

# **U**nderstanding Different Needs: Towards Designing an English Learning Audio Book for Sighted and Visually Impaired Massage Therapists

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## **Abstract**

*Thai massage therapists see the need to improve their English, as their business is advancing towards international markets. The availability of English learning resources is, however, still very limited, especially for those with visual disabilities. This research project attempted to design an ESP syllabus and develop the content into an MP3 audio book format so that it could benefit both sighted and visually impaired learners. A needs analysis was conducted with different parties involved in the massage business, using interviews and on-site observations to create learners' profiles, observe the language requirements of therapists and construct the syllabus. After a prototype audio book was created, sample groups, which included massage therapists with and without visual impairment, were asked to study the material on their own for three months. The same pre/post-tests were used to measure learners' language improvement. A 5-point Likert scale format questionnaire was used to measure learners' satisfaction with the product. The research offered a comparison of the results and concluded that although the audio book could enhance the language proficiency of both groups of learners, those with visual impairment showed a significantly greater improvement due to the higher level of motivation and learning discipline.*

**Keywords:** *English for Thai Massage Therapists, needs analysis, learners with visual impairment, ESP syllabus and material design, audio book*

## **1. Introduction**

Thai massage encompasses traditional medicinal healing and the local way of life (Kanchanoo & Muangsiri, 2012; Chia & Chia, 2005), modeling itself into a highly stylized healing art which now appeals not only to Thais, but also to foreigners all over the world. The Thai government's Policies and Economic Plan for 2013-2017 envisions the country as "A World Class Thai Traditional and Alternative Medicine Destination" (Department of Trade Negotiation, 2011; Department for Health Service Support, 2012). In addition, the formation of the AEC in 2015 has offered a potential market close to home. The Thai massage business is on the rise. Being a Thai massage therapist is undoubtedly becoming a very popular profession that attracts many people, including the visually impaired, whose career choices are limited by their physical difficulties. However, to take a step



further into the global arena, a massage therapist needs to have an adequate command of the English language.

To date, there have only been a few booklets and casual pieces of online material that offer a set of vocabulary and convenient expressions related to the massage business. The scarcity of reliable material is far more critical for therapists with visual disabilities, since their physical limitation prevents them from visually accessing what little is available. My initial aspiration was to create an English learning audio book for the benefit of visually impaired therapists. Nevertheless, considering the fact that an audio medium requires only a sense of hearing, I presumed that it could benefit sighted learners in the same way. The purpose of my research was to find out whether a specifically designed audio book could enhance the language proficiency of both groups equally; if not, what would be the factors contributing to such a difference? Understanding learners' degree of satisfaction with the learning material would also benefit the product and contribute to its improvement.

My research paper published in 2015 (see Sawaddee, 2015) gave a brief outline of the development of the prototype audio book, but focused exclusively on the test results from the visually impaired learners, who were divided into two groups: Group 1 was asked to self-study the audio book for three months, whereas with Group 2, it was used as classroom material and practice for a three-day language training period. The results offered positive language improvements, and concluded that the audio book yielded better results with assistance from an instructor due to the learners' limited access to outside resources and assistance. However, because the main focus of the paper was solely on the findings and analysis from the visually impaired groups, it did not elaborate on the process of the syllabus design, when information from various groups of people was taken into account.

This paper attempts to provide richer details of the syllabus design process, focusing on the data obtained from both sighted and visually impaired therapists, and other related parties, i.e. foreign customers and administrative staff, for the needs analysis, and the role it played in the decision-making process of material design. Test results and users' satisfaction are compared to offer a broader outlook of the research project with a comparative aspect.

## **2. Rationale of the research**

It is worth noting that Thai massage therapy has become one of the most attractive professions for people with visual impairment, because it involves fewer physical risks while generating a better income (Sawaddee, 2015). Through my personal voluntary work with a vocational school for the blind, it became clear to me that there was a demand for a specific English course which would prepare them for the world of work. Through interviews with the staff and students at the Skills Development Center for the Blind and at the Caufield Foundation for the Blind under Royal Patronage, specific English learning materials and language training were found wanting.

