

## Lexical Input in an ELT Course Book “Communicative English for Tourism:” a Matter of Variation, Frequency, and Coverage

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### บทคัดย่อ

การเรียนรู้คำศัพท์เป็นองค์ประกอบสำคัญอย่างหนึ่งในการเรียนภาษา อีกทั้งหนังสือแบบเรียนก็อ่าวเป็นเครื่องมือสำคัญในการช่วยให้ผู้เรียนภาษาได้เรียนรู้คำศัพท์เพิ่มเติมมากขึ้น ดังนั้นการศึกษาในครั้งนี้จึงเกี่ยวข้องกับการประเมินคำศัพท์ในหนังสือแบบเรียนที่ถูกเลือก *Communicative English for Tourism* แต่งโดย รองศาสตราจารย์นิษฐา อุทวนิช สำนักพิมพ์มหาวิทยาลัยธรรมศาสตร์ ผู้ช่วยได้ทำการออกแบบการตรวจสอบคำศัพท์ที่ปรากฏในหนังสือที่ถูกเลือกโดยใช้ RANGE โปรแกรม ทำการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลและใช้การนำเสนอข้อมูลโดยแสดงค่าเบอร์เซ็นต์ และอภิปรายผลโดยใช้หลักทฤษฎีด้านการเรียนรู้คำศัพท์เข้ามาช่วยสนับสนุน ผลการศึกษาแสดงให้เห็นว่าหนังสือแบบเรียนที่ใช้ในการศึกษานี้ได้บรรจุคำศัพท์ที่เหมาะสมสมสำหรับผู้ที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษาที่สอง หรือ ในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศ และยังมีการบรรจุคำศัพท์ทางด้านสาขาวิชาที่เกี่ยวข้อง นอกเหนือจากนั้นการที่แบบเรียนแล้วนี้ได้ถูกออกแบบมาเพื่อคนไทยโดยเฉพาะทำให้ง่ายต่อการทำความเข้าใจในบริบทของเนื้อหา หรือการเชื่อมความเข้าใจของเนื้อหา กับความคุ้นเคยของคนไทย

**คำสำคัญ** : การครอบคลุมคำศัพท์ การประเมินแบบเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ คำศัพท์พื้นฐาน คำศัพท์วิชาการ

### ABSTRACT

Vocabulary knowledge has significantly come to be recognized as a crucial feature of language learning. Since course books are the most important materials for language instruction and that helps learners to increase vocabulary. Therefore, the study was evaluation of a selected course book: *Communicative English for Tourism* authored by Associate Professor Kanitta Utawanit, published by Thammasat University Press: in field of lexical input. The RANGE program was employed to analyze in this study. Analyzed data were presented by percentage and descriptive analysis under theories of lexical knowledge. The study found that the selected course book plentifully contain headwords and provide learners a preferable proportion of high and low frequency word lists. In terms of academic area, the book is unlikely to be sufficient for learner to gain academic English at undergraduate level. In contrast, for communicative skill, the course book provides useful words engaged to the particular field. Furthermore, the course book authored for Thai learner, so is easy for them to understand by linking the content to their familiar context.

**Keywords** : Lexical Coverage, ELT Course Books Evaluation, GSL, and AWL

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## Introduction

Tourism is one of priority sectors for ASEAN integration, ASEAN Economy Community (AEC 2015), because ASEAN tourism preformed an outstanding growth with total national arrivals of more than 73 million in 2010 and increase of 11 per cent compared to 2009 (ASEAN, 2012). In the same vein, the rapid growth of tourism industry in this region especially in Thailand makes high requirements of employees to serve a diversity of the international visitors. To achieve that requirement, one of the most important components in giving effective services or communications for the international tourists is English competence. For that reason, English learning has taken a major role in the field of international service. English role in some countries in ASEAN including Thailand is their second language. Learning English as second language involves the collection of various fields including syntax, phonetics and an extensive vocabulary. Among those fields vocabulary knowledge has significantly come to be recognized as a critical feature of reading ability (McKeown & Curtis, 1987; Nagy, 1988; Nation & Coady, 1988; Stanovich, 1986; Wan-a-rom, 2008; Sukying, 2010). To learn a language, learners have to comprehend a wide range of words to get through reading texts since vocabulary knowledge is in proportion of English skills including reading, speaking, writing and listening. As a consequence, it is undeniable that vocabulary acquisition is an essential part of language acquisition and they must be concurrent.

