INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION BARRIERS AND STRATEGIES OF THAI BUDDHIST MONKS WITH FOREIGNERS AT AN INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST CENTER IN THAILAND

PHRAJATUPORN SIMMALI

A Thesis Submitted to University of Phayao

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Master of Arts Degree in English

June 2025

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Submitted by PHRA JATUPORN SIMMALI

Approved in partial fulfillment of the requriements for the

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ABSTRACT

This research explored the intercultural communication (IC) barriers and strategies employed by Thai Buddhist monks during interactions with foreign visitors at an International Buddhist Center (IBC) in Thailand. Given the increasing significance of English as a lingua franca (ELF), particularly in religious and cultural exchanges, the study aims to investigate how monks navigate linguistic and cultural challenges while communicating in English. As monks frequently serve as cultural ambassadors to foreign tourists, effective intercultural communication is essential for sharing Buddhist teachings and promoting cross-cultural understanding. This mixed-methods study incorporated both quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine the communication difficulties monks encounter and the strategies they use to overcome these barriers. The study used questionnaire and semi-structured interviews to collect data from a sample of 30 Buddhist monks for questionnaire and 10 Monks for interview, focusing on their experiences with IC at the IBC. Data from the questionnaire underwent analysis using computer program, focusing on descriptive statistics including mean scores, standard deviation (SD), and percentages. Additionally, a conceptual content analysis method was applied to examine the data gathered from the semi-structured interviews.

The results indicate the answer to Research Question 1 (RQ1): What IC barriers do Buddhist monks in Thailand encounter when speaking English with foreigners about Buddhism at an International Buddhist Center? Language barriers were the most prevalent, with a mean score of 3.45; philosophical/religious barriers were second at an overall 3.30, followed by cultural barriers, which scored an average of 3.05, and pragmatic considerations were the lowest at an average of 2.75. For semi-structured interviews, the interview regarding the Thai Buddhist monks' intercultural communication barriers during communication activities. As can be seen, the most common ICBs found in the interviews of all four questions were language and cultural barriers, the data suggesting that monks faced language barriers and cultural barriers, including struggle with Buddhist vocabulary, a limited vocabulary for complex religious terms, pronunciations, and cultural differences when encountering foreigners. Answer to Research Question 2 (RQ2): What IC strategies are utilized by Buddhist monks in Thailand when speaking English with foreigners about Buddhism at an International Buddhist Center? Verbal strategies were the most prevalent, with an average of 3.69, followed by non-verbal strategies at 3.53, and interactive strategies were third with an average score of 3.46, respectively.

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Jatuporn Simmali

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ABBREVIATIONS

IC = Intercultural communication strategies

CBs = Communication barriers

IBC = International Buddhist Center

L1 = First language leaner

L2 = Second language leaner

EFL = English as a Foreign Language

ELF = English as a Lingua Franca

IC = Intercultural communication

ICC = Intercultural communicative competence

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the research on intercultural communication (IC) barriers and strategies used by Buddhist monks in Thailand. It outlines the importance of English proficiency, the role of English as a lingua franca in religious and cultural contexts, and the significance of Buddhist monks as cultural ambassadors. Additionally, the chapter presents the research gaps, contribution, research objectives, research questions, and definitions of key term

Background and rationale of the study

1. Global importance of English and the English language Proficiency level in Thailand

Nowadays, English is the most widely spoken language in the world, with over 1.5 billion people using it as a first or second language. As the dominant international language, it serves as a lingua franca in global commerce, diplomacy, education, and intercultural communication. English proficiency is essential for individuals and nations seeking to participate fully in the global economy and foster cross-cultural exchanges (Crystal, 2012). The significance of English continues to grow as it mediates communication between people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

In Thailand, English is regarded as a crucial skill, particularly in educational contexts and across industries such as tourism, commerce, science, and religious communication (Ruanklai & Yodmongkol, 2017). As global tourism expands, particularly in Southeast Asia, the need for English proficiency intensifies, especially among Buddhist monks, who often serve as spiritual guides and cultural representatives for foreign tourists in countries such as Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Brunei, and the Philippines.

Despite the global importance of English, Thailand consistently ranks low in international English proficiency indices. According to the English Proficiency Index

(EPI), Thailand ranked 97th out of 111 countries in 2022, 101st out of 113 countries in 2023, and 93rd out of 109 countries in 2024 (English Proficiency Index, 2022, 2023, 2024). These rankings reflect significant challenges in the educational system, where students often struggle to achieve functional English proficiency by the time they reach university. Thai university graduates are expected to achieve B2 proficiency (upper-intermediate level) based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR); however, most students fall within the A1 or A2 levels, indicating basic English skills (Waluyo, 2019).

Several factors contribute to this proficiency gap. Oeamoum & Sriwichai (2020) cite outdated curricula, insufficient practical learning opportunities, and the lack of alignment between classroom instruction and real-world communication needs. Additionally, most Thai students, especially in rural areas, have limited exposure to English in daily life (Imsa-Ard, 2020).

2. English as a Lingua Franca in religious contexts

Beyond commerce, education, and tourism, English plays a vital role as a lingua franca in intercultural communication within religious contexts. Thailand attracts millions of international visitors annually, many of whom are interested in its rich Buddhist heritage. Buddhist monks frequently engage with tourists who seek to learn about Buddhism and Thai culture, where English becomes the medium for religious and philosophical exchanges.

English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) refers to the use of English by speakers of different native languages for communication in multilingual settings. Monks frequently interact with tourists from Western countries like the United States and Europe, as global tourism expands, particularly in Southeast Asia, the need for English proficiency intensifies, especially among Buddhist monks, who often serve as spiritual guides and cultural representatives for foreign tourists in countries such as Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Brunei, and the Philippines. Additionally, English is widely used as a second language in many neighboring Asian countries, including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines, further emphasizing the importance of English proficiency in the region (Jenkins, 2007).

As Palasarn (2015) notes, the growing international interest in Thai culture and Buddhism necessitates improved English proficiency among monks to effectively communicate with tourists. However, these interactions are often hampered by monks' limited English skills, leading to communication breakdowns (Soma & Sribayak, 2023).

3. Thai Buddhist monks' roles in Thai society, using of intercultural communication and the lack of intercultural communication for monk

Buddhism is deeply embedded in Thai society, with over 90% of the population practicing Theravada Buddhism (United States Department of State, 2022). Buddhist monks play a critical role as spiritual leaders and cultural representatives. In addition to religious duties, they serve as cultural ambassadors, particularly in the context of international tourism. Monks often engage in conversations with foreign visitors about Buddhism and Thai culture, making IC a core component of their interactions.

Monks have employed various intercultural communication strategies to foster understanding and connection with diverse communities. One such strategy is the use of storytelling and parables, which can transcend cultural barriers and resonate with people from different backgrounds. Additionally, monks often engage in active listening, seeking to understand the perspectives of others and respond with empathy and compassion (Smith, 2019).

However, monks have struggled with English proficiency, particularly when discussing complex religious concepts, limiting their effectiveness in ICs. The lack of intercultural communication strategies can hinder the effectiveness of monks in modern society. As globalization increases, monks encounter individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, necessitating effective cross-cultural interaction. However, traditional monastic training often prioritizes spiritual development over intercultural communication skills (Talanuek & Tham-ngarn, 2024).

Moreover, numerous studies have explored the challenges Buddhist monks face in developing and using English for ICs. Phongsiri (2017) examined the lack of intercultural communication strategies at the International Buddhist Center at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Chiang Mai, and found that monks' limited

ICs posed significant barriers to effective communication, especially during discussions on Dhamma topics. Similarly, Varasayananda & Prakrai (2020) found that despite efforts to provide English training at Mahamakut Buddhist University, monks continued to face difficulties in using appropriate communication strategies during real-world conversations with foreigners. Furthermore, research by Moontha & Taweesuk (2023) explored the impact of technology on ICs among Buddhist monks. The study found that while technology can facilitate cross-cultural exchange, it can also pose challenges, such as language barriers and cultural misunderstandings. Finally, a study by Williams (2021)) emphasized the need for more practical ICs that focus on real-world communication skills. The study found that traditional English language courses often fail to equip monks with the necessary tools to engage in meaningful intercultural interactions

These findings indicate that while monks are motivated to use English to fulfil their roles as cultural ambassadors, their proficiency remains low, hindering their ability to engage effectively in IC.

Significance and gaps of the study

This research offers significant insights into the IC barriers and strategies used by Buddhist monks in Thailand when speaking English with foreigners. By addressing both linguistic and cultural challenges, this study provides valuable data that can be used to enhance language education programs and IC practices, particularly within the context of Buddhist monks interacting with foreign visitors at International Buddhist Centers (IBCs).

The findings may also be applied to develop educational workshops and training sessions for monks, helping them overcome specific communication barriers identified in interactions with foreigners. Additionally, the results can inform the creation of targeted language curricula for monks that emphasize strategic communication skills and practical language use. On a broader scale, the study could contribute to formulating institutional guidelines and policies for Buddhist universities throughout Thailand, promoting cross-cultural understanding through improved English proficiency.

Despite the existing body of research on English language proficiency in Thailand, several gaps remain. Previous studies have not fully explored the IC strategies Buddhist monks employ during real-world interactions with foreigners. While frameworks such as Dornyei & Scott (1997) communication strategies have been applied in general EFL contexts, there is little research on how these strategies are adapted by Buddhist monks when discussing complex religious and cultural topics. Moreover, most existing studies focus on controlled educational environments rather than the spontaneous, unscripted interactions monks experience with tourists in IBCs.

By addressing these gaps, this study contributes to the literature by applying IC frameworks (Byram, 1997; Dornyei & Scott, 1997) specifically to the context of Buddhist monks. It will explore how monks navigate Intercultural communication barriers and strategies, both linguistic and cultural when engaging with foreigners. The research will also examine the role of cultural factors—such as social norms, religious beliefs, and attitudes toward authority—providing a comprehensive view of IC challenges in religious contexts.

Ultimately, the findings of this study will have practical applications for improving English language training for monks, promoting cross-cultural understanding, and enhancing the overall visitor experience at IBCs.

Purposes of the study

This thesis aims to provide insights into the IC barriers and strategies employed by Buddhist Monks when speaking English with foreigners during interactions at an International Buddhist Center. The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To explore IC barriers encountered by Monks when engaging in communication with foreigners in English at an International Buddhist Center.

2. To identify IC strategies utilized by Monks when speaking English with foreigners about Buddhism at an International Buddhist Center.

Research questions

The research questions for this study are designed to identify barriers based on the question content of foreigners and IC strategies utilized by Buddhist Monks when speaking English with foreigners at an International Buddhist Center. The study aims to address the following research questions:

1. What IC barriers do Buddhist Monks in Thailand encounter when speaking English with foreigners about Buddhism at an International Buddhist Center?

2. What IC strategies are utilized by Buddhist Monks in Thailand when speaking English with foreigners about Buddhism at an International Buddhist Center?

Scope of study

1. Scope of content

The study investigated both IC barriers and the strategies used by monks when communicating in English with foreigners. The study focused on linguistic challenges (e.g., vocabulary, pronunciation) as well as cultural barriers (e.g., differences in religious norms, attitudes towards authority). The frameworks of Byram (1997) and Dornyei & Scott (1997) guided the classification of these barriers and strategies.

2. Scope of context and population

The research was conducted in a real-world setting, focusing on the daily interactions monks had with foreign visitors. The motivations for foreigners visiting Thailand often include tourism, spiritual experiences, or academic research. Within the IBC context, these visitors typically seek to deepen their understanding of Buddhism, engage in spiritual practices, and immerse themselves in Thai culture. Their interest in Buddhism might stem from a personal spiritual journey, academic pursuits, or a desire to contribute to interfaith dialogue. Understanding these varied motivations is essential for examining the intercultural communication barriers and strategies that Thai Buddhist monks employ when interacting with these visitors (Piuchan, 2021). This allowed for the investigation of unscripted, natural conversations, which often involved complex religious discussions and cultural exchanges. 30 Buddhist Monks were studied in this study. Inclusion criteria for Buddhist Monks are Monks who attend university at any level and in any program, participate in the university-affiliated IBC, and vary in

age, temple, and level of English proficiency. Convenience sampling was used for practical purposes, with the expectation that 10 Monks would participate in semi-structured interviews to provide a comprehensive understanding of intercultural communication barriers and strategies.