A pilot project was initiated in 2013 by Blindpass, a voluntary group in Bangkok, in collaboration with the Department of English, Silpakorn University, to design a syllabus and develop materials for English for Blind Massage Therapists. The program lasted 10 weeks (two hours per week) for 15 participants at the Caufield Foundation for the Blind under Royal Patronage, using DAISY (Digital Accessible Information System) as the audio learning medium. The audio library at the Thailand Association of the Blind has been using DAISY with NCC (Navigation Control Center) to digitize manuscripts into audio format and make them available for readers with visual disabilities. The structure of this type of DAISY book follows the printed manuscript. It can indicate titles and mark page numbers to help facilitate the visually disabled when reading (Thailand Association of the Blind, 2013).

After the completion of the project, changes were made to improve the syllabus according to the feedback and evaluation of the participants. Full research was then conducted in that same year to redesign the audio learning material for all users regardless of their visual abilities. Instead of DAISY, the prototype audio book for the research was produced in audio MP3 format because this did not require any specialized equipment to operate it. Since the aim of the new audio book was extended to accommodate sighted learners as well, it was felt that the format should be accessible for everyone. In addition, an audio MP3 file could be transferred for distribution very easily, and free of charge. It could be saved and stored instantly in the learners' PCs or mobile phones. Both groups of users should find the learning materials convenient and portable, provided that the audio content has been designed to effectively deliver the audio lessons in accordance with the syllabus, and to clearly mark different sections of the content.

### **3. Literature review**

English for Thai Massage Therapists belongs to the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) which, according to Hyland (2006), aims to help the disadvantaged who lack the language ability needed for the situations they hope to enter. To date, ESP specialists have begun to consider its sociocultural aspects by addressing the needs of those who are coping with physical disabilities or seeking citizenship (Belcher, 2004 and 2006). Needs analysis has been used since the late 1970s as an approach to course design which focuses primarily on the learner's needs. It has served as "the initial process for the specification of behavioural objectives" (Nunan, 1988, p. 43) which then explores different syllabus elements, such as functions, notions and lexis, in a more detailed manner. John Munby's approach to needs analysis, "Communicative Syllabus Design", from 1978, marked a critical point for ESP course development. Munby's model is set out under several variables that "affect communication needs by organising them as parameters in a dynamic relationship to each other" (Munby, 1978, p. 32). The heart of Munby's model is the Communicative Needs Processor (CNP). Information about the learner is fed into the CNP, which consists of eight categories in order to produce a profile of needs – a description of what the learner will be expected to do with the language at the end of the course (Gillett, 1989). Munby's model was well-received for its new vision on individual needs, but was



also criticized for its failure to create an actual teaching/learning syllabus (Davies, 1981; Hawkey, 1980). In other words, Munby provided detailed lists of microfunctions in his CNP, but did not explain how to prioritize them or any of the affective factors which today are recognized as important (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). His model also excluded certain important aspects such as psycho-pedagogic, methodological and administrative issues (Le Ha, 2005). Despite such criticism, Munby's work has remained influential for its attempt at incorporating two operations – needs analysis and course design – into one (Coffey, 1984; Le Ha, 2005). Most subsequent target needs analysis research has been based on Munby's model because it offers comprehensive data banks and performance targets (Robinson, 1991).

In relation to Munby's CNP, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) provided a comprehensive framework for the conduct of a needs analysis. An understanding of the learning needs of these learners is pivotal for the analysis of such, and can tell us "what the learner needs to do in order to learn" (p. 54). Hutchinson and Waters divided needs into target needs (i.e. what the learner needs to do in the target situation) and learning needs (i.e. what the learner needs to do in order to learn). However, Flowerdew and Peacock (2001) stated that there could be a mismatch between target situation needs and learners' needs since learners might have their own perception of target needs. They further asserted that the early models of needs analysis, including Munby's CNP, could elicit only a 'rough idea' of learners' needs since they did not consider the needs of all the stakeholders, and were limited to identifying only part of the learners' biographical information. Brown (2001) added that other needs that should be considered include financial, physical, political and other nonlinguistic needs. Huhta, Vogt, Johnson, and Tulkki (2013) suggested that a needs analysis for ESP should be evidence-based, where the evidence is supported by a 'thick description' of the professional workplace or training institution. A thick description is one which attempts to reveal multiple factors that provide a more accurate understanding of the context.

Needs analysis has been a core device in curriculum development in ESP literature through various arguments and approaches which range from quantitative methods such as tests, to qualitative ones such as interviews (Mohammadi & Mousavi, 2013). Each approach has been criticized in ESP literature because of its limitations in the definition of needs and in the methods used for collecting learner's needs (Kothalawala, Kothalawala, & Amaratunga, 2015). Today, there is an awareness of the fact that different types of needs analyses are not exclusive but complementary, and that each one provides a piece to complete the jigsaw of needs analysis (Songhori, 2008).