As McCarthy (1990) noted in his introduction, "no matter how well the students learn grammar, no matter how successfully the sound of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wide range of meanings, communication in an L2 just cannot

happen in any meaningful way."

To increase learner's vocabulary, one important element is potential of material. In the present, course books are the most important tool for language instruction and they are more popularly used than ever before. As Richards and Rodgers (2001) state, course books are an unavoidable element of language learning because they specify content and define coverage for syllabus items. Based on the advantages of course book, it can be connected to vocabulary acquisition that; 1) all vocabularies are revealed in course book that is teachers and students know how large of the vocabularies size, 2) it provides exercises to help learners repeat some vocabularies taught by teacher in the class, 3) it is useful to guide teachers regarding which words should be focused on first. As Cunningham (1995) affirmed that course book is an effective resource for self directed learning, an effective resource for presentation materials, a source of ideas and activities, a reference for students, a syllabus reflecting pre-determined learning objectives. According to the important role of lexical knowledge in second language learning and the advantages of course book which is used to increase vocabulary to the learners, the researcher has been interested in the followings issues : an evaluation of selected course book, an analysis of word coverage, word variation and word frequency. The findings of this study show useful vocabulary in tourism area. They also guide teachers to develop lessons and classroom activities. Furthermore, after students finish their required English classes, they use their course book without tutors, so the course book should be a prompt tool to support them to be autonomous learners. Finally, learners are able to recognize sufficient vocabulary in their specific

field, in which they will be engaged in life-long language learning.

### **Research Questions**

At the present, course book becomes a major part of language learning, so the considerations of course book efficiency under theories of lexical knowledge is what has done in this study. Findings of the present study are expected to answer the following research questions:

1. What is Lexical Frequency Profile in the course book?
2. What are an average number of word frequency and word variation, existing in the course book?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purposes of the study are as follows

1. to investigate the lexical coverage in selected course book
2. to consider overlap of the existing words in the book with GSL, and AWL
3. To examine word frequency and word variation by investigating the lexical nature of a target course book

## **Research Methodology**

### **Selection of Course Book**

The researcher collected the data by asking twenty lecturers who teach English for Tourism course. The personal contacts were used in this procedure. Those lecturers are from different institutes throughout the country including state and private universities in northern part, central part, northeastern part, and southern part of Thailand. It was found that there are three publishers including Oxford Press, Longman Press, and Thammasat

University Press.popular used in this field. When these course books' publishers were considered in depth, the most lecturers recommended the course book published by Thammasat University Press because the course is more suitable for Thais which contains Thai contexts than other two publishers. Communicative English for Tourism authored by Associate Professor Kanitta Utawanit, published by Thammasat University Press is the most popular course book used in universities offering tourism curriculum and it is the only one among those popular course books in English for Tourism area written by a Thai author

It is important to note that the researcher contact the publisher to request for a permission to use the course book for this study, and the publisher granted a legal permission to do so.

### **Procedure**

To compile all the vocabulary in the course book, all pages were scanned and saved as text file format (.txt). After preparing the running words files, they were analyzed as follows:

**Step I:** The first part of the analysis was to examine the Lexical Frequency Profile (LFP). This could answer the first and the second research questions: 1) what is Lexical Frequency Profile in the course book? , and 2) what are an average number of word frequency and word coverage?.

The LFP was calculated by a computer program called RANGE. The RANGE program is a Windows based program developed by Paul Nation and Alex Heatley of Victoria University, Wellington and freely available from <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/staff/paul-nation.aspx>. It can apply three distinct word lists, called Based word lists, to any text, and can sort the text vocabulary into three categories of



headwords from each list, and a category of words outside all three list, making four categories altogether. The RANGE program can do this either by ranging across several texts, or frequency within a text. It can also mark each word according to the category in which it belongs. The based word lists can be altered depending on requirements. The ones which come with the program are the first and second thousand words from West's General Service List (West, 1953), referred to from now on as the GSL, and Averil Coxhead's Academic Word List referred to as the AWL. The program has self-checking routines to ensure that the same word form does not occur in more than one of the based word lists. This program has been used with the text based studies of Hirsh and Nation (1992), Laufer and Nation (1995) and Coxhead (2000).

