

## Communication Strategies Employed by Both Thai-Cooking

## Instructor and Foreign Tourists: The Smart Cook Thai

## Cookery school in Chiang Mai

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ชาวต่างชาติ: กรณีศึกษาโรงเรียนสอนทำอาหารไทยสมุทรศึกษาศูกิจังหวัดเชียงใหม่

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to analyze and compare the communication strategies adopted by a teacher of Thai cookery and foreign tourists. For the purpose of data collection, a focus-group discussion and a video recording would provide an insightful understanding of the communication strategies and practical use of those strategies by an instructor demonstrating the preparation of Thai food, and by foreign tourists enrolled in courses on the subject of Thai cuisine in the Smart Cook Thai Cookery School in Chiang Mai, Northern Thailand. The data analysis and oral-communication strategies were employed, which consisted of these two major types: 1) Risk-taking strategies, and 2) Risk-avoidance strategies. The findings revealed that the strategies employed by the Thai-cooking instructor were mostly fluency-oriented, while his other strategies were of the time-gaining and accuracy-oriented types. Meanwhile, the strategies employed by foreign tourists were mostly of the help-seeking type, while their other strategies were of the non-verbal and fluency-oriented type. The results are expected to help the Thai-cooking instructor and foreign tourists at the cooking schools in Chiang Mai to acquire in-depth information on the best use of their communication skills.

**Keywords:** communication, communication strategies, oral communication strategies

### Introduction

Over the years, the growth of the global society and the development of modern technology have made communication for people from different places more convenient. Many researchers are interested in studying extensively about a subject of intercultural communication (Hiranburana, 2013 and Huang, 2013).

The researchers found that communication in people from different culture is more complex than it is among people of the same culture. For that reason, effective intercultural communication requires specialized communication strategies that take into account the diversity of cultures worldwide (Trimetsoontorn, 2006).

The types of communication that occur in the same culture using the same language and the types that occur in different cultures using the same language can be effective toward applying communicative competence and communication strategies effectively (Bumrungrkit, 2015; Nanthaboot, 2012 and Rastegar & Gohari, 2016). In the same way, Chomsky (1965) and Canale & Swain (1980) found that if the speaker had communicative competence in communication, then both knowledge and understanding could empower the use of language for effective communication are activated. Subsequently, Hymes (1966) noted that intercultural competence was the understanding of the emotions and behavior of people from different cultures that could enable an understanding of the true meaning of an interlocutor. One of the most popular activities for foreigners in terms of cultural exchange in Thailand is Food Tourism because Thai food reflects Thai culture as well as the wisdom and lifestyle of Thai people (Kitwikarn, 2014: 12-28). Popular culinary activity is the Thai cooking school which is growing. According to statistics, the highest numbers of Thai cooking schools are 63 schools in Chiang Mai and 51 schools in Bangkok respectively (Trip advisor Thailand, 2017). Currently, there are still few studies on this case. The preliminary study found that the Thai cooking school was most popular with American, German, French and China tourists. On the other hands, French and China tourists' problems in English accents and language understanding were mostly found. Currently, there are still few studies on this subject. Hence, the use of Thai-cooking instructor's English communication strategies interacted with foreign tourists learning their cooking class should be investigated as the target group for this study.

According to previous research, it was confirmed that communicative competence was one of the most important factors in a given cultural or cross-cultural context and would lead to more effective communication (Xiao, 2004; Dvořáková, 2012; Nanthaboot, 2012; Euamomvanich, 2016 and Thanakong & Adipattaranan, 2017). In addition to communicative competency for effective communication, it was found that the speaker must have communication strategies to increase the effectiveness of his communication. In the event of an inadequacy in the communicative competency essential to the success of a speaker's communication, the use of communicative strategies were going to become necessary to enhance that speaker's communication efficiency. Thus, intercultural

communication has thus played a very important role in transferring knowledge, along with understanding, to people from different cultures.