## **4. Research procedures**

### ***4.1 Data collection for the syllabus***

The process of the syllabus design for English for Thai Massage Therapists followed several of the approaches mentioned above. Following Munby's aspects of learners' needs, and Hutchinson and Waters' framework for target needs, relevant questions were

addressed to create data banks and performance targets. The research employed interviews which aimed at answering five essential questions for the needs analysis. The questions were as follows:

1. *How do massage therapists cope with communication problems?*
2. *Where and how have the therapists learnt English?*
3. *Do massage therapists want to learn English, and would they be interested in an English learning audio book?*
4. *Are there problems or issues that need to be acknowledged?*
5. *What does a massage therapist need to learn or is expected to know?*

Questions 1-3 attempted to extract information about the learners. Question 4 explored other aspects that may have been worth taking into account, such as the physical limitations of learners with visual disabilities. Finally, question 5 was to elicit the target needs for the syllabus construction.

As Brown (2011) noted, different aspects of needs may rise from related parties other than the learners themselves. Therefore, the population sample included:

- 10 foreign customers (mixed nationalities)
- 10 sighted massage therapists from different tourist areas
- an administrative staff member who worked for Chetawan Massage School (Wat Po)
- 10 visually impaired massage therapists
- an English course convenor for visually impaired massage students at the Skills Development Center for the Blind in Bangkok
- the president of the Association for the Promotion of Thai Massage Therapists with Visual Impairment

Data for a 'thick description' of the professional workplace, as suggested by Huhta, Vogt, Johnson, and Tulkki (2013), was collected during personal on-site observations in several massage centres in tourist areas to complement the data from interviews.

#### ***4.2 Data collection for learners' language proficiency***

Participating learners were divided into two groups: the sighted, and the visually impaired. Each participant was asked to study the prototype audio book for three months. The same pre/post-tests were used to measure the participants' background of English and language improvement after the completion of all the lessons in the audio book. The test was comprised of 15 multiple-choice items. Eight items tested general and job-related expressions, and seven items tested job-related vocabulary.

#### ***4.3 Data collection for learners' satisfaction***

A five-point Likert scale format questionnaire was used to measure learners' satisfaction with the prototype audiobook.

## 5. Results of needs analysis and the syllabus construction

Essential data was elicited from interviews for the needs analysis and the syllabus design. The answers and analyses are as follows:

### 1) How do massage therapists cope with communication problems?

*“When my customer wants to talk, I tell him to go to sleep.”*

*(Sighted masseuse 2/ from Wat Po, Bangkok)*

*“The Russians don’t speak English, so we use gestures and body language.”*

*(Sighted masseuse 10/ from Phuket)*

*“I can speak a few words of English. If the customer says something quite serious and I don’t understand, I get my colleagues or the reception to talk to them instead.”*

*(Sighted masseuse 3/ from Wat Po, Bangkok)*

*“Ask whoever was closest to you, like your neighbor colleagues. But, if they don’t know either or if there was nobody around, I just have to say sorry and hope that it wasn’t anything serious.”*

*(Blind masseur 4)*

The answers revealed that sighted therapists have the benefit of body language and instant help from other staff to cope with communication problems, whereas the visually impaired could only rely on themselves. This may lead to different levels of motivation to learn English, since verbal communication is not as important to the sighted as to the visually impaired.

### 2) Where and how have the therapists learnt English?

*“I pick up words at work from my colleagues and customers.”*

*(Sighted masseuse 1/ from Wat Po, Bangkok)*

*“It’s easy when you have a farang husband. Your English improves fast. I don’t have one so sometimes I ask from my friends’ farang husbands.”*

*(Sighted masseuse 7/ from Samui)*

*“We have only one audio CD to share here. Anyone can make a copy of it. I want to organize a language training, but we need a teacher...traveling may be difficult for those who can’t find assistance. The budget needs to cover transportation, meals, and accommodation for everyone during the days of the training.”*

*(President, Association for the Promotion of Thai Massage Therapists with Visual Impairment)*

*“We have a Filipino teacher to teach English here, but a good ESP textbook is hard to find. Currently, we use commercial textbooks for general English, which offer too much of what we don’t need.”*

*(Partially sighted English course convener/ The Center for the Blind)*

The answers from question 2 are parallel to those of question 1 in that the sighted massage therapists had better access to language assistance from others. The visually impaired therapists had to struggle with the lack of suitable learning materials and the budget to facilitate language training. Once again, the fact that the sighted therapists had such convenient forms of assistance may contribute to their lack of motivation.

