pool villa owners available and willing to participate. While the qualitative approach provided in-depth insights into participants' English communication needs and experiences, the limited number of participants means that the findings cannot be generalized to

the broader hospitality workforce in Thailand.

Future research should therefore expand the sample to include a larger and more diverse group of accommodation owners and staff across different regions and accommodation types, which would enable comparative analysis and strengthen the external validity of the findings. Also, future studies could adopt a mixed-methods design by developing a questionnaire based on the findings of this study and administering it alongside interviews or observations. This approach would allow for data triangulation and provide a more comprehensive understanding of English language needs and training preferences among hospitality staff in Thailand.

Acknowledgement

This research was funded by 2023-2024 Research Project Grant of Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya (RUTS). The researcher would like to thank the university administrators, expert lecturers, staff, and accommodation service providers who supported and provided valuable input during the study, which contributed to its successful completion.

References

Akram, A. (2024). The role of English language in global tourism and navigating international destination. *Social Science Review Archives, 2*(2), 1393–1398. DOI: 10.70670/sra.v2i2.191

Department of Tourism and Sports. (2024). *Tourism statistics report*. Ministry of Tourism and Sports.

Dudley-Evans, T., & St John, M. J. (1998). *Developments in English for specific purposes: A multi-disciplinary approach*. Cambridge University Press.

Hsu, K. C., Barrett, N. E., & Liu, G. Z. (2025). English for tourism and AR-assisted context-aware ubiquitous learning: A preliminary design-based research study. *Computer Assisted Language Learning, 38*(3), 544–568. DOI: 10.1080/09588221.2023.2202701

Hutchinson, T., & Waters, A. (1987). *English for specific purposes: A learning-centred approach*. Cambridge University Press.

Jantawong, L., Sermsook, K., & Nakplad, R. (2023). Voices of tourism-related personnel regarding their problems

and English language needs: A case study of the tourism industry in Phang Nga, Thailand. *Education Quarterly Reviews, 6*(2), 199–211. DOI: 10.31014/aior.1993.06.02.749

Jenkins, J. (2007). *English as a lingua franca: Attitude and identity*. Oxford University Press.

Kappina, K., Charoennaiwongphao, W. & Konchiab, S. (2021). Needs for Improving Non-Verbal Communication Skills of Thai Homestay Staff in the New Normal Tourism Context, Chiang Mai. *FEU Academic Review, 15*(1), 80-99.

Kumawat, K., Datta, A., Prentice, C., & Leung, R. (2025). Artificial intelligence through the lens of hospitality employees: A systematic review. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 122*, Article 103986. DOI: 10.1016/j.ijhm.2024.103986

Lin, C. H., Wu, W. C., & Huang, Y. T. (2013). English for specific purposes for hospitality college students and hotel employees in Taiwan. *International Journal of Education and Research, 1*(8), 1–14.

Matsuda, A. (2003). Incorporating world Englishes in teaching English as an international language. *TESOL Quarterly, 37*(4), 719–729. DOI: 10.2307/3588220

Munpru, S., & Sittiwa, E. (2022). English-Thai online learning media development for improving English communication of young tour guides and boosting sustainable community tourism at Khlong Khang village. *Journal of Graduate Studies in Northern Rajabhat Universities, 12*(2), 58–70.

Namtapi, I. (2022). Needs analysis of English for specific purposes for tourism personnel in Ayutthaya. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network, 15*(1), 409–439.

Pinsirikul, Y., Chuduang, W., Nunainam, T., Jantawong, L., & Tapnimit, V. (2023). English communication problems and solutions of Thai hotel staff working with foreigners in Phuket Province. *Journal of Liberal Arts, Prince of Songkla University, 15*(2), Article 269038. DOI: 10.14456/jlapsu.2023.19

Prodanovska-Poposka, V. (2022). Classification of English for specific purposes and overview of the language skills in ESP context. *Beder University Journal of Educational Sciences, 26*(Special issue), 117–131.

Putri, L. A., Ridwan, M., & Afriasih, M. U. C. (2022). Needs analysis on English language use for students of hospitality department. In *Proceedings of the Tegal International Conference on Applied Social Science & Humanities (TICASSH 2022)* (pp. 79–85). Atlantis Press.
DOI: 10.2991/978-2-494069-09-1_11

Rahayu, N., Suprina, R., Amrullah, & Pitchayadejanant, K. (2021). English competency of hospitality workers and tourist satisfaction: Policy recommendations. *Journal of Hunan University (Natural Sciences), 48*(8), 135–143.

Rancati, E., Abashidze, I., & d'Agata, A. (2025). AI-based machine translations in tourism and hospitality: An exploratory study of travelers' perceptions and future challenges. *European Scientific Journal, 21*(7), 1–13.
DOI: 10.19044/esj.2025.v21n7p1

Rattanapong, C., Anuyahong, B., Pengnate, W., & Rahm, J. (2021). Needs of English language usage in hospitality and tourism industry in Prachuap Khiri Khan Province. *International Journal of Sciences: Basic and Applied Research, 58*(1), 24–30.

Thi, P. B., & Cheng, Y. H. (2024). English needs analysis of food and beverage employees: A case study of a 5-star resort in Vietnam. *English for Specific Purposes, 76*, 74–105.
DOI: 10.1016/j.esp.2024.07.001

Tiansoodeenon, M., Rungruangsuparat, B., & Tarapond, S. (2023). Investigating the needs and challenges with regard to English communicative competencies in the Thai hospitality industry. *Journal of Contemporary Social Sciences and Humanities, 10*(2), 69–80.
DOI: 10.14456/jcsh.2023.12

Wongkittiporn, A. (2024). The development of instruments for the study of needs analysis towards speaking skills in the fields of hospitality. *Lawarath Social E-Journal, 6*(2), 15–32.