For this reason, the researcher is interested in investigating communication strategies in food tourism between instructor in Thai cookery and foreign tourists. Providing the appropriate training courses in a context of tourism will increase value for the business organizations and for the people in the tourism industry. For this purpose, an analysis should be made of the possible communication strategies between an instructor in Thai cookery and foreign tourists using English as a main language in a Thai-speaking context. This research provides insight into the cooking industry and challenges of dealing with the customer from showing the results through small points such as sentences or morphemes. The research shows the different communication strategies under cultural diversity between Thai cooking instructor and tourists. Therefore, the analysis should include an investigation of the best possible guidelines for developing successful communication.

### **Purposes**

1. To analyze the communication strategies employed by Thai-cooking instructor and foreign tourists
2. To compare the communication strategies employed by Thai-cooking instructor and foreign tourists

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study was a descriptive survey research, which aimed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The oral communication strategies conceptualized by Corder (1983), Dörnyei & Cohen (2002), and Nakatani (2005, 2006) was used as the main criteria for detecting the strategies that occurred in oral communication, which was divided into two major types, as show in Figure 1.

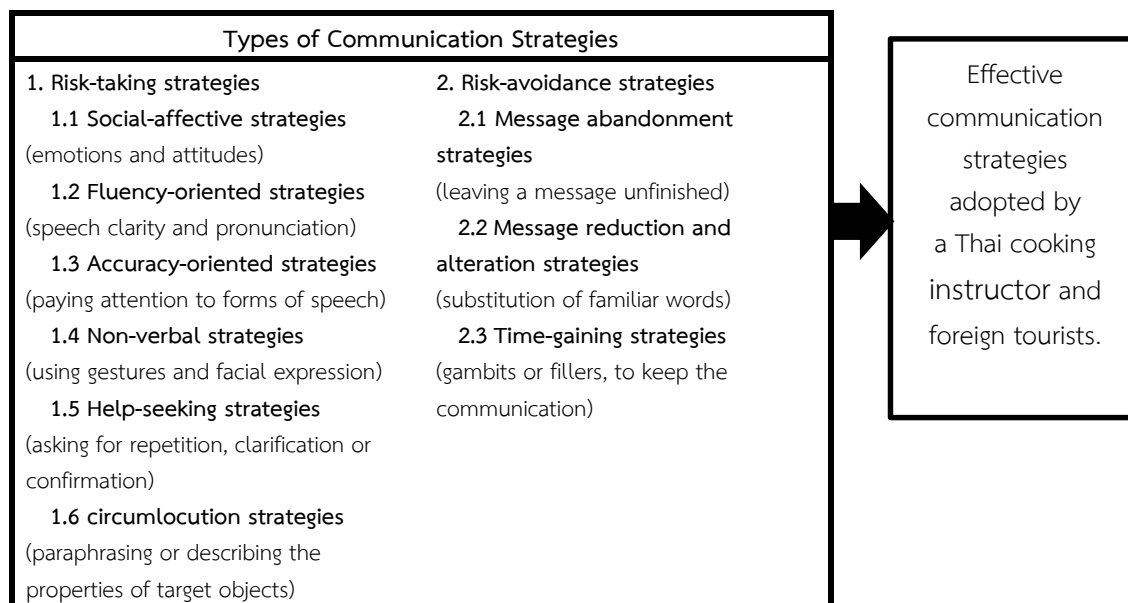


Figure: 1 Conceptual framework

## Research Methodology

### Participants

In this study, the researchers observed a group discussion that was held for the purpose of obtaining an improved understanding through detailed examples and to ascertain the meanings of actions, experiences and the sentiments underlying expressed opinions. Moreover, this instrument shed new light on puzzling questions and identified a frame hypothesis for future survey research. Thus, more information were taken from the communication strategies of one Thai-cooking instructor with his cooking experiences for more than 2 years, and 20 foreign tourists out of five major groups because the length of time carried out for data collection was validated for its effective research. Due to global multilingual and multicultural diversities, a selected group of foreign tourists from China, France, the United States, and Germany taught in the most popular Thai cooking school in Chiang Mai was selected by the convenient sampling technique. One group of foreign tourists took 3 hours of the half-day course at the Smart Cook Thai Cookery School, which has offered various cooking courses for over 15 years. Above all, the researchers sent a consent form to the participants to assure that ethical procedures were used. In case of video-recording, participants immediately protected by the device of anonymity and video recorded for the long-term effects on individuals or groups as a result of the research.