**3) Do the massage therapists want to learn English, and would they be interested in an English learning audio book?**

*“I want to learn English, but it takes both money and time off work, you know. Everybody wants to earn money instead of spending it on an English course.”*

*(Sighted masseuse 4/ from Wat Po, Bangkok)*

*“Audio book sounds good because we can study whenever it’s convenient. But, I wouldn’t pay for it. I’ll try it only if it’s free.”*

*(Sighted masseuse 5/ from Wat Po, Bangkok)*

*“Most customers here are Russians and Germans, then there are the Chinese and Japanese too. They don’t speak English or if they do, it’s very little. I don’t think a proper lesson is needed. You can send us the audio book and I’ll leave it at the reception in case anyone is interested.”*

*(Sighted masseuse 9/ from Krabi)*

*“We definitely need a course material that is tailor-made for our massage students. These kids cannot go to regular schools so their English is not as good as that of the sighted. It’s difficult to share materials that are produced for the sighted. Audio material, I think, is good for learners’ listening and pronunciation practice.”*

*(Partially sighted English course convener/ The Center for the Blind)*

The answers from question 3 confirmed my hypothesis regarding the learners’ motivation as mentioned earlier. Obviously, the sighted massage therapists showed much less interest in learning English, even with an audio book, due to the availability of communication assistance both from body language and other staff. The visually impaired expressed a greater demand for anything that could help them with their English – from learning materials to language training.

**4) Are there problems or issues that need to be acknowledged?**

Considering the answers from questions 1-3, it seemed that while an English learning audio book could benefit both groups of learners, the visually impaired showed a much stronger desire to learn. The interviews with Sighted masseuses 4, 5, and 9 in question 3 clearly showed a lack of enthusiasm to learn English. This may limit the potential of the audio book as material to help improve sighted learners' language proficiency. Nevertheless, it was worth observing how different levels of motivation may have played a role in the learners' progress.

**5) What does a massage therapist need to learn, or what are they expected to know?**

*"Thai massage is relaxing and calm, so the therapists don't need to talk much. I think they just need to know some vocabulary to tell the customers what to do."*  
(Foreigner 1)

*"They should be able to tell the customers what to do. A masseuse didn't tell me to put on the disposable pants for the oil massage, so I just lay on the bed naked. When she returned she covered my private parts with a blanket, then I realized that I wasn't supposed to be naked. That was culturally embarrassing!"*  
(Foreigner 6)

*"A masseuse once used her elbow with me and that hurt terribly. I cried 'Ow!...Ow!', but she didn't understand and kept doing it. The massage therapists really need to learn what farangs' exclamations mean."*  
(Foreigner 8)

*"I cannot see my customers' expressions so I need to constantly ask them how they feel and understand what they say to me. Sometimes I have to ask them to lead my hand to certain body parts like the hip or the thigh; otherwise, I would be messing my hands around their body and that can offend female customers."*  
(Blind masseur 1)

*"There was a blind masseur who not knowingly dislocated his customer's shoulder because he didn't know the customer had a splint there. I think communicating with customers is very important, especially when it comes to certain health issues."*  
(Blind masseur 5)



The answers are crucial for the analysis of the target needs, for they illustrate situations where English is essential for massage therapists. The data above is categorized in the table below.

Vocabulary	Grammar/Useful phrases	Suggested by
Body positions	- Imperative sentences - Modals for polite requests	Foreigner 1 and 6
Exclamations	-	Foreigner 8
- Feelings - Body parts	- Asking about feelings	Blind masseur 1
Physical conditions and illnesses	- Asking about health issues - Offering precautions	Blind masseur 5

Additional data for the syllabus construction was collected through personal on-site observations. Richards and Renandya (2002) proposed that vocabulary is “a core component of language proficiency” especially in an ESP course, for it provides much of the basis for how well learners can master the language. Vocabulary plays a pivotal role in communication. Words used in five different massage centres during their operating hours were recorded and expanded to add to those collected from interviews. The vocabulary bank for the syllabus construction was finalized as follows:

Category	Vocabulary
Body parts	hair, head, the back of the head, forehead, scalp, ear, eye, nose, neck, cheek, chin, teeth, lip, shoulder, elbow, arm, wrist, palm, finger, thumb, chest, bottom, hip, leg, thigh, calf, knee, ankle, foot, feet, toe, nerves
Feelings	relax, ticklish, sore, hurt, good, bad, hard, soft, gentle
Verbs	Lie down; Lie on your stomach; Lie on your back; Lie on your left side; Sit up straight; Sit crossed-legged; Stretch your legs; Lift (your chin); Lower (your chin); move; put
Types of massage	Thai massage; oil massage; aromatic oil massage; foot massage; face massage; back, shoulder and neck massage; relaxing massage; reflexology
Tools	Bed, mattress, blanket, sheet, pillow, cushion, bowl, brush, powder, lotion, aromatic oil, ointment, stick, herb, herbal ball/ herbal compress, cotton balls, cloth
Physical conditions and diseases	fever, cold, flu, allergy, diarrhea, headache, backache/back pain, stomachache, period, period pain, cramp, operation, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, AIDS. high/low blood pressure
Massage centre	reception, corridor, changing room, toilets/restrooms, shower, floor, ceiling, door, doorstep, window, corner
Directions	Go straight; Turn left/right; on your left/right; in front of; opposite; near; next to
Clothes	loose clothes, towel, shirt, skirt, trousers, underpants, bra, jewelry, ring, earrings, watch, necklace, slippers, flip-flops

In fact, words do not exist as isolated items in language. Grammar also contributes to the meanings and functions of sentences in ESP learning. Cook (2000) affirmed that components of language are interconnected through grammar. Selected words in the vocabulary bank were then provided with their grammatical contexts using sample conversations to generate grammatical patterns.

Finally, topics for each unit were arranged according to the sequence one would experience when going to an actual massage centre, except unit 11: making an appointment, which could be done over the telephone or in person at any time. It was placed there because the learners need to understand information from the previous topics i.e. greetings, types of massage and questions before the massage, before they can make appointments. There were 12 units altogether.

Unit	Topic	Content	Explanation
1	Greetings	1.1 Expressions: basic greetings and introduction 1.2 Vocabulary: occupations 1.3 Grammar: verb “to be” 1.4 End-of-unit exercise	This unit introduces common greeting expressions. It also introduces a list of common occupations. As Thai massage is a physical treatment, a massage therapist may ask the customer about his/her job in order to diagnose the cause of his/her muscular pain and give proper treatment or advice. The occupations will then be incorporated with the usage of the verb “be” e.g. “What <u>is</u> your job?”, “My name <u>is</u> Suwat.”, “I <u>am</u> a massage therapist”. After this unit, the learners should be able to introduce themselves and introduce other people using appropriate verb forms.
2	Services offered	2.1 Vocabulary: types of massage 2.2 Useful question phrases: “Would you like...”, “Would you like to...”, and “What kind of...?” 2.3 Grammar: frequently asked questions 2.4 End-of-unit exercise	This unit provides the vocabulary of common massage types. It then introduces the question phrases “would you like (a Thai massage)?” and “would you like to (come in)?”, and asks the learners to practice the phrases using different words from the vocabulary section. The grammar section talks about frequently asked questions from foreign customers, namely: “What is this?”, “What is it like?”, “How much?” and “How long?”