The target participants for data collection consisted of 30 Thai Buddhist Monks from the IBC at Mahamakut Buddhist University, Chiang Mai. These 30 Buddhist monks are students from Mahamakut Buddhist University. These monks are different in ages and experiences in Buddhism as well as in intercultural communication with foreigners. Prior to collecting data, these monks were approached by personal meeting at the IBC, Mahamakut Buddhist University, Chiang Mai.

Personal meetings at the International Buddhist Center (IBC) at Mahamakut Buddhist University, Chiang Mai, offer a unique opportunity for visitors to engage in one-on-one conversations with Buddhist monks. These meetings provide a personalized setting for individuals to ask questions, discuss spiritual concerns, and gain deeper insights into Buddhist teachings. Monks often utilize a blend of formal and informal communication styles, adapting their approach to the individual needs and preferences of each visitor(Varasayananda & Prakrai, 2020).

After approaching these monks, the researcher used the following inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria include:

1. Thai Buddhist monks residing at the specified international Buddhist center
2. Monks who have had regular interactions with foreign visitors
3. Monks who possess a certain level of English proficiency (e.g., able to engage in basic conversations)
4. Monks who are ready to take part in the study and give informed consent

3. Scope of time

This study investigated the intercultural communication barriers and strategies employed by Thai Buddhist monks at an international Buddhist center in Thailand during the year 2024. By focusing on a specific year, the research aimed to capture a snapshot of the current intercultural communication landscape within the

Buddhist community. This approach allowed for a detailed examination of the specific challenges and strategies that monks encountered in their interactions with foreign visitors, providing valuable insights into the evolving nature of intercultural communication in religious contexts.

Definition of key terms

Intercultural communication (IC): Intercultural Communication refers to the process of exchanging information, meaning, and ideas between individuals from different cultural backgrounds. In today's globalized world, IC has become a critical skill across multiple sectors, including business, education, healthcare, diplomacy, and religious contexts. It plays an increasingly significant role as societies become more diverse and cross-cultural interactions become commonplace.

Intercultural Communication Barriers (ICBs): Communication barriers are challenges encountered by Thai Buddhist Monks when speaking with foreigners that limit their ability to communicate clearly. The study employed the framework of Byram (1997), who classifies barriers into five types: knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, attitudes, and critical cultural awareness.

Intercultural communication strategies (ICSs): Approaches and plans employed in verbal or non-verbal communication from the framework of Dornyei & Scott (1997) enhance clarity and effectiveness in conveying information. These strategies aim to facilitate successful communication and overcome potential challenges. They include linguistic strategies (e.g., borrowing, appeal for help, codeswitching, translanguaging), cultural strategies (e.g., cultural accommodation), non-verbal strategies (e.g., mime, employing multimodal resources), and adaptive strategies (e.g., paraphrase, avoidance, inclusive communication practices).

Thai Buddhist monks: The target participants for data collection consisted of 30 Thai Buddhist Monks from the IBC at Mahamakut Buddhist University, Chiang Mai. These 30 Buddhist monks are students from Mahamakut Buddhist University. These monks are different in ages and experiences in Buddhism as well as in intercultural communication with foreigners. Prior to collecting data, these monks were approached by personal meeting at the IBC, Mahamakut Buddhist University, Chiang Mai

International Buddhist Center (IBC): This study would be conducted at an International Buddhist Center (IBC) affiliated with Mahamakut Buddhist University in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The IBC is an informal environment where monks regularly interact with foreign visitors interested in learning about Buddhism. Visitors come from a range of countries, including the United States, Germany, France, Australia, and Japan, making the IBC a rich setting for studying intercultural communication (Varasayananda & Prakrai, 2020).

Foreigners: As part of this study's context, foreign participants from different countries who take part in the Monk Chat program at the International Buddhist Center (IBC) would be included in the data collection process. However, these foreigners would not be the primary subjects of the study, meaning that their information would not be analyzed directly. Instead, their participation serves as a crucial element of the intercultural exchange, allowing the evaluation of communication barriers and strategies employed by the Buddhist monks, who are the main focus of the research.

Conclusion of the chapter

This chapter has introduced the research topic, "Intercultural Communication Barriers and Strategies of Thai Buddhist Monks with Foreigners at an International Buddhist Center in Thailand." The chapter outlined the background and rationale for the study, highlighting the global importance of English as a lingua franca and its relevance to IC, particularly in religious contexts. The role of Buddhist monks as cultural ambassadors, coupled with the challenges they face in English proficiency, sets the foundation for this study.

The research gaps identified in this chapter emphasize the limited focus on the specific communication strategies used by monks, as well as the underexplored influence of cultural factors on these interactions. Additionally, previous studies have primarily been conducted in controlled environments, overlooking the complexities of real-world interactions between monks and foreign visitors. This study seeks to address these gaps by investigating both linguistic and cultural barriers, and examining how monks adapt their communication strategies when discussing Buddhism with foreigners in unscripted settings.

The research aims and questions laid out in this chapter provide a clear focus on identifying IC barriers and strategies. By analyzing the experiences of monks in real-world scenarios, the study will contribute to enhancing English language education and training programs for Buddhist monks, with the ultimate goal of fostering better intercultural understanding.

The next chapter will present a detailed review of the literature, exploring relevant theoretical frameworks and previous research on IC, ELF, and the role of Buddhist monks in cross-cultural exchanges. This literature review will serve as the foundation for the empirical study, positioning the research within the broader context of existing scholarship.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter reviews theories and studies relevant to IC barriers and strategies, with a focus on the role of ELF in the context of Buddhist monks in Thailand. The chapter begins by explaining the theory of IC and related concepts. It then moves to discuss frameworks for IC barriers and strategies. Next, it introduces the concept of ELF, particularly in Buddhist and Thai settings. Finally, the chapter examines previous studies on IC barriers and strategies, identifying theoretical gaps that this study aims to address

Intercultural communication (IC)

Intercultural communication or IC refers to the process of exchanging information, meaning, and ideas between individuals from different cultural backgrounds. In today's globalized world, IC has become a critical skill across multiple sectors, including business, education, healthcare, diplomacy, and religious contexts. It plays an increasingly significant role as societies become more diverse and cross-cultural interactions become commonplace. Successful IC involves not just language proficiency but also an understanding of the cultural norms, values, and beliefs that shape the way people from different backgrounds perceive and convey information.

In addition, IC helps bridge cultural gaps and foster mutual understanding in diverse environments. This is especially important in the context of globalization, where individuals and institutions frequently interact across borders. As Baker (2022) notes, IC facilitates global interactions in various spheres of life, particularly through the use of digital communication technologies, which have accelerated the spread of cultural forms and practices worldwide. These platforms have made it possible for people from different parts of the world to engage in real-time communication, often navigating complex cultural nuances in the process.

IC is also essential in contexts where cultural and religious exchanges are prominent, such as in interactions between Buddhist monks and foreign visitors in

Thailand. Monks, who serve as cultural and spiritual ambassadors, often find themselves in situations where they must convey complex religious and philosophical concepts to tourists who come from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. In such situations, IC becomes a vital tool that enables these monks to navigate the potential challenges posed by cultural differences and language barriers. By effectively engaging in intercultural dialogue, monks not only communicate Buddhist teachings but also promote a deeper understanding of Thai culture and spirituality among international visitors.

More importantly, IC in religious contexts like Buddhism plays a critical role in enhancing global peace and understanding. As noted by (Kim, 2001), religious leaders often act as mediators and communicators between cultures, promoting values such as compassion, tolerance, and understanding, which are central to many religious teachings. Buddhist monks, for instance, convey not only the doctrinal aspects of Buddhism but also embody its principles of mindfulness, non-attachment, and empathy through their interactions. In this way, IC in religious contexts does not merely involve linguistic communication but also the transmission of values, worldviews, and spiritual beliefs.

In conclusion, intercultural communication (IC) is a critical skill in today's globalized world, particularly for individuals who interact with people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. For Thai Buddhist monks, IC is essential for effectively communicating Buddhist teachings and promoting cross-cultural understanding. By developing strong IC skills, monks can overcome language barriers, bridge cultural gaps, and foster meaningful connections with people from different cultures. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, the importance of IC will only continue to grow. By investing in IC training and education, we can promote intercultural understanding, tolerance, and peace.

1. Definition and conceptualization of IC

IC has been defined and conceptualized in various ways by scholars from different disciplines. At its core, IC involves the ability to exchange information and ideas in a way that is culturally appropriate and mutually intelligible to all parties involved. The study of IC encompasses both verbal and non-verbal communication,

recognizing that cultural differences can affect everything from language use to body language, eye contact, gestures, and even silence.

To illustrate, Deardorff & Jones (2012) defines IC in terms of intercultural competence, which involves several key elements: respect, openness, curiosity, cultural knowledge, and effective communication skills. According to Deardoff, intercultural competence is achieved when individuals are able to engage in meaningful communication across cultural divides by demonstrating respect for others' cultural perspectives, remaining open to new ideas, and possessing the knowledge needed to navigate cultural differences. This requires not only language skills but also an awareness of cultural norms, values, and behaviors. For instance, understanding that certain gestures or expressions may have different meanings in different cultures is critical for avoiding misunderstandings and fostering successful communication.

One of the key aspects of IC, according to Deardoff, is cultural sensitivity—the ability to recognize and respect the cultural differences that exist between oneself and others. This sensitivity is crucial in avoiding ethnocentrism, or the belief that one's own culture is superior to others. For Buddhist monks in Thailand, cultural sensitivity is vital when engaging with foreign tourists who may hold different religious beliefs, values, and practices. The monks must navigate these differences while remaining true to the core principles of Buddhism, such as non-judgment, compassion, and mindfulness.

Angelis (2015) expands on this by emphasizing the role of cultural conditioning in shaping communication. Cultural conditioning refers to the way individuals are influenced by their cultural upbringing in terms of how they perceive the world, interact with others, and communicate. This includes everything from language use to social norms and expectations. Understanding how cultural conditioning affects communication allows individuals to better interpret the behaviors, actions, and words of people from other cultures. For example, in some cultures, direct eye contact is considered a sign of confidence and attentiveness, while in others, it may be seen as confrontational or disrespectful. Recognizing these details is critical for successful IC.

In the case of Buddhist monks, cultural conditioning plays a significant role in shaping how they communicate Buddhist teachings to foreign audiences. Many monks have been raised in the Thai cultural context, where certain norms, such as showing deference to authority figures or avoiding direct confrontation, are deeply ingrained. When engaging with foreign tourists, monks must be aware that these cultural norms may not align with the expectations of their audience. For example, Western tourists may expect a more direct form of communication, while tourists from East Asian cultures may be more accustomed to indirect communication styles. By being mindful of these cultural differences, monks can adjust their communication style to ensure that their message is understood and appreciated by a diverse audience.

In summary, IC is a multifaceted process that involves more than just linguistic exchange. It requires an understanding of cultural conditioning, communication styles, and the ability to manage anxiety and uncertainty. For Buddhist monks, mastering these skills is essential for fulfilling their role as cultural and spiritual ambassadors, allowing them to engage meaningfully with foreign visitors and share the teachings of Buddhism in a way that transcends cultural boundaries.

2. Intercultural communicative competence (ICC)

IC, as discussed earlier, involves the exchange of information across cultural boundaries, emphasizing the importance of both linguistic and cultural understanding. In today's globalized world, where interactions between people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds are increasingly common, IC plays a critical role, particularly in religious contexts like those in which Buddhist monks in Thailand engage. The concept of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), developed by Byram (1997), expands on IC by incorporating key competencies such as critical cultural awareness, openness, and the ability to interpret and relate cultural information, ensuring effective communication in diverse cultural settings. However, as digital platforms and global interconnectedness reshape the nature of intercultural exchanges, Baker's Intercultural Communication Awareness (ICA) framework offers a more fluid and adaptable approach. While Byram's ICC focuses on interactions rooted in specific cultural identities, Baker's model, particularly relevant in today's digitally

connected world, emphasizes the evolving and hybrid nature of cultures in real-time global communication. This is especially pertinent for Buddhist monks, who must navigate both face-to-face and online interactions, blending traditional cultural competencies with the dynamic realities of IC in the digital age.

As a summary, intercultural communication (IC) is a vital skill for effective cross-cultural interaction. Byram's ICC and Baker's ICA frameworks offer valuable insights into the complexities of IC in today's interconnected world. Buddhist monks, as cultural ambassadors, can benefit from developing strong IC skills to effectively communicate with people from diverse backgrounds, both in person and online.