### Research Instruments

The proposed research study had four major methodologies: Group Discussion on Cooking Demonstration, Video-Recording, Content Analysis, and Observation

### Procedures Used in This Study

#### Data Collection

Firstly, the researcher video-recorded the interaction of the Thai-cooking instructor with a group of foreign tourists during their cooking classes in order to provide natural-dialogue recordings. In this first phase, the recording length of the interaction of the Thai-cooking instructor with a diverse group of foreign tourists during their cooking classes, which required one hour per session over a five-week period.

Secondly, the researchers transcribed the dialogues between the Thai cooking instructor and a group of foreign tourists during their cooking classes at the Smart Cook Thai Cookery School in Chiang-Mai Province. Each video was approved by the thesis advisor and language experts for accuracy of transcriptions, and all videos were transcribed into written dialogues.

The next task was to categorize the communication strategies implemented in their five cooking classes into frequency checklists, for which the results were presented in terms of frequency, strategy, percentage and frequency rating. The functions of the communication strategies were then analyzed in the form of a descriptive analysis. In addition, the conversation analysis was carried out with the data transcriptions of the five dialogues.

In the last step, these 5 video-recorded dialogues were viewed for their content by following an observation checklist. The results taken from observing the behaviors of the Thai-cooking instructor in their use of communication with their selected foreign tourists during their cooking classes at the Smart Cook Thai Cookery School in Chiang Mai Province were then summarized. The results were also included in the descriptive analysis with the applicable percentages.

### Results

1. The use of risk-taking and risk-avoidance strategies employed by the Thai cooking instructor are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Frequencies pertaining to the use of communication strategies employed by the Thai-cooking instructor

Communication strategies	Frequency of strategy	Percentage	Rating
<b>1) Risk-taking strategies</b>			
1.1) Social-affective strategies	34	4.34	7
1.2) Fluency-oriented strategies	311	39.67	1
1.3) Accuracy-oriented strategies	95	12.12	3
1.4) Non-verbal strategies	85	10.84	4
1.5) Help-seeking strategies	5	0.64	9
1.6) Circumlocution strategies	35	4.46	6
	<u>565</u>	<u>72.06</u>	
<b>2) Risk-avoidance strategies</b>			
2.1) Message abandonment strategies	11	1.40	8
2.2) Message reduction and alteration strategies	49	6.25	5
2.3) Time-gaining strategies	159	20.28	2
	<u>219</u>	<u>27.93</u>	
	<u>784</u>	<u>100</u>	

In terms of the risk-taking strategies, the Thai-cooking instructor's fluency-oriented strategies were mostly used during his cooking demonstrations with the foreign tourists. These strategies succeeded because the Thai-cooking instructor's professional abilities were well-performed; moreover, his clear explanations aided his cooking demonstrations. Occasionally, the foreign tourists had no responses and lacked concentration. They would skip from one topic to the next or would ask the same questions over again. The absence of continuity in their comprehension of the Thai instructor's cooking demonstrations, as well as their irritableness, is revealed in the three transcribed dialogs below.

#### Dialogue 4<sup>[1]</sup>

Tourist A: Bamboo↑

Instructor: = Aha It's the young one. Just you can do it

Tourist A: Aha okay okay

Instructor: = For that one↑ can you cut the stem off. Cut the stem off.

Instructor: = And they can do cut half. Half the long way

Otherwise, the Thai cooking instructor's help-seeking strategies were rarely used in his cooking classes when he demonstrated his cooking with foreign tourists. He tried not to ask for help to express their requests for help or clarification from the

interlocutor to show credibility for clarification of the information used in the conversation as quoted in the transcribed dialogue below.