A major weakness of the RANGE program is that it deals with word forms. Thus, the RANGE program was not able to distinguish a word's part of speech and meaning. That is, a word which had the same written forms, but had a different meaning, for example March (n.) and march (v.), was recognized as the same word by the RANGE program. This problem also occurred with most words that did not change their written forms to indicate tense such as put and shut.

**Step II:** To investigate of the lexical richness of the selected course book, lexical variation (LV) was applied in this progress. To be more obvious, LV was used to examine the degree of word repetition and the degree of lexical diversity of the course book as well.

LV is the type/token ratio which is the ratio in percentage between the different words in the

text and the total number of running words (Laufer and Nation, 1995). The lower the ratio, the more repetitions exist in a text, and the fewer types need to be known in order to comprehend the text. LV is calculated with the following formula:

$$LV = \frac{\text{Number of types} \times 100}{\text{Number of tokens}}$$

In this process, LV ratio was calculated:  
the lexical variation of the selected course book.

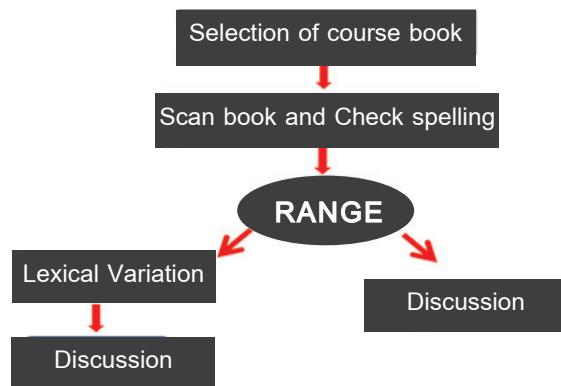


Figure 1 Flow chart of the procedure

### Data Analysis

The statistics used in the study is percentage. The result from analysis of Lexical Frequency Profile (LFP) presented the overlap of vocabulary coverage in selected book between four frequency lists in percentages. Moreover, RANGE program is used to reveal this procedure. The data analysis from the LFP can be summarized in the statistics mentioned above and interpreted under lexical knowledge theories.

## Results and Discussion

### Lexical Frequency and Coverage

Table 1 shows all words appearing in the selected course book. These words are classified into five wordlists which depend on their relation. The

wordlists comprise (1) the number of the first 1000 word families, (2) the number of the second 1000 word families, (3) the number of the academic word families, (4) proper names, and (5) the number of low-frequency words.

Table 1 Words appearing in the course book

WORD LIST	TOKENS / (%)	TYPES / (%)	FAMILIES / (%)
1st 1000 GSL	23970 / 72.09	1435 / 41.00	799
2nd 1000 GSL	3474 / 10.45	545 / 15.57	381
570 AWL	878 / 2.64	259 / 7.40	183
Proper Names	2320 / 6.98	423 / 12.09	-
Low Frequency	2609 / 7.85	838 / 23.94	-
Total	33251 / 100	3500 / 100	1363

These first three lists are the RANGE default ready-made base lists. Moreover, the columns of Table 1 are divided by word count. In details, the data shown in the second column (TOKENS) are the number of words which is counted every time it appears in the selected course book. In other words, if the same word form occurs more than once, each occurrence is counted. Words counted in this way are called "tokens" or sometimes "running words". In the third column, the figures shown are the amount of words which are counted once. If the same word appears again, it is not counted. The last column is a headword and some of its inflected form. The word inflections consist of plural, third person singular present tense, past tense, past participle, present participle, comparative, superlative, and possessive.