2.1 Byram's (1997) ICC framework

Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) builds upon the basic principles of IC by focusing not only on language proficiency but also on the essential cultural and social competencies required to navigate intercultural exchanges successfully. Byram's ICC framework introduces five core competencies—critical cultural awareness, attitudes of openness and curiosity, cultural knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, and skills of discovery and interaction. These competencies provide a deeper understanding of how individuals can engage meaningfully across cultures.

For Buddhist monks, who serve as cultural and spiritual ambassadors to foreign visitors, ICC is especially crucial. Their interactions often involve explaining intricate Buddhist concepts in English, a language that is not native to them or their visitors. Byram's model highlights that effective IC requires more than just linguistic accuracy; it demands the ability to relate these teachings to the diverse cultural contexts of the visitors. For instance, monks must critically assess their own cultural perspectives on Buddhism while being open to understanding how foreign visitors from various backgrounds might approach or interpret the religion

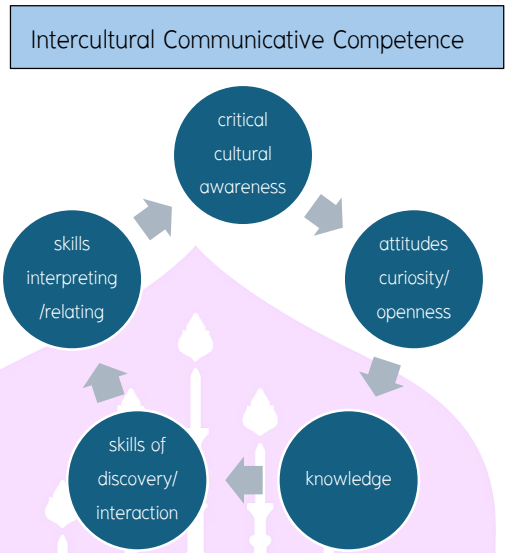

Figure 1 Byram's (1997) Intercultural communicative competence

As seen in Figure 1, Byram's framework is particularly relevant to the role of monks in Thailand. The critical cultural awareness component emphasizes that monks must be able to reflect on and evaluate both their own cultural norms and those of their foreign visitors. This reflective process allows monks to modify their explanations of Buddhist teachings to make them more accessible and culturally sensitive. Attitudes of openness and curiosity are also essential, encouraging monks to approach intercultural interactions with empathy and an eagerness to learn about the cultural backgrounds of their visitors, which fosters deeper connections and mutual respect.

The knowledge aspect of ICC further underscores the need for monks to be aware of both their own cultural context and that of their audience. This knowledge allows them to better understand the expectations and assumptions that visitors bring to the interaction, thereby facilitating more effective communication. Similarly, the skills of interpreting and relating help monks translate complex Buddhist ideas into terms that are meaningful and comprehensible to foreign audiences, ensuring that the core teachings are not lost in translation.

Finally, the skills of discovery and interaction enable monks to continually learn from their intercultural experiences, improving their ability to communicate in future encounters. Through ongoing reflection and adaptation, monks can enhance their communication strategies, making each interaction more effective than the last. These competencies, as outlined by Byram, are vital for the monks' roles as intercultural communicators, allowing them to engage with foreign visitors in ways that promote both understanding and appreciation of Buddhism.

As can be seen, Byram's Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) framework provides a comprehensive understanding of the skills and attitudes necessary for effective intercultural communication. For Buddhist monks, who often engage with people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, ICC is crucial for conveying complex Buddhist concepts and fostering intercultural understanding. By developing the five core competencies outlined by Byram, monks can enhance their ability to communicate effectively, build relationships, and promote the teachings of Buddhism globally.

2.2 Baker's (2015) ICC framework

However, as the nature of intercultural interactions evolves in an increasingly globalized and digital world, it is essential to build on Byram's ICC framework by considering broader, more dynamic models of intercultural awareness. This is where Baker's Intercultural Communication Awareness (ICA) model comes into play, offering a more fluid and adaptable approach to intercultural competence in today's interconnected society.

While Byram's model focuses on the interaction between individuals from distinct cultural backgrounds, emphasizing the development of competencies like cultural awareness, linguistic ability, and interpretive skills, Baker (2015) expands this view to include the complexities introduced by digital communication and global interconnectedness. Baker argues that IC is no longer confined to face-to-face interactions; instead, it increasingly takes place in virtual and global spaces where individuals from multiple cultural backgrounds interact in real-time. This shift reflects the growing need to move beyond rigid cultural norms and to embrace a more

dynamic understanding of how culture and language evolve in response to digital globalization.

Baker's ICA framework builds on Byram's ideas but goes further by acknowledging that intercultural exchanges are now influenced by digital platforms, where boundaries between cultures are more fluid, and cultural references are often hybridized. In this context, ICA focuses on how individuals navigate cultural differences not only in direct encounters but also in the virtual world, where instant global communication is the norm. For example, Buddhist monks in Thailand, who traditionally engage with tourists in temples or International Buddhist Centers (IBCs), now increasingly use digital platforms to share teachings or conduct online meditation sessions with global audiences. This shift requires them to develop an adaptable communication style that accommodates diverse linguistic backgrounds and cultural expectations.

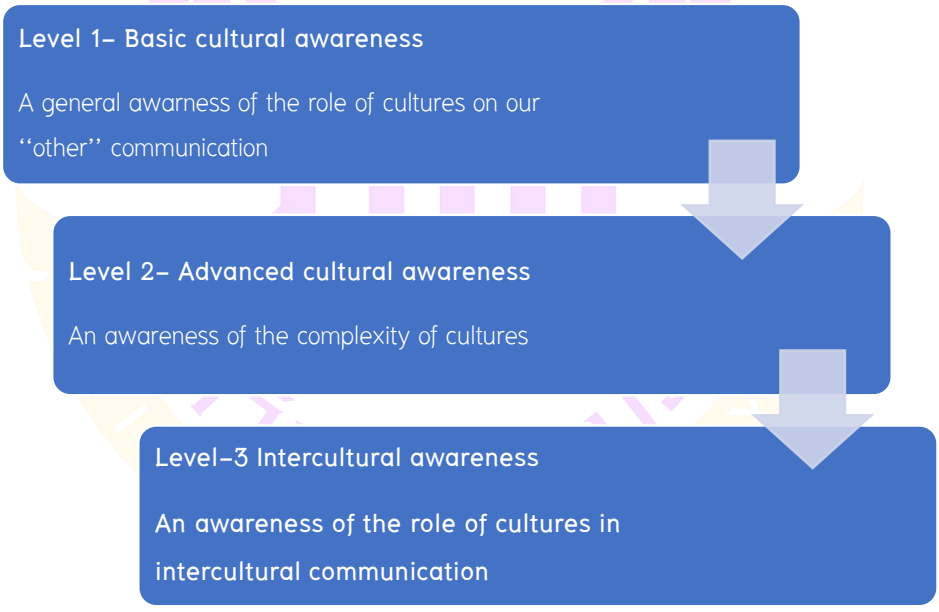

Figure 2 Baker's (2015) Intercultural communication awareness (ICA)

As illustrated in Figure 2, Baker outlines three levels of Intercultural Awareness (ICA), each reflecting a deeper understanding of cultural complexity in both physical and digital spaces.

Level 1, Basic Cultural Awareness, involves a basic understanding of one's own culture (C1) and its influence on communication. While this level is not directly focused on IC, it provides the foundation for recognizing how one's beliefs, behaviors, and values shape interactions. For Buddhist monks, this level ensures that they are aware of how their Thai Buddhist identity influences their interactions with both Thai locals and foreign visitors.

Level 2, Advanced Cultural Awareness, involves recognizing cultures as dynamic, fluid entities rather than fixed or essentialist categories. At this stage, individuals understand that cultural frameworks are relative and often change based on context. For monks, this means acknowledging that the foreigners they engage with, whether in person or online, bring complex, multi-layered cultural identities to their interactions. This level is crucial for monks who must navigate cultural differences not just within traditional Thai settings but also in global, multicultural environments.

Level 3, Intercultural Awareness, transcends specific cultural identities and focuses on how globalization and digital communication influence intercultural exchanges. This level emphasizes that in today's world, communicative practices are no longer tied to specific cultural norms. Instead, they are shaped by the fluid, hybrid nature of global interactions, where English is often used as a lingua franca (ELF). In this context, Buddhist monks need to adapt their communication strategies to facilitate mutual understanding, regardless of whether their audience consists of native or non-native English speakers. By engaging with audiences through digital platforms, monks experience a wide variety of intercultural exchanges that reflect the emergent, flexible nature of communication in a globalized world.

In summary, IC is the exchange of ideas and meanings between people from different cultural backgrounds. It is essential across sectors, including religious contexts, where Buddhist monks in Thailand play a key role as cultural ambassadors. Effective IC requires understanding not just language, but also cultural norms, beliefs, and values. Two major frameworks, Byram's (1997) Intercultural Communicative

Competence (ICC) and Baker's (2015) Intercultural Communication Awareness (ICA), highlight the need for adaptability in both face-to-face and digital interactions. Monks must utilize these frameworks to engage with diverse, global audiences meaningfully.

IC in religious and Buddhist contexts

As outlined earlier, IC plays a vital role in the globalized world by facilitating dialogue between individuals from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This extends beyond secular domains like business and education, reaching into religious contexts where communication across cultural boundaries is increasingly common. In religious settings, IC is essential for promoting mutual understanding and fostering deeper connections between cultures, particularly when dealing with complex spiritual teachings and traditions. Byram's (1997) ICC model emphasizes that successful intercultural interactions depend not only on linguistic skills but also on critical cultural awareness, openness, and the ability to interpret and relate cultural information in context.

In the case of Buddhism, which has historically adapted to various cultural contexts, IC has been central to the spread and development of Buddhist teachings. As Baker's (2015) Intercultural Communication Awareness (ICA) model highlights, the globalization of communication—both through face-to-face interactions and digital platforms—requires dynamic and flexible approaches to intercultural exchanges. Buddhist monks, in particular, serve as cultural ambassadors who facilitate such exchanges, especially when communicating with foreign visitors in temple settings or online.

The role of IC in Buddhism is evident across its global spread. For example, Smith (2024) discusses how Buddhist teachings were adapted as they traveled across cultures, particularly in East Asia, where Buddhism was integrated with Confucianism, Daoism, and Zen traditions. This shows that the core principles of Buddhism were communicated and reshaped to fit the cultural contexts of China, Japan, and Korea, creating new forms of Buddhism that were both rooted in local traditions and connected to the broader Buddhist philosophy.

In India, where Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana schools coexist, Buddhist monks from different lineages engage in dialogue to share perspectives and teachings. Pralahad (2015) highlights how these intercultural exchanges contribute to the vibrant intellectual and spiritual environment within the Buddhist monastic community, where regional differences in language and custom are overcome through shared Buddhist principles. This dynamic process of IC fosters collaboration, cross-cultural understanding, and spiritual enrichment.

Similarly, Larbprasertporn et al. (2021) emphasize that cross-cultural interactions among Buddhist monks are critical for promoting global cooperation within the Buddhist community. For example, Japanese Buddhist monks, though they may not explicitly use the term "IC," engage in it constantly when they participate in global Buddhist organizations or collaborate with other schools, such as Zen or Tibetan Buddhism. These exchanges often involve overcoming language barriers and cultural misunderstandings, which monks address by applying the principles of Buddhist philosophy to communication—such as mindfulness, patience, and compassion. This enables them to bridge the gap between tradition and modernity while fostering deeper cross-cultural connections.

In the Thai context, Tangpathomwong (2021) argues that IC is becoming increasingly important for Thai Buddhist monks, particularly as modern technologies facilitate more frequent intercultural exchanges. In Thailand, where Buddhist monks regularly interact with tourists and foreign students of Buddhism, their role extends beyond teaching religious doctrine; they act as mediators between Thai culture and the international community. This role requires strong IC skills, especially when engaging with visitors who come from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

While face-to-face interactions have long been the primary means of IC in religious settings, the digital age has introduced new platforms for intercultural dialogue. Many Buddhist monks now use digital communication to engage with global audiences through online teachings and meditation sessions. This aligns with Baker's (2015) ICA framework, which stresses the importance of digital communication in shaping contemporary intercultural exchanges. Monks must now navigate both the traditional in-person interactions at temples and the growing demand for virtual communication

with international audiences, further highlighting the need for intercultural competence.