Dialogue 1

Instructor: Shrimp paste

Tourist C: (chickky...)

Instructor: (chickky...?)↑

Tourist C: Ha↑

Instructor: Shrimp paste

With references to the theory of communication strategies conceptualized by Corder (1983); Dörnyei & Cohen (2002), and Nakatani (2005, 2006), it was stated that these help-seeking strategies were involved with showing recourses, clarifying the information used in the conversation, asking for repetition, or clarification or confirmation, which help the interceptors' understandings of what they expressed.

↑ means rising intonation                      = means indicated contiguous utterance  
 — means raise in volume or emphasis       :::: means sound stretch  
 ( ) means unclear to transcribe

2. The use of risk-taking and risk-avoidance strategies employed by foreign tourists, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Frequencies pertaining to the use of communication strategies employed by foreign tourist

Communication strategies	Frequency of strategy	Percentage	Rating
<b>1) Risk-taking strategies</b>			
1.1) Social-affective strategies	8	3.13	6
1.2) Fluency-oriented strategies	34	13.28	3
1.3) Accuracy-oriented strategies	0	0	9
1.4) Non-verbal strategies	58	22.67	2
1.5) Help-seeking strategies	100	39.06	1
1.6) Circumlocution strategies	17	6.64	5
	<u>217</u>	<u>84.76</u>	
<b>2) Risk-avoidance strategies</b>			
2.1) Message abandonment strategies	6	2.34	7
2.2) Message reduction and alteration strategies	23	8.98	4
2.3) Time-gaining strategies	7	2.73	8
	<u>36</u>	<u>14.06</u>	
	<u>256</u>	<u>100</u>	

In terms of risk-taking strategies, the help-seeking strategies of the foreign tourists were mostly used during their cooking-class activities. The foreign tourists not only learned how to cook Thai food from the Thai-cooking instructor, but they also expressed their requests for help or clarification from their interlocutors for further clarification of the information being used during their conversation, as quoted in the two transcribed dialogues below:

#### Dialogue 1

Instructor: Can you leave the bowl on the plate like that and then pour your soup in the bowl

Tourist B: Ah:::

Instructor: You can test again its good

In other words, foreign tourists' accuracy-oriented strategies were never used in his cooking classes when learned how to cook Thai food with the Thai cooking instructor. They did not focus on the correct idioms and correcting an error in own speech about grammar and word order in conversations.

In order to implement these communication strategies with further studies, however, a model related to one Thai instructor's and foreign tourists' cooking demonstration should be all adjusted for its proper contents as well as learners' different contexts.

## Discussion and Conclusion

### Discussion

In terms of the risk-taking strategies employed by the Thai-cooking instructor and foreign tourists, it was the fluency-oriented strategies of the cooking instructor that were mostly used, because these strategies involved the focusing of attention on fluency in the flow of the conversation. Not only was the professional ability of the instructor noticeable as his cooking demonstration continued, but his clear explanation on the cooking procedure enhanced his interaction with his audience. Nevertheless, the lack of concentration from the foreign tourist on his cooking demonstration, as well as their lack of responses, was characteristic of their interaction with their cooking instructor. Otherwise, the foreign tourists' previous questions were all skipped out when they changed their minds onto the next topics so that the foreign tourists were not confident with their Thai cooking instructor's communicative abilities.



Regarding to the study of the study of Posai and Soranasthaporn (2018), it was stated that these fluency-oriented strategies were associated with the interlocutors' language fluency, pronunciation and accent in English speaking, and making conversations effort. Moreover, clarifying the interlocutors' conversation, taking time to convey preferred meaning, as well as attempting to express concisely should be all identified for their use of effective communication strategies. On the other hand, the help-seeking strategies of the foreign tourists were the most used, since these strategies postulated that people would follow a series of predictable steps in seeking to remedy their inadequacies. They consisted of a series of well-ordered and purposeful cognitive and behavioral steps, each of which led to a specific solution type. This was because the receivers' conversations were interacted for their doubts or helps in order to understand the Thai cooking instructor's cleared explanation.