The analysis of Communicative English for Tourism course book d by the RANGE program shows

that the total number of running words is 33,251 words. Among these running words, 72.09% is from the first 1000 GSL wordlist. Based on the number found in the FAMILIES's column, the course book provides the total number of the first 1000 word families, that is 799 word families out of 1,000 word families. When comparing the first 1000 words GSL list with the first 1000 words existing in the course book, the data is almost 80% of the first list. It shows that the book is likely to be sufficient for readability improvement. This word list is a matter of a reading context constructing, because the words in this list can successfully contribute to a plentiful basic word source for learners. In other words, the learners can use basic words for building up an understandable context to gain reading comprehension. Furthermore, the diversity of the first 1000 GSL word list effectively aids learners in guessing word meaning in order to learn new words in a specific context.



**Table 2** Top 10 frequency word families of the second 1000 GSL word list

BASE TWO FAMILIES	RANGE	TYFREQ	FAFREQ
TOUR	1	169	1052
GUIDE	1	113	129
HOTEL	1	70	112
BUS	1	61	75
TRIP	1	45	48
AFTERNOON	1	40	41
DOUBLE	1	33	33
HALL	1	31	37
ISLAND	1	30	39
DANCE	1	28	54
SILK	1	27	27
THANK	1	26	32
LUNCH	1	26	26
HOLIDAY	1	25	37
LIST	1	25	28
GRAND	1	23	23
PASSAGE	1	22	24
ELEPHANT	1	19	42
RECOMMEND	1	19	28
CONVERSATION	1	18	18

For the second 1000 GSL, the course book contains 3,474 (10.45%) running words. The number of the second 1000 word families is hardly found. To make it clear, there are only 381 word families appearing in the target course book from 1,000 word families that is counted as 38.1% of the second 1000 GSL. This finding is not surprising because the second 1000 GSL words usually vary,

depending on a variety of topics and themes each book chooses to focus on. That is, their appearance vocabulary is more closely related to the topic or subject area of the text than to the wide range of general purpose words in the first 1000 GSL. As seen in the Table 2 the data show that the second 1000 GSL words; Tour, Guide and hotel are the most frequent appearing words in the course book. On average, the number of the second 1000 GSL words found in the target course book is involved with tourism field. In fact, given enough texts and a range of topics and theme, the second 1000 GSL words are more generally useful than other word lists. Therefore, learners can learn the useful words in a particular field by reading context from this book.

**Table 3** Coverage of first and second 1000 words of the GSL

Book	1st 1000	2nd 1000	Total
Communicative			
English for Tourism	72.09 %	10.45 %	82.54%

In a variety of studies (Hwang, 1989; Hirsh and Nation, 1992; Sutarsyah, Nation and Kennedy, 1994), the GSL provided coverage of 78% to 92% of various types of written text, averaging approximately 82% coverage. Similarly, Communicative English for Tourism written by Associate Professor Kanitta Utawanit offers an average amount of GSL coverage that is counted as 82.54% of running words. This high proportion of the first 2000 GSL in the course book matches some researchers' recommendations. They agreed that the first 2000 GSL words seem to be the initial words of the vocabulary learning targets. It seems that the composition of words in the course book is

suitable, productive and beneficial to the learners as achieving the first 2000 GSL is their first goal.

The course book contains a high percentage of the first 2000 words and this is likely to match the initial vocabulary learning goal for the learners. Furthermore, another word list that makes high proportion of vocabulary coverage is Academic Word List (AWL)

**Table 4** Top 10 frequency word families of AWL

BASE THREE FAMILIES	TYFREQ	FAFREQ
IMAGE	27	49
STYLE	31	39
SELECT	22	32
AVAILABLE	27	27
TEXT	23	27
RESPOND	0	26
AREA	18	23
CULTURE	5	22
LOCATE	0	22
SOURCE	20	20

The AWL slightly appeared in the course book, which is merely 2.64%. Therefore, if the course book is used as a leaning source for learners to prepare a word size for academic purposes, it is unlikely to be sufficient to gain academic vocabulary especially in undergraduate study. As presented in Table 4, there are 183 word families appearing in the target course book, which is 32.10% of 570 AWL word families. The AWL consists of words that are purposively excluded from the first 2000 words of the GSL but still were frequently found as a wide range in academic texts. In other words, the words occur not just in one or two disciplines like economics or mathematics, but occur across a wide range of disciplines.