For Thai Buddhist monks, acquiring IC skills is vital for fulfilling their role as cultural and spiritual ambassadors. Witayarat (2023) suggests that cultural competence among monks can be developed through a combination of introspective practices, such as meditation and reflection on their own cultural background—and more formal intercultural education. Monks who practice self-reflection are better equipped to engage meaningfully in intercultural exchanges, as they can draw from their deep understanding of Thai Buddhist values while remaining open to the cultural perspectives of their foreign visitors.

Overall, the role of IC in Buddhism is multifaceted, combining the transmission of religious teachings with the promotion of global peace and understanding. By applying Byram's ICC framework and Baker's ICA model, Buddhist monks are able to navigate the complexities of cross-cultural communication, both in traditional religious settings and on digital platforms, where they continue to share the teachings of Buddhism with an ever-expanding global audience.

IC barriers

As highlighted in previous sections, both IC and ICC stress the ability to navigate cultural differences and facilitate exchanges across linguistic and cultural divides. Buddhist monks in Thailand, often serving as cultural and spiritual ambassadors, face several IC barriers that hinder their communication with foreign visitors. As seen in Table 1; these challenges fall into four main categories: linguistic barriers, cultural barriers, pragmatic considerations, and religious or philosophical barriers.

Table 1 Summary of types of IC carriers

Barrier Types	Sub-Barriers	Specific Barriers	Possible impacts based on literature
Language Barriers	Vocabulary & Grammar	Limited vocabulary for complex religious terms; frequent grammar mistakes.	Inability to clearly explain concepts; misunderstandings in discussions (Chand, 2021)
	Pronunciation & Fluency	Difficulty with pronunciation; slow or hesitant speech.	Visitors may struggle to understand; reduced confidence in public speaking (Chaiyasit, 2018).
	Comprehension Issues	Trouble understanding accents or fast conversations.	Missing key points, leading to incomplete responses or superficial engagement (Chaiyasit, 2018).
Cultural Barriers	Cultural Norms & Values	Differences in respect for authority, eye contact, greetings.	Misalignment with visitor expectations; awkward exchanges (Liu, 2022).
	Non-verbal Communication	Misalignment with visitor expectations; awkward exchanges.	Visitors may misinterpret behavior as disinterest or offense (Tangpathomwong, 2021).
	Cultural Stereotyping & Ethnocentrism	Visitors may have stereotypes or impose their own cultural norms.	Stereotypes limit conversation depth; ethnocentrism may dismiss Buddhist perspectives (Tahir et al., 2020).
Pragmatic Considerations	Time & Resource Constraints	Limited time for deep engagement; lack of translation tools.	Superficial conversations, limited exploration of topics (Smith, 2024).
	Technological Barriers	Limited skills with digital tools or translation apps.	Difficulty engaging international audiences or explaining teachings in real-time (Pralahad, 2015).
	Environmental Factors	Disruptions during informal chatting at IBCs.	Interruptions prevent in-depth discussions or contemplative exchanges (Pralahad, 2015).
Philosophical/ Religious Barriers	Monastic Rules & Lifestyle	227 ordination rules restrict interactions (e.g., with women); monks live a detached lifestyle.	Visitors may feel alienated or confused by monk behavior (Larbprasertporn et al., 2021)
	Doctrinal Explanations	Complexity of Buddhist teachings; different interpretations across schools.	Struggle to simplify teachings or convey them accurately ((Tangpathomwong, 2021)

1. Language barriers

Language proficiency is fundamental for effective communication, and Buddhist monks encounter significant linguistic challenges in their interactions. Vocabulary limitations and grammatical issues are common, especially when monks try to express complex religious ideas in English. Limited English vocabulary for terms such as “karma” or “nirvana,” compounded by grammatical inaccuracies, can lead to misunderstandings or incomplete explanations ((Chand, 2021). Furthermore, difficulties in pronunciation and fluency, particularly with English sounds and sentence structures, often hinder monks from conveying complex teachings clearly. Comprehension issues, such as difficulties understanding different accents or fast-paced conversations, exacerbate these challenges ((Chaiyasit, 2018).

While some scholars, like Mancini-Cross et al. (2009), argue that linguistic barriers might enrich intercultural experiences by highlighting cultural differences, they generally hinder clear communication, especially when monks aim to convey profound spiritual teachings. To mitigate these issues, improved language training and educational programs could be implemented at Buddhist centers, helping monks develop the proficiency needed for effective intercultural dialogue.

In conclusion, language barriers pose significant challenges for Buddhist monks in their intercultural interactions. Limited English vocabulary and grammar, pronunciation and fluency, and comprehension issues can hinder effective communication of complex religious concepts. To address these challenges, targeted language training programs can be implemented to enhance monks' English language skills and facilitate intercultural understanding.

2. Cultural barriers

Cultural norms and values often differ significantly between monks and foreign visitors, leading to challenges in intercultural exchanges. In Thai culture, monks hold an esteemed position, and the deep respect they command may not be fully understood by visitors from more egalitarian societies, which can result in awkward or uncomfortable interactions (Liu, 2022). Additionally, non-verbal communication, such as gestures, eye contact, and personal space, can differ widely across cultures, leading to misunderstandings. For instance, maintaining physical distance is important

for monks, especially with women, yet this may be misinterpreted as disinterest or aloofness by visitors (Tangpathomwong, 2021).

Cultural stereotyping and ethnocentrism are other significant barriers. Visitors may come with preconceived notions about monks and Buddhism, reducing monks to exotic or spiritual figures rather than engaging deeply with their teachings. Additionally, visitors may impose their cultural norms during exchanges, dismissing the religious or cultural significance of certain Buddhist practices (Tahir et al., 2020). These factors further complicate meaningful communication, making it essential for both monks and visitors to engage with mutual respect and cultural sensitivity.

In summary, cultural barriers pose significant challenges for Buddhist monks in their intercultural interactions. Differences in cultural norms and values, non-verbal communication, cultural stereotyping, and ethnocentrism can lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretations. To overcome these challenges, monks must be mindful of cultural differences, practice active listening, and cultivate empathy. By fostering intercultural understanding and respect, monks can create more meaningful and effective interactions with foreign visitors.

3. Pragmatic considerations

In addition to language and cultural barriers, pragmatic considerations can limit the effectiveness of intercultural communication. Time constraints in informal settings, such as International Buddhist Centers (IBCs), often prevent deep engagement with visitors. Monks may lack access to translation tools or sufficient time to explore complex topics with foreign visitors, leading to superficial conversations that do not adequately address visitors' spiritual or intellectual curiosities (Smith, 2024).

Technological barriers also pose challenges. While monks increasingly use digital platforms to communicate with international audiences, their proficiency with these tools is often limited, preventing effective outreach. Environmental factors, such as noise or distractions in informal settings, can also disrupt meaningful discussions. Furthermore, monastic rules and lifestyle, such as the 227 rules of ordainment—impose specific restrictions on monks' interactions, particularly with women, which can

seem alien or off-putting to foreign visitors unfamiliar with these practices (Pralahad, 2015).

In summary, pragmatic considerations, such as time and resource constraints, ecological barriers, and environmental factors, can hinder effective intercultural communication between Buddhist monks and foreign visitors. To address these challenges, monks may need to find creative ways to balance their religious obligations with their role as cultural ambassadors. Additionally, investing in digital literacy and language training can help monks overcome technological and linguistic barriers and facilitate deeper intercultural exchanges.

4. Religious and philosopher barriers

Religious and philosophical barriers are uniquely challenging for Buddhist monks, as they must navigate the complexities of Buddhist teachings and the restrictions imposed by their monastic lifestyle. The 227 rules of ordainment strictly govern their interactions, including restrictions on physical contact, which can be difficult for foreign visitors to understand or accept. For instance, foreign female visitors may feel alienated when monks refuse to engage in physical greetings like handshakes (Larbprasertporn et al., 2021).

Additionally, the complexity of Buddhist doctrines, such as non-attachment, karma, and mindfulness, poses a significant barrier in intercultural communication. Monks often find it challenging to simplify or translate these profound spiritual concepts into accessible terms that resonate with visitors from diverse cultural or religious backgrounds. The diversity within Buddhism itself, such as the differences between Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana traditions, adds another layer of difficulty, as visitors may misunderstand or oversimplify key teachings (Pralahad, 2015)

Moreover, the philosophical gap between monks and foreign visitors often leads to misinterpretations. Western visitors, for instance, may approach Buddhist teachings with a secular or skeptical mindset, interpreting spiritual concepts through the lens of their own cultural or religious traditions. This can result in misunderstandings or a failure to grasp the nuances of Buddhist philosophy, limiting the depth of intercultural exchanges. In International Buddhist Centers or temple settings, monks must balance their role as spiritual leaders with the practical

constraints of interacting with tourists, many of whom seek simple, digestible insights into Buddhism. This commercialization of religious interaction can dilute the depth of the spiritual teachings, leading to frustration for both monks and visitors seeking a more profound understanding (Tangpathomwong, 2021).

To sum up, Buddhist monks face a range of intercultural communication barriers, including linguistic, cultural, pragmatic, and religious or philosophical challenges. Linguistic barriers involve vocabulary limitations, pronunciation difficulties, and comprehension issues, while cultural barriers stem from differences in norms, non-verbal communication, and stereotyping. Pragmatic barriers arise from logistical constraints, technological limitations, and the monastic lifestyle, while religious and philosophical barriers center on the complexity of Buddhist teachings and the unique demands of monastic life. Addressing these barriers requires enhanced language training, cultural awareness, and adaptation of communication strategies to ensure that monks can effectively share the teachings of Buddhism with international audiences.

Intercultural communication (IC) strategies

As highlighted in previous sections, Intercultural Communication (IC) barriers, including language limitations, cultural differences, and pragmatic challenges, significantly affect the ability of Buddhist monks in Thailand to engage with foreign visitors effectively. Addressing these barriers necessitates the implementation of Intercultural Communication Strategies (ICS), which are designed to overcome misunderstandings and facilitate effective communication across cultural and linguistic divides.

The evolution of IC strategies, particularly for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) speakers, is rooted in key scholarly contributions. Tarone (1980) introduced the idea of IC strategies as collaborative, interactive problem-solving efforts. Later, Faerch and Kasper (1983) expanded on this by emphasizing the conscious nature of these strategies, highlighting their deliberate use in overcoming specific communication challenges, particularly in intercultural settings. These strategies, while often subconscious in everyday communication, can be learned and applied intentionally, especially in environments where IC barriers are prevalent.

The comprehensive framework developed by Dornyei & Scott (1997) categorizes IC strategies into both verbal and non-verbal approaches. This categorization is particularly relevant for Buddhist monks, as their communication extends beyond spoken language to include cultural gestures, posture, and eye contact, all of which can vary greatly between cultures. For instance, the way a monk presents a gesture in Buddhist rituals may hold specific significance in Thailand but could be misunderstood by foreign visitors. Mastery of both verbal and non-verbal strategies is therefore essential for monks to effectively communicate Buddhist teachings to visitors from diverse cultural backgrounds.

In conclusion, intercultural communication (IC) strategies are crucial for Buddhist monks to effectively engage with foreign visitors. By understanding and implementing various IC strategies, such as those outlined by Tarone, Faerch and Kasper, and Dörnyei and Scott, monks can overcome language and cultural barriers, enhance their communication skills, and foster deeper intercultural understanding. These strategies can help monks to convey Buddhist teachings effectively, build strong relationships with visitors, and promote the values of Buddhism on a global scale.

1. Types of IC strategies

As explored in previous sections, the barriers to intercultural communication that Buddhist monks face include linguistic limitations, cultural disparities, and practical challenges. These barriers can impede effective communication, especially when monks interact with foreign visitors who may not share their cultural or religious background. To navigate these challenges, monks can use Intercultural Communication Strategies (ICS), which have been well-studied in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners.

The development of IC strategies is grounded in foundational research, beginning with Tarone (1980), who introduced IC strategies as interactive, problem-solving processes aimed at bridging gaps in understanding. Faerch & Kasper (1980) further emphasized the conscious nature of these strategies, framing them as deliberate actions that speakers can apply to achieve specific communication objectives. This theoretical foundation was later expanded by Dornyei & Scott (1997), who provided a comprehensive framework categorizing strategies into verbal, non-

verbal, and interactive approaches, recognizing the multifaceted nature of communication.