With references to the concept of Nitisakulwut and Soranastaporn (2017); cited in Nakatani (2006), it was stated that these help-seeking strategies were involved with asking for repetition, clarification or confirmation, as well as showing recourse and clarification to clarify the information used in the conversation. Also, the study of Arpacı-Somuncu (2016) on communication strategies insisted that this strategy of asking for help from interlocutors or "getting help" was concerned with the speaker's no continuity of sentence. In other words, in terms of the Thai cooking instructor's and foreign tourists' risk-avoidance strategies, it showed that the Thai cooking instructor's time-gaining strategies were mostly used whereas the foreign tourists' message reduction and alteration strategies were mostly used. This was because the Thai cooking instructor's time-gaining strategies were usually used for his knowledge-transferring; moreover, he also attempted to clarify them clearer explanation on his cooking demonstration to be accomplished for their interaction. According to the study of Rastegar and Gohari (2016), it was stated that these time-gaining strategies were associated with keeping the communication channel open, maintaining discourse difficulties, as well as using strategies to ask for more time to talk in order to take time to think what to express. On the other hands, the foreign tourists' message reduction and alteration strategies were often used in terms of transferring their unknown words with their Thai cooking instructor in order to better their understandings of what they interacted. Most importantly, simplifying own words and expressing short statements were both employed with their Thai cooking instructor's interaction. With references to the study of Posai and Soranasthaporn (2018), it was stated that these message reduction and alteration strategies were all

concerned with decreasing texts by making the text concise, and simplifying phrases and familiar words to be understood, replacing the original text with new text to convey the meaning, as well as reducing original messages and reporting the same ideas. However, these word-oriented strategies were involved with conveying the speaker's familiar words into same ideas, and the speaker's familiar words were purposed to guess what they expressed.

### Conclusion

An analysis of the type of communication strategies used by the Thai-cooking instructor shows that his use of risk-taking strategies was mostly in the form of fluency-oriented strategies, followed by his use of accuracy-oriented and non-verbal strategies. Meanwhile, use of risk-avoidance strategies by the instructor was mostly in the form of his time-gaining strategies, followed by his use of message-reduction and alteration strategies and, lastly, his use of message-abandonment strategies. On the other hands, an analysis of the type of communication strategies employed by foreign tourists shows that use of risk-taking strategies by the foreign tourists was mostly in the form of help-seeking strategies, followed by non-verbal and fluency-oriented strategies. Otherwise, their use of risk-avoidance strategies was mostly in the form of message-reduction and alteration strategies, followed by their use of message-abandonment and time-gaining strategies. On this result, it was found that Thai-cooking instructor used all 9 communication strategies based on the concepts of Corder (1983); Dörnyei & Cohen (2002), and Nakatani (2005, 2006). But not found to be used accuracy-oriented strategies for foreign tourists. Therefore, it can be a guideline for further studies that should more focus on accuracy-oriented strategies.

Due to such a different selected participant's multilingual diversities and different cultures, it was found that some Chinese and French tourists were not keen on communicating English. That was to say, simplifying English words to express ideas, using a lot of gestures to communicate when being misunderstood, as well as keeping doing it without asking clearly were mostly found in some Chinese tourists, meanwhile French and German tourists with their good command in English communication attempted to ask for inquiries with their Thai instructor. In terms of the American tourist's interaction with his/her Thai instructor, it was also found that jokes and talks were mostly used for their relaxation when communicating with interlocutors, as well as their cleared explanation was frequently used when their conversation took places.

### Recommendations for Further Study

1. A further study might be conducted between people of the same or different sexes to identify the similarities and differences of frequency, which may affect their use of communication strategies.
2. A further study might make use of questionnaires to analyze the more obvious tendencies or behavioral norms.
3. A further study might also be conducted by reference to other factors affecting the use of communication strategies in different workplaces.
4. A further study might be conducted another issue related to communication strategies such as lack of concentration and lack of response.

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