The academic Word List is thus a word list for learners with specific purpose to develop personal academic reading.

Although the course book restrictedly contains AWL words, these word lists provide such useful words in the particular field. As shown in Table 4, the top 20 AWL words appearing in the course book is concerned with various specific fields, e.g. Image, Style, Classic, Design, Construct, and Feature, etc. These words are in Architecture field which is used to describe the building in historical sites. Moreover, to describe the historical site, the terms in the field of history and art are also involved e.g. Period, Tradition, and Culture etc. Consequently, it is agreed that Communicative English for Tourism authored by a Thai provides the academic words regarding Thailand's tourism resources, historical resources, natural resources, and traditional resources.

**Table 5** Proper names in communicative english

TYPE	RANGE	FAFREQ
THAI	1	182
BANGKOK	1	128
CHIANG	1	110
MAI	1	98
WAT	1	98
THAILAND	1	90
BAHT	1	71
PHUKET	1	53
PHRA	1	47
AYUTTHAYA	1	43

In term of readability, proper names and low frequency were purposively checked. In fact, the



course book gives a slightly different proportion of proper names and low frequency words: 2,320 proper names (6.98%) and 2,609 low frequency words (7.85%). The percentage of proper names is not as huge as expected and those words are understandable due to the context and are not counted as low frequency words. In other words, as shown in Table 5, proper names presented in the course book are mostly well-known as tourist attractions in Thailand, such as Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Phuket, Ayutthaya, etc. Incidentally, some proper names are written with a space in between, so they are considered two words in RANGE such as Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, etc.

Moreover, the proper names are also transliterations, such as Wat (temple), Baht (Thai currency), Phra (monk), etc. Therefore, Thai learners possibly are highly likely to understand these proper names by relating the language to the familiar Thai contexts.

**Table 6** Low frequency words

TYPE	RANGE	FAFREQ
BUDDHA	1	76
CONDITIONED	1	74
COLUMN	1	68
PALACE	1	52
DIALOGUE	1	41
MUSEUM	1	36
TEL	1	35
ACCOMMODATIONS	1	33
BEACH	1	31
BOXING	1	25

For low frequency words, this word list affects the readability and reduces percentage of the text coverage, if not being properly managed. From the mentioned figures, the number of low frequency particularly causes reading difficulty. However, in Table 6, the words in low frequency list are possible reading difficulty in tourism area including places, activities, etc. As a consequence, the learners in this particular field are able to understand these low frequency words easily through either personal knowledge in the specific area or assuming from assistance by numerous words from the first 2000 GSL words in contexts.

**Table 7** Vocabulary coverage in selected course book

Source	2000 GSL	AWL	Proper Names	Total
Communicative				
English for Tourism	82.54%	2.64%	6.98 %	92.16%

Findings of this study showed that the vocabulary coverage is very close to 95%, when the first 2000 GSL, AWL, and proper names were combined. The coverage of the course book became found 92.16%. In other words, the density of unknown words in the course book is 1 unknown word in every 13 words. The course book seems to contain a high percentage of the frequency word lists. It was suggested, base on a research conducted by Laufer (1989), that 95% coverage (1 in every 20) is sufficient to allow reasonable comprehension of a text.

### Lexical Variation

The lexical variation (LV) was another measure used in this study to examine the lexical richness of the textbooks. As presented in the Table 8, the LV ratio expresses the degree of lexical diversity in the course book. In other words, the lower the ratio, the more representation there is. If many of the words are repeated several times, then fewer different words (types) need to be known. On the other hand, in a text, if few words are repeated, then more types will be included in the course book. The degree of lexical diversity is often represented as the LV ratio.