Table 2 Types of intercultural communication strategies summarized and adapted from Dornyei and Scott's (1997)

Strategy Type	Sub-Strategy	Description	Example in Monk Context
Verbal Strategies	1. Message abandonment	Leaving a message unfinished due to language difficulty.	A monk halts explaining *nirvana* mid-sentence due to vocabulary limitations (Gregersen et al., 2014).
	2. Message reduction	Simplifying or avoiding difficult language structures or topics to communicate more effectively.	Avoiding in-depth explanations of *enlightenment* and focusing on simpler ideas (Gregersen et al., 2014).
	3. Message replacement	Substituting the original message with a more straightforward one.	Explaining "karma" using "actions and consequences" to make it understandable (Gregersen et al., 2014).
	4. Circumlocution/ Paraphrase	Describing or explaining a concept when the exact term is unknown.	Explaining "monastic discipline" by saying "the rules monks follow every day." ((Gregersen et al., 2014).
	5. Approximation	Using a related or more general term when the specific one is not known.	Using "peace" instead of *nirvana* when explaining Buddhist ideas (Gregersen et al., 2014).
	6. Use of all-purpose words	Extending a general word, like "thing" or "place," to replace a specific term.	Using "thing" for a "relic" or "temple" in conversation (Gregersen et al., 2014).
	7. Word coinage/ Foreignizing	Creating or adapting a word by applying linguistic rules from another language.	Coining "meditator" for someone who practices meditation or using the word *samadhi* with English grammar (Gregersen et al., 2014).
	8. Literal Translation (Transfer)	Translating directly from L1 to L2, even if it doesn't fit idiomatic usage.	Translating a Thai idiom like "falling leaves" literally into English (Gregersen et al., 2014).
	9. Self-Rephrasing/ Self-Repair	Compensating for a lexical item whose form the speaker is unsure of with a word (either existing or non-existing) which sounds more or less like the target item.	Rephrasing "meditation helps focus the mind" as "meditation is good for thinking clearly." (Gregersen et al., 2014).

Table 2 (Cont.)

Strategy Type	Sub-Strategy	Description	Example in Monk Context
	10. Asking for Repetition/Clarification	Requesting the interlocutor to repeat or explain a statement that was unclear.	"Could you say that again?" or "What do you mean by that?" when lost in conversation (Gregersen et al., 2014).
	11. Code Switching	Alternating between languages within a conversation when needed.	Switching to Thai or Pali when explaining difficult Buddhist concepts to visitors (Gregersen et al., 2014).
	12. Mime (Non-Verbal Strategies)	Using gestures, facial expressions, or body language to convey meaning.	Demonstrating a meditation posture to explain a Buddhist practice visually (Zhu, 2020)
	13. Use of Fillers/Self-Repetition	Using pauses like "um" or repeating words to buy time and maintain conversation flow.	"Uh... you see... meditation is... uh... good for the mind" to think of the right words (Zhu, 2020)
	14. Mumbling/Omission	Mumbling or leaving out words when unsure of the correct term.	Skipping over technical terms when explaining complex Buddhist rituals to a tourist (Zhu, 2020)
	15. Over-Explicitness (Waffling)	Using more words than necessary to compensate for language difficulties.	Providing long, repetitive explanations when discussing meditation (Zhu, 2020)
	16. Use of Similar Sounding Words	Using a word that sounds like the intended one but may not be correct.	Confusing "karma" with "calm" due to similar sounds (Zhu, 2020)
	17. Direct Appeal for Help	Asking the interlocutor directly for help or clarification.	"What's the word for...?" to a visitor when struggling with a specific term (Gass & Varonis, 1994).
	18. Guessing/Expressing Non-Understanding	Making a guess about the meaning or explicitly stating that something was not understood.	"So, 'suffering' means life's challenges?" or "I'm sorry, I didn't understand that." (Gass & Varonis, 1994).
	19. Interpretive Summary/ Comprehension Check	Summarizing or checking to ensure understanding of the conversation.	"So, you're asking how mindfulness helps with stress?" to clarify the visitor's question " (Gass & Varonis, 1994)
	20. Own-Accuracy Check	Verifying if one's own speech was correct or clear by questioning or repeating it.	"I said 'meditation,' right?" to confirm the use of the correct term " (Gass & Varonis, 1994)

Verbal strategies, as outlined in Table 2, provide practical tools for monks to overcome linguistic barriers. For instance, **message abandonment** occurs when a monk may leave a message unfinished due to vocabulary limitations, particularly when explaining complex Buddhist concepts like “nirvana.” In cases where language limitations prevent in-depth explanations, **message reduction** is applied by simplifying intricate concepts, such as replacing “enlightenment” with “inner peace.” **Message replacement** offers another option, enabling monks to substitute complicated terms like “karma” with simpler phrases such as “actions and consequences” to ensure that the core idea remains accessible to the foreign visitor. Moreover, strategies such as **circumlocution** and **paraphrase** help monks explain religious concepts by describing their attributes when exact terminology is unknown. For instance, monks can explain “monastic discipline” as “the rules monks follow every day,” effectively ensuring that their listeners comprehend the practice even if they do not grasp the specific term. **Approximation** is another valuable strategy, allowing monks to replace complex ideas like “nirvana” with more familiar terms like “peace.” These strategies provide monks with versatile tools to make their teachings accessible across language divides. Additionally, **use of all-purpose words**, such as “thing” or “place,” allows monks to simplify the discussion of sacred objects or locations when more specific terms are challenging to translate. **Word coinage** and **foreignizing** also enable monks to creatively adapt language, such as coining the term “meditator” to describe someone who practices meditation or using Pali terms like samadhi but adjusted for English grammar.

At the same time**, non-verbal strategies** offer critical support, particularly in overcoming cultural barriers. **Mime**, for example, allows monks to use gestures, facial expressions, or body language to convey meaning when words fall short. This strategy is especially useful when explaining meditation postures or Buddhist rituals, as visual demonstration can often be more effective than verbal descriptions alone. Research by Gregersen et al. (2014) underlines how non-verbal cues, such as posture or gestures, can effectively support second-language communication. Additionally, the use of **fillers** or **self-repetition** can help monks maintain conversational flow by stalling for time while they search for the correct words. This is particularly important when

explaining complex religious teachings where there may be a search for culturally relevant terms. When monks are unsure of specific terminology, **mumbling** or **omission** may occur, allowing them to skip difficult words while still continuing the conversation. **Over-explicitness**, or providing excessively detailed explanations, is also a useful strategy when monks need to ensure that their message is understood. This approach is particularly helpful when discussing complex religious doctrines or philosophical ideas that require nuanced explanations. Research by Zhu (2020) emphasizes the importance of tailoring communicative efforts to the listener's level of comprehension, especially in culturally rich contexts like Buddhism. Similarly, **use of similar-sounding words** can occur when monks mistakenly use words that sound alike but may not have the intended meaning. These strategies allow monks to navigate conversations when their vocabulary is insufficient, though they may risk confusion.

Finally, **interactive strategies** further enhance monks' ability to engage with foreign visitors. **Direct appeal for help**, for instance, involves monks asking visitors for assistance with specific words or concepts, such as, "What's the word for...?" when they encounter difficulties in expressing complex Buddhist terms. Studies by Gass & Varonis (1994) support the notion that direct requests for clarification are essential for maintaining effective communication in intercultural settings. **Guessing** or **expressing non-understanding** allows monks to make educated guesses about the visitor's message or openly admit confusion, thereby encouraging further clarification and engagement. For instance, a monk may say, "So, 'suffering' means life's challenges?" to confirm their understanding of the visitor's question. Additionally, **interpretive summary** and **comprehension checks** allow monks to summarize the visitor's statements, ensuring that both parties are aligned in their understanding of the conversation. Research by Swain & Lapkin (2000) emphasizes the importance of these strategies in confirming mutual understanding in conversations where language proficiency may be unequal. Lastly, **own-accuracy checks** involve monks verifying if their statements were clear and correct, such as by asking, "Did I say 'meditation' correctly?" to ensure they used the right terminology. These

strategies are essential to avoid miscommunication, particularly when discussing nuanced Buddhist teachings with international visitors.

In summary, Intercultural Communication (IC) Strategies help Buddhist monks overcome barriers such as linguistic limitations, cultural differences, and practical challenges when engaging with foreign visitors. These strategies, categorized into verbal, non-verbal, and interactive types, allow monks to adapt their communication based on context. Verbal strategies like message abandonment, reduction, and replacement help simplify complex Buddhist teachings. Non-verbal strategies, such as mime and use of fillers, aid in overcoming cultural differences. Finally, interactive strategies, like asking for clarification or verifying understanding, promote effective dialogue. Incorporating these strategies into monk training enhances their intercultural communication skills, ensuring their teachings resonate with global audiences.

English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)

In the context of IC, English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) plays a crucial role, especially in facilitating communication between individuals who speak different native languages. This concept is particularly relevant to the intercultural interactions between Thai Buddhist monks and foreign visitors. ELF provides a common language through which monks and international visitors can engage in meaningful dialogues about Buddhism, overcoming both linguistic and cultural barriers. Understanding the significance of ELF is essential in analyzing the intercultural communication strategies (ICS) used by Buddhist monks.

1. Definition and conceptualization of ELF

In terms of its definition, ELF refers to the use of English for communication among individuals who do not share a first language. Seidlhofer (2011) defines ELF as a global phenomenon, emphasizing its unprecedented spread across cultures and languages. Unlike traditional views of English focused on native proficiency, ELF emphasizes effective communication, where the priority is mutual understanding rather than linguistic accuracy. Jenkins (2015) describes ELF as a flexible and adaptive tool that allows speakers from diverse linguistic backgrounds to negotiate meaning. This concept is particularly relevant in intercultural

communication settings, such as the interactions between Thai Buddhist monks and international visitors, where the goal is not to speak perfect English, but to use it functionally to convey Buddhist teachings.

Conceptually, ELF accommodates different cultural and linguistic norms, allowing speakers to focus on clarity and comprehensibility rather than native-like fluency. This pragmatic approach is critical in multicultural exchanges, where both sides adjust their use of English to ensure effective communication. For Buddhist monks, the importance of ELF lies in the adaptability it offers. Rather than adhering strictly to native English rules, monks can use simplified vocabulary, altered sentence structures, or even code-switching to ensure their audience understands key Buddhist concepts. This aligns with the overall goal of ELF—achieving communication efficiency across diverse linguistic landscapes.

In addition, ELF allows speakers to deviate from standard grammar or pronunciation without compromising understanding. For instance, monks interacting with non-native English speakers can use approximation or circumlocution to express difficult Buddhist terms. By focusing on functional communication rather than linguistic precision, ELF creates an inclusive space for meaningful intercultural dialogue. This flexible nature of ELF is crucial in environments like International Buddhist Centers (IBCs), where monks engage with visitors from diverse linguistic backgrounds. In such settings, ELF serves as a practical medium, enabling the exchange of spiritual and philosophical ideas without the expectation of linguistic perfection. Consequently, ELF fosters deeper cross-cultural connections, allowing monks to share Buddhist teachings in ways that resonate with a global audience.

Finally, ELF's role in intercultural communication also extends to its capacity for accommodation and negotiation. When Buddhist monks engage with foreign visitors, they can adapt their language use, repeat phrases, utilize simpler terms, or even employ gestures to aid understanding. These communication strategies help overcome potential language barriers, making the use of ELF a vital tool for effective intercultural exchange. Seidlhofer (2011) and Jenkins (2015) argue that by focusing on the functionality of language rather than rigid linguistic rules, ELF enhances mutual understanding and facilitates successful cross-cultural interactions.

In essence, ELF operates not as a rigid linguistic structure but as a dynamic and adaptable medium for intercultural communication. Its relevance to Buddhist monks lies in its ability to transcend language barriers and promote effective communication across diverse cultural contexts.

2. ELF in Thailand

In Thailand, English is positioned within Kachru's (1985) Expanding Circle, where it functions as a foreign language and is primarily used for communication between non-native speakers. This classification reflects the broader international use of English in non-native contexts, especially in sectors like education, tourism, and international business. Thailand, like other countries in the Expanding Circle, does not have English as an official second language but recognizes its importance for global interaction.

English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) is especially relevant in Thailand because most of the interactions that take place in English involve communication between non-native speakers. Baker (2012) emphasizes that in such settings, the use of ELF allows Thai speakers to engage in meaningful communication without adhering to native-speaker norms, which may not always be relevant or necessary. Instead, ELF focuses on intelligibility and mutual understanding, which is critical in Thailand, where many international interactions occur, particularly in the context of tourism and academic exchanges.