3	Small talk	<p>3.1 Common useful phrases</p> <p>3.2 Vocabulary: countries, nationalities and capital cities</p> <p>3.3 Grammar: the question “What is it like?” and “How do you like it?”</p> <p>3.4 End-of-unit exercise</p>	<p>The objective of this unit is to get the learners to make small talk with their foreign customers while waiting for the service or even during the service, focusing on the topic of countries and nationalities. The question “What is it like?” (as in 2.3) is reintroduced, but is used to ask about the customers’ countries in general. The question “How do you like it?” is often used in small talk when asking about preferences.</p>
4	Inside the massage centre	<p>4.1 Vocabulary: parts of the massage centre</p> <p>4.2 Grammar: giving directions using imperatives</p> <p>4.3 Useful phrases: giving precautions and warnings</p> <p>4.4 End-of-unit exercise</p>	<p>After this unit, learners should know the parts of the massage centre in English and put them in proper sentences when giving directions. 4.3 deals with the phrases “Be careful” and “Mind your (step)”, which can be used when giving directions to customers.</p>
5	Tools for Thai massage	<p>5.1 Vocabulary: objects associated with Thai massage</p> <p>5.2 Grammar</p> <p>5.2.1 Revision of question words</p> <p>5.2.2 Making politer equests</p> <p>5.3 End-of-unit exercise</p>	<p>This unit introduces a set of vocabulary associated with the service e.g. herbal ball, massage stick, and mattress. 5.2.1 reintroduces the question phrases in 2.3, and applies them to a different situation. 5.2.2 is a revision of imperative sentences in 4.2.</p>
6	Questions before the massage	<p>6.1 Vocab: health conditions and diseases</p> <p>6.2 Grammar: the verb “have/has”</p> <p>6.3 Useful phrases: asking about health</p> <p>6.4 End-of-unit exercise</p>	<p>6.1 introduces a list of physical conditions and diseases related to massage treatment which will then be incorporated with the usage of the verb “have/ has”. 6.2 introduces the question form “Do you have (any health problems)?” or “Do you have (disease)?”</p>
7	Body parts	<p>7.1 Vocab: body parts</p> <p>7.2 Grammar: possessive adjective</p> <p>7.3 Useful phrase: asking about lost items</p> <p>7.4 End-of-unit exercise</p>	<p>This unit introduces a list of body parts, both external and internal, which will then be incorporated with the usage of the verb “have/has” as studied in 6.2. 7.2 introduces the possessive adjective along with the question word “whose” so that learners may apply the usage to either 7.1, or 8.2 in the following unit.</p>

8	Suggestions before having a Thai massage	8.1 Grammar: making suggestions using should/ can/don't have to, and must not 8.2 Vocabulary: clothes and accessories 8.3 End-of-unit exercise	This unit explains the use of “should/can/don't have to”, and “must not” which will then be incorporated with 8.2 which talks about clothes, accessories and related verbs e.g. “You <u>should take off</u> your <u>earrings</u> .”
9	Conversation during the massage service (body positions and polite commands)	9.1 Grammar: asking for things during the massage service 9.2 Vocabulary: body positions 9.3 End-of-unit exercise	This unit deals with situations that often happen in the massage room: the customer asking for things and the massage therapist telling the customer to change their body positions. 9.1 reintroduces the question “Do you have...?” and introduces an interchangeable question “Have you got...?” This will then be incorporated with the vocabulary in 5.1 e.g. “Do you have a herbal ball?” 9.2 provides a list of common body positions for massage treatment which is incorporated with the imperative already studied in 4.2.
10	Conversation during the massage service (asking about customers' satisfaction)	10.1 Useful phrases: asking about customers' satisfaction 10.2 Vocabulary: physical pains 10.3 Grammar: using “too” And comparatives 10.4 End-of-unit exercise	This unit continues to deal with situations in the massage room. 10.1 provides patterned phrases like “How is it?” and “Is it good?” 10.2 provides a list of common physical pains. 10.3 introduces the adverb ‘too’ and a list of relevant adjectives in comparative forms e.g. “Too gentle?” and “Harder?”
11	Making an appointment	11.1 Vocabulary: days of the week, months, cardinal numbers and ordinal numbers 11.2 Useful phrases: telling/ asking about date and time 11.3 End-of-unit exercise	This unit does not contain a grammar section because there are already a lot of words to be memorized in the vocabulary section. Common questions like “What time?” and “When?” are included in the sample conversation (with translations).
12	Payment and saying goodbye	12.1 Useful phrases related to payment 12.2 Vocabulary: payment methods 12.3 Expressions: saying good-bye and invitation to come back 12.4 End-of-unit exercise	The question “How much?” in 2.3 is reintroduced. Learners then can practice cardinal numbers in 11.1 to say the price of the service. The word “please” in 4.2 is also reintroduced e.g. “Please pay at the counter.” 12.3 introduces common phrases used when the customer is leaving e.g. “Please come back again” and “Have a nice day”.