**Table 8** Lexical variation of the course book

Source	Tokens	Types	LV ratio
Communicative	33251	3500	10.52
English for Tourism			

To assess lexical richness provided by the course book, the measure of lexical variation (LV) is a great method used in this study. Schmitt (2000) provided a very clear explanation of LV and method

of interpreting the ratio: "Lexical variation or type token ratio (number of different words in a text divided total number of words in a text) shows the range of words used in a text. Schmitt's study revealed that a higher figure means that the writer has used more variety of words with less repetition." In addition, there is a researcher Jeffrey ( 2007) studied the LV ratios of the English textbooks for junior high schools in Hong Kong, the result revealed that the LV ratios were 7.66 to 10.94 and the researcher indicated that the ratios were still low.

Regarding the lexical richness of the selected course book examined by LV, the data presented in the Table 8 shows that the LV ratios are consistently low (10.52). This indicates the existing words in the course book are heavily repeated. In the same vein, these consistent low LV ratios imply that the variety of words is limited. Although low LV ratios signal the selected course book does not provide a large variety of words as lexical input for learners, the low LV ratios can be interpreted positively as a beneficial condition for students in term of word repeating. It means, that is more words repetition across the text.

### Lexical Frequency

Regarding the program result, there are plenty of existing words in the course book (33,251 running words). Should all these running words be taught? Undoubtedly, a large vocabulary size is seen as valuable matter. It is barely possible to use all the items in the list, since some may be culturally inappropriate, not suitable for learners' level, or difficult to be used in daily life. To support the claim, Nation and Waring (1997) noted that a language makes use of a large number of words, but not all of these words are equally used. It was suggested that the way to measure the word use is word frequency. As presented in Table 2 and 4, the most frequently-used words classified by their word lists in the course book are revealed in order to guide teacher what words should be taught. The data also implies that the teacher should put more attention on words with low frequency when those words are considerably beneficial words in a particular field.



## Conclusion and Implications

The data analysis was carried out by using the RANGE program. The result gave information about the relationship between word lists, GSL and AWL, and all existing words in the course book.

It is expected that the study can give the teachers guide line in investigating the existing vocabulary in the course book. The study is particularly informative for the teachers who practically use Communicative English for Tourism course book in the classroom. It is also desired that the methodology can demonstrate more useful approach to examine vocabularies in the book and the result can be interpreted as a direction to guide the teachers to effectively implement the course book in their teaching process.

Not only lexical input investigation but analysis of designed activities was also implicitly looked in this study. In terms of layout analysis of course book there is a study (Cunningsworth, 1995) showed that layout and presentation should follow a standard format of six sections: Warm up, Listening Conversation topic, Grammar awareness, Pair Interaction, and Read and Response. The selected course book matches exercise format stated early. The contents of this course book are involved the vocabulary development, reading practice exercise, listening practice sections, writing practice, matching exercise, dialogue completion, dialogue construction, communicative practice, glossary of specialized terms, and writing practice. It confirms that the selected course book provides appropriate contents based on criteria designed of ELT course book

The vocabulary development exercises of this course book are presented in the first activity in each unit. The activities are intended to set the

scene and provide background for the context that follow. The blank-filling exercise is straightforward (one word per blank) and it easy to pick the word lists above the exercise. Moreover, the last part of each unit is a glossary of specialized terms with Thai translation. This design agreed some studies that course book contains an appendix of key words has proved useful for the students, doing individualized, out-of-class work, and comprehensive preparation for exams (McDonough and Shaw, 1993). In terms of second language acquisition, the selected course book contains sufficient vocabularies regarding the course book purpose, communicative English purpose. Furthermore, the course book layout provides authenticity of language acquisition pattern.

## Suggestions for Further Study

Future research can be conducted to compare and contrast the lexical coverage of different course books from different publishers. It should also be noted that the results of this study are inadequate and limited to English for Tourism course; therefore, future study should examine the lexical input from English for Hotel course or other associate areas in the particular field.

In term of course book evaluation, the key component taken to be evaluated was limited to lexical input of the course book. While, there are various key components that can be applied for the course book evaluation e.g. appropriate layouts and designs, balancing of activities, language type used in the course book, and relevance of subjects and contents etc. Hence, the previously mentioned components could be counted for the course book evaluation in the further study. Different evaluations of the course book may give the useful insights and

facilitate the teachers or learners to use the book with its optimal benefits.

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