Despite the extensive inclusion of English in the education system, many Thai speakers, including university graduates, struggle with achieving high fluency levels. Baker & Jarunthawatchai (2017)) note that even though Thai students invest years in learning English, they often find it difficult to move beyond a basic or intermediate level of proficiency. This presents challenges, particularly when more complex ideas or technical language are required in conversations, especially in academic or professional settings.

Furthermore, Wongsothorn et al. (2003) explain that much of the English communication in Thailand involves interactions with non-native English speakers, either from ASEAN countries or other international visitors. This reinforces the idea that the role of ELF in Thailand is not just about acquiring native-like fluency but about being able to navigate intercultural communication effectively in a globalized context.

In Thailand's expanding role on the global stage, the ability to use ELF is not only a linguistic skill but also a tool for navigating intercultural interactions. English is widely used in business, education, and even in diplomatic and regional cooperation, particularly within ASEAN, where English is the working language. This further solidifies the importance of ELF in Thailand's international communication strategies.

The proliferation of English in Thailand is linked to its historical development in the region, where English was first introduced during colonial times and has since become a dominant language in sectors like education, science, and international trade. However, as Dewey (2013) and Jenkins (2015) suggest, the focus of ELF in the expanding circle is not on perfect grammar or pronunciation but on functional communication that facilitates mutual understanding between non-native speakers.

In conclusion, ELF's role in Thailand is critical for enabling effective communication in a globalized world. With English being used predominantly in non-native speaker interactions, ELF presents a more practical framework than adhering to native-speaker norms. While fluency remains a challenge, ELF provides Thai speakers with a flexible approach to communication that prioritizes clarity and mutual understanding over native-like proficiency.

3. ELF in Thai Buddhist studies

The use of ELF in Thai Buddhist studies is highly significant, especially in the intercultural communication (IC) context where Thai Buddhist monks interact with foreign visitors. Given the global prominence of English, it serves as the primary medium for communication between non-native speakers. As more than 90% of Thailand's population practices Theravada Buddhism Cholvijarn (2019), monks often find themselves in the role of cultural and spiritual ambassadors, sharing the teachings

of Buddhism with international audiences at temples, International Buddhist Centers (IBCs), and through educational programs at Buddhist universities.

ELF, as defined by Jenkins (2015), refers to the use of English as a common language between individuals whose first languages differ. This concept is essential in the context of Thai monks, as it allows them to engage with foreign visitors from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In these settings, the goal of communication is not native-like fluency, but rather mutual understanding and effective dialogue. Baker (2015) emphasizes that in countries like Thailand, where English is taught as a foreign language, ELF plays a crucial role in enabling monks to convey Buddhist teachings without the constraints of native English norms.

Despite significant efforts to teach English in Thailand, including within Buddhist institutions, many monks still face challenges in achieving proficiency, especially when discussing complex religious doctrines such as karma or nirvana. Baker & Jarunthawatchai (2017) note that although Thai students and monks invest years in English education, they often struggle to reach an intermediate level of proficiency, which affects their ability to fully engage with international visitors. For monks, the difficulty lies not only in linguistic proficiency but also in translating culturally specific and philosophical concepts into English in ways that resonate with non-Buddhist audiences.

Monks who participate in English-language programs at Buddhist universities, such as those at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University (MCU), play a vital role in spreading Buddhist teachings to international audiences. However, as Suwannatrai & Yanapalo (2023) highlights, the process of translating these teachings into English while preserving their spiritual essence poses a significant challenge. This requires a deep understanding of both the English language and the cultural nuances that shape how non-native speakers interpret religious concepts. Moreover, these linguistic barriers can sometimes hinder successful communication, even though ELF allows for flexibility in terms of grammar and vocabulary.

ELF also plays a key role in facilitating intercultural interactions in digital contexts, where monks increasingly engage with global audiences through online platforms. This shift underscores the importance of ELF in religious education and outreach, as it allows monks to share Buddhist teachings with a wider, international audience. According to Boonmatun & Huttayavilaiphan (2025) effective communication in these settings requires not only conversational English skills but also a profound understanding of how to adapt religious messages to ensure comprehension across cultural and linguistic boundaries.

Overall, the use of ELF in Thai Buddhist studies is essential for facilitating meaningful intercultural exchanges between monks and international visitors. While linguistic barriers remain, ELF provides monks with a flexible and adaptable framework for sharing Buddhist teachings with non-native English speakers, both in person and through digital platforms. By embracing ELF, monks can overcome language limitations and ensure that the spiritual depth of their messages is conveyed effectively across diverse cultural contexts.

Previous studies on IC barriers and strategies in relation to ELF and Buddhist studies

Research into IC barriers and strategies, particularly within the context of ELF, has evolved significantly over the past few decades. This section reviews key studies in global contexts and gradually focuses on specific research related to Thai Buddhist monks and intercultural communication within religious frameworks.

In global contexts, IC barriers have been studied extensively in multicultural settings where communication between individuals of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds occurs. De Mooij & Hofstede4 (2011) emphasized the importance of cultural dimensions, such as power distance and individualism versus collectivism, in shaping communication styles. This cultural framework highlights how mismatches in expectations, behaviors, and norms create cultural barriers that complicate intercultural dialogue. These barriers are frequently studied in cross-cultural management, diplomacy, and education. For example, Deardorff & Jones (2012) identified anxiety and uncertainty as core factors that disrupt communication between

individuals from different cultures, emphasizing the need for IC strategies that reduce ambiguity and build rapport between speakers.

Globally, ELF has been central to bridging linguistic gaps in IC. Seidlhofer (2011) defines ELF as the use of English in intercultural settings, specifically when neither speaker is a native English speaker. The goal is not fluency but mutual understanding, highlighting that IC strategies—such as paraphrasing, repetition, and non-verbal communication—become vital tools in navigating linguistic barriers. Research by Jenkins (2015) in European contexts found that ELF speakers frequently employ accommodation strategies (adjusting speech for the listener's benefit) and negotiation of meaning to facilitate smooth communication in international business and academic contexts.

The work of Dornyei & Scott (1997) remains a seminal contribution to understanding IC strategies, categorizing them into verbal, non-verbal, and interactive strategies. Their framework has since been applied in multiple intercultural contexts, with studies by Permana & Rohmah (2024) and Tuyen et al. (2020) showing how students and professionals use message reduction, code-switching, and time-gaining strategies when communicating in ELF settings. These strategies are vital for ensuring effective communication, particularly in environments where speakers have varying levels of English proficiency.

In the religious and Buddhist contexts, the research on IC barriers and strategies has increasingly focused on specific domains, including religion. Religious contexts present unique communication challenges, particularly when discussing complex philosophical or spiritual teachings with international audiences. Studies in global Buddhist studies highlight the significant role of language in the transmission of religious knowledge. Smith (2024).emphasized how Buddhist teachings were adapted as they spread across different cultures, requiring monks to navigate linguistic and cultural barriers when communicating the essence of Buddhist doctrines to non-native speakers.

Yakut & Bada (2021) examined the role of English language exposure in shaping the IC strategies of individuals learning English in non-native environments. Their study showed that increased exposure to English helped individuals develop

more sophisticated IC strategies, such as circumlocution and approximation. This finding is especially relevant for Thai Buddhist monks, who frequently engage in informal IC with foreign visitors. These interactions provide monks with significant exposure to English, often through informal chats at International Buddhist Centers (IBCs). Despite the language exposure, the complexity of Buddhist teachings poses a significant challenge, requiring monks to simplify or adapt spiritual concepts to make them understandable to a diverse, global audience.

For Thailand, Pralahad (2015) emphasized that monks, when interacting with foreigners, not only face linguistic barriers but also religious and cultural barriers. Buddhist teachings, particularly doctrines like karma and nirvana, are often difficult to translate directly into English, leading to potential misinterpretations by non-Buddhist audiences. This requires monks to employ IC strategies such as simplification, metaphorical explanations, and non-verbal gestures to ensure that their teachings are communicated effectively without losing their spiritual depth.

Moreover, ELF plays a crucial role in IC between Buddhist monks and foreign visitors. As noted by Baker (2015), Thailand is situated in the Expanding Circle of Kachru's (1985) model, where English is learned and used as a foreign language primarily for communication with non-native speakers. This makes ELF a practical approach for Thai monks, who often engage with international visitors from diverse linguistic backgrounds at IBCs or temple settings. Baker & Jarunthawatchai (2017) highlight that despite decades of formal English education, many Thai speakers, including monks, continue to struggle with fluency, particularly in oral communication. This reinforces the need for IC strategies that focus on mutual intelligibility, rather than native-like fluency. Also, Suwannatrai & Yanapalo (2023) explored the specific challenges faced by Buddhist monks in translating complex religious teachings into English. His research highlights that while monks are well-versed in Buddhist philosophy, they often lack the linguistic tools to explain these concepts in English. This presents an opportunity for developing tailored IC strategies that focus on maintaining the spiritual essence of Buddhist teachings while ensuring that they are accessible to a global audience.

Despite the global research on IC barriers, strategies, and ELF, there remains a lack of studies focusing specifically on Thai Buddhist monks. As Larbprasertporn et al. (2021) argue, monks form a distinct population that requires specialized communication strategies due to their role as spiritual and cultural ambassadors. Existing studies, which focus predominantly on students or professionals in secular settings, may not fully capture the unique challenges faced by monks when translating spiritual concepts into English. Future research should address the specific IC barriers and ELF strategies employed by Buddhist monks in IC settings. Studies could explore how monks adapt their communication strategies in informal settings such as IBCs, where their role is both pedagogical and spiritual. Additionally, further exploration of religious IC barriers, particularly how monks navigate the cultural and spiritual nuances of Buddhist teachings in English, would be valuable.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the literature by applying IC frameworks (Baker & Jarunthawatchai, 2017); Byram (1997); Dornyei & Scott (1997) to the context of Buddhist monks. It will explore how monks navigate Intercultural communication barriers and strategies, both linguistic and cultural when engaging with foreigners. The findings of this study will have practical applications for improving English language training for monks, promoting cross-cultural understanding, and enhancing the overall visitor experience at IBCs.

Conclusion

In summary, this chapter reviews the literature relevant to the study. Significant theoretical perspectives and research findings related to the present study are uncovered in three major topics namely, intercultural communication, communication barriers, and intercultural communication strategies. Language is an extension of culture, complex, and inherently subjected to challenges in IC communication. Barriers include language (verbal and non-verbal), culture, and pragmatic considerations. Strategies include a hierarchal and comprehensive list, consistently utilized over time with the goal of improving communicative meaning. The list is limited, a conscious effort, and amenable to teaching/learning.

There is a lack of research in Communication barriers and IC specific for the population of Buddhist Monks. As a micro-culture, ordained in Buddhist philosophy which is integral to daily life, there may be unique findings. Given the importance of Monks in disseminating Buddhism, further study is paramount. Monks possess significant topical knowledge about Buddhism. Identification of barriers and strategies specific for this population is necessary for the development of training programs for Monks who participate in Monk Chat settings. In addition, culture significantly impacts IC. The culture of a Monk is unique with further research needed to assess this influence. Furthermore, efforts in communication research are required of this cohort given their important role in global dissemination of the teaching of the Budda.

The proposed research aims to identify Communication barriers encountered and IC employed by Monks in response to foreigner's questions when speaking English at an IBC. The next chapter will present the methodology proposed for this study.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research methodology that would be employed in this study, which aims to investigate the IC barriers and strategies encountered by Buddhist monks when speaking English with foreigners about Buddhism at an International Buddhist Center (IBC). The methodology outlines the research design, population and sampling methods, research procedures, data analysis techniques, limitations of the study, and ethical considerations. The chapter will conclude with a summary of each section.

Mixed method research approach

This study adopted a mixed-methods research approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods to explore the communication barriers and strategies experienced by Buddhist monks in IC exchanges with foreigners regarding Buddhism. Mixed methods allowed for a comprehensive analysis by combining numerical data with in-depth exploration and interpretation of qualitative data. This combination is expected to provide a holistic understanding of the research question, enhancing the credibility and validity of the findings through triangulation (Creswell & Clark, 2018).

The relevance of this approach was particularly pronounced in this study, where the complexities of intercultural communication require both quantitative data to reveal trends and frequencies, and qualitative data to provide rich, context-specific insights into monks' experiences. Qualitative data would offer contextualized understanding of the monks' perceptions and strategies, while quantitative data was quantify communication barriers and strategies. Through triangulation, this study aims to develop a nuanced comprehension of the challenges Thai Buddhist monks face in communicating with foreigners and how effective their communication strategies are (Kim, 2001).