(Sawaddee, 2015)

The audio book content had to be designed to suit the learning process, which depends entirely on the sense of hearing. Factors that may affect the learning process were considered as follows:

<b>Issues to be considered for the audio design</b>	<b>Solutions for the audio book</b>
Lack of context for the teaching of vocabulary and expressions	Each unit provides sample sentences and conversations for grammar, vocabulary, and expressions.
Fast pace and lack of pauses when recording	The overall recording speed was done at a slower pace with adequate pauses after each phrase/sentence. Each word in the vocabulary section was repeated with a longer pause so that the learners could repeat afterwards. Each sample conversation was repeated – the first time at normal speed and the second time at a slower speed.
Learners may not remember what the sentences mean if the translation is provided too far after a long sentence	English sentences were made short and simple. Translation was added immediately after each sentence, making it easier to follow and digest.
Monotony and confusion that could occur when one person was used for two or more characters in a dialogue	Five different recording voices were used: (1) the female narrator, who read the objectives of each unit, explained the grammar sections, and read the exercise sections; (2) the male foreign customer; (3) the female foreign customer; (4) the Thai masseur; and (5) the Thai masseuse. One dialogue comprised either the male customer talking to the masseuse, or vice versa, so that learners could easily identify the two different speakers.
Lack of interactive activities	Short questions in the end-of-unit exercise sections were repeated. Each question was followed by a five-second pause marked by the sound of a ticking clock, before the answer was given after a ringing sound.
Locating and marking sections of the audio content	A theme song, which is a piece of Thai classical music, was used to mark the end of each unit. A sub-theme song was used to mark the end of each section.

(Sawaddee, 2015)

The final prototype audio book was 5 hours long altogether. It was then reproduced for participating learners, both sighted and visually impaired.

*a. Learners' Language Improvement*

All participating learners were asked to do the same pre-test. After three months of self-studying the prototype audio book, they were asked to do the same post-test (the pre- and post-tests were also the same). The results are as follows:

Group	Average pre-test (percent)	Average post-test (percent)	Average increased score (percent)
Sighted	75	83.33	8.33
visually impaired	52.13	66.00	13.87

The sighted learners scored higher in the pre-test. An interview with the English course convener from the Center for the Blind confirmed that sighted learners were likely to have better language background due to their opportunities to attend regular schools and to meet foreigners. Sighted learners also scored higher in the post-test; however, the visually impaired learners showed greater improvement. From personal observation, people with visual disabilities tend to have better focus on what they intend to do, because their disabilities limit their communication activities, social life and entertainment. Interviews with individual visually impaired participants suggest that their greater ambition to learn English for their career contributed to greater motivation and learning discipline.

### *b. Learners' Satisfaction*

After completing the post-test, a five-point Likert scale questionnaire was used to discover learners' attitudes towards the audio book.

	Sighted	Visually impaired
1. The topics and content are interesting.	4.1	3.6
2. The content is applicable to your work.	4.2	4.1
3. The arrangement of content is easy to follow.	3.9	4.1
4. The length of each unit is appropriate.	3.6	4.1
5. The content in each unit is sufficient with appropriate detail.	3.5	3.9
6. The level of English is appropriate.	3.4	4.1
7. The characters speak with clear voices.	4.0	3.9
8. The characters' pace is appropriate.	3.8	3.8
9. The audio book can be self-studied.	3.8	4.3

The scores from both groups of learners were very close. Only one sighted learner left a comment that the audio book was a good idea. Two visually impaired learners said they liked the soothing background music because it set up a relaxing atmosphere for learners. Four learners expressed their liking for the end-of-unit activities, and especially the ticking of the clock, which urged them to actively think of the answers before the ringing bell marked the end of the allotted time to answer.

## 6. Conclusion

The research attempted to draw as much information as possible from interviews and personal on-site observations of the workplace to create a pool of data for needs analysis, which was essential for the syllabus construction. Results from interviews with sighted massage therapists revealed a much weaker demand for English learning material among them. This was due to an abundance of communication assistance both from body language and from other staff members at their workplace. On the other hand, the visually impaired staff and learners expressed a greater need for English lessons and learning materials because their physical disabilities did not allow them to take advantage of body language or to obtain immediate assistance from others.

According to the test results, the prototype audio book could improve the learners' language proficiency to a satisfying level. Although the sighted learners scored higher in both the pre- and post-tests, the visually impaired learners showed greater improvement due to greater motivation and discipline. They also showed greater satisfaction with, and appreciation for, the material.

Further research may narrow down factors within the sample groups and take more of the learners' biographical backgrounds into consideration, such as age, education, and work experience, for a more refined outcome that should help generate ideas for new and improved versions of English for Thai Massage Therapists in the future.

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