Additionally, the mixed-methods approach was well-suited to this study because it allows for a multi-dimensional investigation of IC barriers and strategies among monks and foreigners at IBC. Questionnaire and semi-structured interviews offered firsthand insights into social interactions, while interviews provided a deeper understanding of the monks' experiences, and ethnographic analysis revealed the cultural patterns shaping communication. This comprehensive methodology supported the study's aim of identifying communication barriers, proposing effective strategies, and understanding the cultural dynamics at play (Almalki, 2017).

The quantitative aspect of this study included the use of questionnaire distributed to 30 monks, ensuring data saturation by collecting enough responses to prevent new themes from emerging. Meanwhile, the qualitative component involved semi-structured interviews with 10 Buddhist monks engaged in IC exchanges with foreigners.

1. Quantitative method

Quantitative research involved the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data to identify patterns, trends, and relationships between variables. This method emphasized objectivity and will use statistical techniques to test hypotheses and draw conclusions (Amaratunga et al., 2002).

Quantitative methods had several advantages, such as enabling the collection of large datasets that can be statistically analyzed to detect patterns. The objectivity and replicability of quantitative research enhanced the reliability of the findings. However, the structured nature of this approach may overlook the contextual nuances of complex phenomena (O'Connell et al., 2009).

In this study, the quantitative method involved the use of questionnaire adapted from Dörnyei & Taguchi (2002) to assess communication barriers and strategies. A sample size of 30 participants was expected to reach data saturation, ensuring comprehensive data collection. The questionnaire focused on barriers and strategies identified in prior research and used a Likert frequency rating scale to measure the occurrence and impact of these barriers.

2. Qualitative method

In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 Buddhist monks engaged in intercultural exchanges with foreigners. These interviews provided deeper insights into the challenges monks face and their strategies for overcoming these challenges. The semi-structured format allowed for flexibility, enabling the interviewer to explore unexpected themes and build rapport with the participants.

Qualitative research was an exploratory approach that investigates the depth of human experiences, perceptions, and behaviors through non-numerical data such as interviews (Aspers & Corte, 2019). This method was valuable for understanding complex social phenomena and gaining profound insights into individuals' perspectives.

Qualitative research was well-suited to this study because it provided a comprehensive understanding of the intricacies of intercultural communication. While quantitative data revealed trends, qualitative data captured the rich details of monks' experiences, such as their coping strategies and cultural sensitivity. However, qualitative methods may be more time-consuming and can be subject to researcher bias (Mwita, 2022).

In conclusion, the mixed-methods approach yielded a comprehensive understanding of monks' experiences in intercultural exchanges by combining the breadth of quantitative data with the depth of qualitative insights. This method was essential for exploring the complex interplay of cultural and linguistic factors that shape IC at Buddhist center.

Research context

1. International Buddhist Center (IBC) as a setting of study

This study was conducted at an International Buddhist Center (IBC) affiliated with Mahamakut Buddhist University in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The IBC is an informal environment where monks regularly interact with foreign visitors interested in learning about Buddhism. Visitors come from a range of countries, including the United States, Germany, France, Australia, and Japan, making the IBC a rich setting for studying intercultural communication (Varasayananda & Prakrai, 2020).

2. Monk chat program (Activity)

At IBC, monks participate in a range of activities designed to improve their English language skills and intercultural communication abilities. Among these activities are “Monk Chat” sessions, meditation instruction in English, and Dhamma talks specifically tailored for international audiences. The Monk Chat program, in particular, provides an informal and interactive environment where visitors are encouraged to ask questions freely about Buddhism, Thai culture, and the daily life of monks. This program is instrumental in helping monks practice conversational English while also developing strategies to navigate and overcome language and cultural barriers.

The IBC attracts a diverse group of visitors, including tourists, expatriates, and students from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This diversity offers monks a unique opportunity to engage in a wide range of communication scenarios, which in turn enhances their ability to adapt to different intercultural contexts. Phongsiri (2017) emphasized the educational benefits of these interactions, noting that regular engagement with foreigners significantly improves both the English proficiency and intercultural competence of monks. The structured programs at the IBC, combined with these spontaneous, real-world interactions, create an immersive environment conducive to both language learning and cultural exchange.

Figure 3 International Buddhist Center (IBC) in Thailand, associated with Mahamakut Buddhist University, Wat Chedi Luang, Chiang Mai

IBC, also known as Monk Chat Program, was founded in 1996 by Professor Kiatkun Saengchanngam, who recognized the necessity of language instruction for Mahamakut Buddhist University students at the Lanna Campus. It offers a chance for English language practice and help outside of the classroom. In addition to language practice, it provides a place for Buddhist monks and foreigners to share their views, ideas, and experiences. Wat Chedi Luang has set aside a shaded spot where tourists and monks may sit and speak.

Monk Chat Club has been around for more than 20 years, and its members include both monastic and lay students. The 200+ members contribute by concentrating on increasing their English language abilities and global knowledge. It helps participants build their social competence, leadership abilities, and enthusiasm for volunteerism. The initiative encourages international volunteers to assist with the

English teaching program. There are also frequent visits from private and public education providers.

The Monk Chat Program is committed to spreading the teachings of Buddhism globally and fostering English language proficiency among students at Mahamakut Buddhist University, Lanna Campus. The program aims to enhance students' English language skills through various activities, including language learning workshops, environmental initiatives, community service, and international exchange programs. By equipping students with strong English language skills, the program seeks to empower them to communicate Buddhist teachings and contribute to intercultural understanding effectively (Varasayananda & Prakrai, 2020).

Participants and sampling design

1. Thai Buddhist monks

30 Buddhist Monks were studied in this study. Inclusion criteria for Buddhist Monks are Monks who attend university at any level and in any program, participate in the university-affiliated IBC, and vary in age, temple, and level of English proficiency. Purposive sampling was used for practical purposes, with the expectation that 10 Monks would participate in semi-structured interviews to provide a comprehensive understanding of intercultural communication barriers and strategies.

The target participants for data collection consisted of 30 Thai Buddhist Monks from the IBC at Mahamakut Buddhist University, Chiang Mai. These 30 Buddhist monks are students from Mahamakut Buddhist University. These monks are different in ages and experiences in Buddhism as well as in intercultural communication with foreigners. Prior to collecting data, these monks were approached by personal meeting at the IBC, Mahamakut Buddhist University, Chiang Mai.

Personal meetings at IBC at Mahamakut Buddhist University, Chiang Mai, offer a unique opportunity for visitors to engage in one-on-one conversations with Buddhist monks. These meetings provide a personalized setting for individuals to ask questions, discuss spiritual concerns, and gain deeper insights into Buddhist teachings. Monks often utilize a blend of formal and informal communication styles, adapting

their approach to the individual needs and preferences of each visitor (Varasayananda & Prakrai, 2020).

After approaching these monks, the researcher used the following inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria include:

1. Thai Buddhist monks residing at the specified international Buddhist center
2. Monks who have had regular interactions with foreign visitors
3. Monks who possess a certain level of English proficiency (e.g., able to engage in basic conversations)
4. Monks who are ready to take part in the study and give informed consent

As for the exclusion, the monks were not part of the project if they were:

1. Monks lacking proficiency in the English language (Monks who cannot communicate with foreigners were not participants in this research.)
2. Monks who refuse to take part in the study
3. Monks who lack regular contact with foreign tourists
4. Monks who fail to meet the minimum English language competency required for their Studies

The IC exchange took place in semi-formal Monk Chat setting where the Monks participates on a voluntary basis. The topic for discussion is Buddhism with spontaneous questions initiated by the foreigner. Participation of Monks in the study was obtained by informed consent. In addition, English speaking volunteers may be present when available to facilitate any difficulties for the Monks when using English as a lingua franca. The researcher was also present for the purpose of conducting the research and recording the exchange for subsequent analysis.

2. Foreigners

As part of this study's context, foreign participants from different countries who take part in the Monk Chat program at IBC were included in the data collection process. However, these foreigners were not the primary subjects of the study, meaning that their information was not analyzed directly. Instead, their participation serves as a crucial element of the intercultural exchange, allowing the evaluation of

communication barriers and strategies employed by the Buddhist monks, who were the main focus of the research.

The international interlocutors were expected to come primarily from Western countries with a significant interest in Buddhism, such as the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and several European nations. Additionally, considering Thailand's geographical location and historical connections, a considerable number of tourists are also likely to come from neighboring Asian countries, including China, Japan, South Korea, and other Southeast Asian states (Varasayananda & Prakrai, 2020).

The motivations for foreigners visiting Thailand often include tourism, spiritual experiences, or academic research. Within the IBC context, these visitors typically seek to deepen their understanding of Buddhism, engage in spiritual practices, and immerse themselves in Thai culture. Their interest in Buddhism might stem from a personal spiritual journey, academic pursuits, or a desire to contribute to interfaith dialogue. Understanding these varied motivations is essential for examining the intercultural communication barriers and strategies that Thai Buddhist monks employ when interacting with these visitors (Piuchan, 2021).

The inclusion criteria for the foreign participants were as follows:

1. Both native and non-native English speakers who were not Thai citizens.
2. Individuals who voluntarily visit the IBC to engage in discussions about Buddhism with the monks.

This diverse group of participants was expected to include individuals from a range of Western and Eastern countries, with common nationalities including the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Germany, France, and increasingly, countries from East Asia such as China, Japan, and South Korea. The primary reasons for their visits to Thailand typically involve spiritual exploration, cultural learning, and tourism. While most of these individuals may have a general interest in Buddhism, a specific subset joins the IBC to expand their knowledge of Buddhism, participate in meditation retreats, or engage in interfaith dialogue. As such, they offer valuable perspectives that enhance the study of intercultural communication within this unique setting (Piuchan, 2021).

Data collection

1. Research instruments

To collect both quantitative and qualitative data, a mixed-methods approach was employed. Quantitative data was gathered through structured questionnaires adapted from Dornyei & Scott (1997), administered online using Google Forms to a sample of 30 Thai Buddhist monks at the International Buddhist Center. The Likert scale was used to measure the frequency of intercultural communication strategies. To ensure reliability and validity, a pilot study was conducted. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 10 selected Thai Buddhist monks at the International Buddhist Center, following a framework informed by Horton & Macve (1995, 1997, 1998). Interviews were conducted in Thai to facilitate open and detailed responses. A pilot interview was conducted to refine the interview guide.

1.1 Questionnaires as a quantitative research instrument

Questionnaire (Use of Google Forms), which are a systematic collection of inquiries designed to gather information from a targeted group, are a fundamental tool in educational research. Online surveys offer significant advantages, such as the ability to collect data from a large number of participants, maintain consistency in responses, and ensure anonymity, all at a relatively low cost. These surveys are valuable for evaluating various aspects, such as learning outcomes, teacher effectiveness, student and parental perspectives, and other educational topics (Creswell & Clark, 2018).

The rationale for using questionnaire in this study was that they were optimal for examining the communication challenges faced by Thai Buddhist monks at the International Buddhist Center. The questionnaire can collect data from a substantial cohort in an anonymous manner, fostering honest feedback regarding communication barriers (such as language and cultural differences) and coping strategies (such as simplification and nonverbal cues). This standardized method provides reliable data on common communication challenges and the strategies monks use to navigate them, offering valuable insights into intercultural communication in this unique environment.

Quantitative research in this study utilized questionnaire adapted from Dornyei & Scott (1997) to identify the intercultural communication strategies employed by monks during interactions using English as a lingua franca. The sample size of 30 participants was expected to reach saturation, ensuring comprehensive data collection. The questionnaire, which focus on both barriers and strategies to answer questions one and two, were derived from previous studies and consisted of an item checklist with a Likert frequency rating scale from 1 to 5 (Yamashita, 2022). The questionnaire consists of three parts. The first part gathers some personal information, the second part asks you to a degree which intercultural communication barriers you encounter when communicating with foreigners, and the third part asks you to a degree which communication strategies you encounter when communicating with foreigners.

Table 3 Five-point Likert scale

Score range	Mean rating	Interpretation
4.21-5.00	Strongly agree	Very high
3.41-4.20	Agree	High
2.61-3.40	Not sure	Moderate
1.81-2.60	Disagree	Low
1.00-1.80	Strongly Disagree	Very Low

To ensure the quality and validity of the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted in two phases.

Phase 1: Expert review Three experts in linguistic fluency evaluated each questionnaire item to determine its suitability. These experts provided feedback on how the questionnaire could be improved, and their evaluations were analyzed using the Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC). This analysis involved calculating mean and standard deviation measurements for each item. Questionnaire items with an IOC value between 0.50 and 1.00 were considered appropriate and usable, while those with an IOC value below 0.50 required revision. So, the IOC value of this study was 0.67 that considered appropriate and usable for this study.

Phase 2: Pilot testing A trial run of the revised questionnaire was conducted with a different group of approximately 30 Thai Buddhist monks from a different temple or monastery. This pilot test aims to assess the clarity of the questionnaire items, evaluate the overall structure, and estimate the time needed for completion. The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's Alpha to ensure consistency in responses. A Cronbach's Alpha value of at least 0.7 was anticipated, indicating satisfactory reliability. Feedback from the pilot study participants was analyzed to identify potential issues or areas for improvement. This feedback was essential for refining and enhancing the questionnaire tools to ensure they accurately and sensitively measure the experiences and perspectives of the monastic participants.

1.2 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews with 10 selected Thai Buddhist monks at the International Buddhist Center offered researchers the ability to maintain flexibility and adaptability when asking questions while still guiding the conversation to align with the research objectives. This interview format stands out from unstructured interviews due to its balance between structure and flexibility. While it allows the interviewer to explore various topics in depth, it also retains control over the interview's direction and focus. This approach is particularly advantageous for qualitative research as it incorporates various perspectives and considerations relevant to the methodological aspects of interviewing (Ruslin et al., 2022).

For research focused on the communication between Thai Buddhist monks and foreign visitors, semi-structured interviews were particularly appropriate. The flexibility of this method enables the researcher to explore specific communication challenges while also probing deeper into the causes and coping mechanisms adopted by the monks. The adaptability of semi-structured interviews encourages open dialogues among the monks, allowing them to share their experiences and cultural perspectives. This results in valuable qualitative data, contributing to a better understanding of the strategies monks use to manage intercultural interactions at the Buddhist center.

Semi-structured interviews provided an efficient means for interviewers to gather accurate and relevant information in a relatively short time, while also

offering flexibility, deep insights, and the opportunity for relationship-building with participants. The interviews followed a framework informed by the works of Horton & Macve (1995, 1997, 1998). The objective is to gain a deeper understanding of the obstacles and approaches that monks face when discussing Buddhism with foreigners using English as the primary language.

The research questions for these interviews were specifically designed to align with the study's objectives, focusing on the communication barriers to answer the question one, " What IC barriers do Buddhist Monks in Thailand encounter when speaking English with foreigners about Buddhism at an International Buddhist Center?", the researcher was begin by transcribing the interview responses verbatim from the audio recordings and storing the data in Microsoft Word format employed by Thai Buddhist monks. While these questions are predetermined, interviewers retain the flexibility to adjust them based on participants' responses.

To ensure the quality and validity of the semi-structured interviews, a pilot study was conducted with a different group of 4 Thai Buddhist monks from a different temple or monastery. This pilot test aims to evaluate the clarity and effectiveness of the interview questions, assess the interview process, and estimate the time required for completion. The feedback from these pilot interviews was used to refine the interview guide, ensuring that it captures the intended data and aligns with the cultural and linguistic nuances of the monastic participants. The interview questions have been rigorously reviewed and validated by the study's supervisor, co-supervisor, and three subject matter experts. These experts have assessed the questions and provided feedback for improvement. The assessment was measured using the Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC), calculated through mean and standard deviation. Questions with an IOC value between 0.50 and 1.00 are deemed appropriate for use, while those below 0.50 require revision.

Before the actual data collection begins, a preliminary assessment of the interview questions was conducted with approximately three Thai Buddhist monks. This pilot test aims to evaluate the clarity of the interview questions, assess the organization of the interview, and estimate the time required for completion. Feedback from this pilot test was used to refine the interview process, ensuring that it effectively

captures the intended data and aligns with the cultural and linguistic nuances of the monastic participants.

In conclusion, the semi-structured interview approach was particularly suitable for this study as it allows for a balance between flexibility and structure, enabling researchers to explore specific communication barriers while also probing deeper into the causes and coping mechanisms employed by Thai Buddhist monks.

2. Data collection procedure

In collecting data to address the research objectives, the researcher followed these steps. Firstly, before engaging in meetings in the International Buddhist Centre (IBC) activities, each participant received a link to complete a Google Form focused on intercultural communication (IC) barriers and strategies. The participants were given ample time to complete the questionnaire at their convenience. Monks were instructed to fill out the questionnaire during the meeting. It is estimated that completing the questionnaire took approximately 10 minutes.

Once the completed questionnaire are collected, the researcher conducted a preliminary analysis of the responses, which served as a basis for the semi-structured interviews. The interviews were used to clarify and expand on the findings from the questionnaire, particularly regarding IC barriers and strategies. This allows for both verification and deeper exploration of the issues identified.

Secondly, the researcher conducted interviews with 10 participants who voluntarily agree to provide additional insights and extend their responses. The interviews were expected to last between 5 to 10 minutes.

After collecting both the audio recordings and completed questionnaire (focused on barriers and strategies) for each exchange, the researcher proceeded with data analysis and interpretation in line with the study's objectives—specifically, identifying communication barriers and strategies. The analysis involved both quantitative and qualitative approaches (as detailed in the Methodology and Data Analysis sections). Participants' names and data were handled with strict confidentiality, ensuring adherence to ethical standards. Additionally, ethical approval for this study was sought from the Ethics Committee at the University of Phayao, and no data collection took place until approval was granted.

Data analysis

1. Quantitative data analysis

The quantitative data collected from the questionnaire were analysed using statistical methods such as calculating the mean and standard deviation (S.D.). The data was processed using statistical computer software. The participants' responses regarding their use of intercultural communication (IC) strategies were evaluated using a five-point Likert scale. The mean scores helped determine the overall trends in participants' attitudes and practices, while the standard deviation provided insight into the variability of responses. This analysis was instrumental in identifying prevalent IC barriers and strategies among the monks.

2. Qualitative data analysis

In analysing the qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews on the question one, " What IC barriers do Buddhist Monks in Thailand encounter when speaking English with foreigners about Buddhism at an International Buddhist Center?", the researcher was begin by transcribing the interview responses verbatim from the audio recordings and storing the data in Microsoft Word format. Subsequently, the researcher was commence analyzing the transcriptions using qualitative content analysis (QCA) as outlined by Schreier. According to Schreier (2012), the QCA steps includes:

1. Material Collection: Identify and collect all relevant textual data that was analysed.

2. Descriptive Analysis: Describe the content and context of the data, noting any relevant characteristic such as the time of creation, source, and intended audience.

3. Category Definition: Develop categories based on the theory or research question, which guide the initial coding process. Categories can be derived both deductively (from theory or literature) and inductively (from the data).

4. Coding Framework Development: Develop a coding framework that outlines the definitions, examples, and coding rules for each category. This framework guides the consistent application of codes across the dataset.

5. Piloting: Test the coding framework on a portion of the text to ensure its reliability and comprehensiveness. Adjust the framework as necessary based on findings from the pilot phase.

6. Main Analysis: Apply the coding framework to the entire dataset, systematically coding the data according to the predefined categories.

7. Revision of Categories: Categories are revised and refined throughout the coding process as needed to better fit the data.

8. Final Analysis and Interpretation: After coding is complete, analyze the coded data to draw conclusions and interpret the findings in relation to the research questions.

Data analysis validation and reliability

Triangulation in research refers to the use of multiple data sources, methods, or perspectives to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic. In this study, the researcher employs triangulation in several ways to enhance the validity and depth of the findings. Qualitative methods, such as semi-structured interviews, are utilized as a form of triangulation, testing the validity of data through convergent information from different sources (Patton, 1999).

The integration of multiple investigators, including both human analysts and computer-generated programs, contributes to data triangulation by cross verifying the findings from different angles.

The data sources are further triangulated by incorporating both questionnaire and Audio recordings, as well as questionnaire adapted from multiple established resources. This multi-faceted approach is designed to cross-check the data, thereby increasing the reliability and consistency of the study's outcomes. By synthesizing data from these varied sources, the study aims to provide a richer and more accurate portrayal of the intercultural communication barriers and strategies experienced by Thai Buddhist monks.

Ethical considerations

Given the importance of ethical practices in research involving human participants, stringent ethical measures were applied to both monks and foreigners who may take part in this study. Prior to commencing the research, the researcher submited the study proposal to the Ethical Committee at the University of Phayao for approval. Ethical considerations included informed consent, ensuring full disclosure and transparency regarding the study's goals and procedures. Participation was strictly voluntary, with foreigners being clearly informed that choosing not to participate would not affect the willingness of monks to discuss Buddhism with them.

To maintain confidentiality, the anonymity of participants would be ensured by coding their names. The researcher was securely store all data with no public access. Participant identities would be protected, and no identifying information would be shared with anyone except the researcher, including in the final thesis submission. Participation data would be encrypted, and paper documents such as questionnaire, consent forms, and printouts would be secured in a locked container in the researcher's room with restricted access. Audio recordings and electronic data would be password-protected and stored securely, with recordings made on a device exclusively used by the researcher. Upon completion of the study, all materials and files would be safely disposed of through shredding and deletion. The researcher will also ensure adherence to best practices and safety guidelines throughout the study.

The well-being and best interests of all participants would be prioritized. Participants would be informed about the potential benefits of the research, assured that no harm would come to them, and notified that they may withdraw from the study at any point during the interview process. After each intercultural communication exchange, both the monk and the foreign participant would be debriefed. The researcher will address any concerns or questions and ensure that any issues are resolved satisfactorily. At the conclusion of the interview, all participants would be thanked for their involvement, with information provided on potential future educational programs aimed at enhancing proficiency and competency in conversations about Buddhism with foreigners.

Expected research outcomes

This study is expected to yield several significant outcomes related to intercultural communication (IC) strategies and barriers experienced by Thai Buddhist monks during their interactions with foreigners. These outcomes will contribute to both theoretical understanding and practical applications. Firstly, the study will provide deeper insights into the specific challenges and coping mechanisms that Buddhist monks encounter when communicating with foreigners using English as a lingua franca. The research will emphasize common barriers, such as linguistic challenges and cultural differences, while also identifying effective strategies that monks employ to bridge these gaps.

Additionally, the findings will offer practical recommendations for designing targeted language training and intercultural communication programs specifically for Buddhist monks. Such programs will aim to improve monks' ability to engage more effectively with international visitors, thus enhancing their role in promoting Buddhism on a global scale. The research will also provide actionable insights that can be implemented at Buddhist centers, especially those that frequently engage with foreign visitors. By understanding the specific needs and challenges faced by monks, these centers would be able to refine their programs and activities to better support intercultural exchanges.

Moreover, this study will contribute to the existing body of literature on intercultural communication within religious contexts, with a particular focus on the unique environment of Buddhist monks in Thailand. It will provide empirical data and theoretical contributions that can inform future research in related fields, such as religious communication, cross-cultural studies, and applied linguistics. Finally, the research may produce recommendations for religious and educational institutions on how to better prepare monks and other religious figures for intercultural interactions. These recommendations could guide policy development aimed at enhancing global engagement and fostering cultural exchange facilitated by Buddhist centers.

Conclusion of the chapter

Chapter 3 of this research proposal outlines the methodology for investigating the IC barriers and strategies experienced by Thai Buddhist monks at an International Buddhist Center (IBC) during their interactions with foreigners. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The quantitative data would be gathered through questionnaire administered to 30 Buddhist monks, assessing their experiences and strategies related to IC. The qualitative component involves semi-structured interviews and Audio-recorded exchanges between 10 selected monks and foreigners, which would be analyzed for emerging themes and patterns.

The sampling criteria ensure a diverse range of monks in terms of age, temple, country of origin, and English proficiency, aiming for saturation and validity in the findings. The chapter also details the procedures for data collection, including the sequence of events from the initial questionnaire distribution to the final analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. Ethical considerations are carefully addressed, emphasizing informed consent, confidentiality, and secure data handling. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the appropriateness of the mixed-methods approach for this study, highlighting its ability to provide a comprehensive understanding of the monks' IC experiences.

Conclusion of the research proposal

This research proposal aims to explore the communication barriers and strategies faced by Thai Buddhist monks in intercultural exchanges with foreigners at an International Buddhist Center. The study's mixed-methods approach is well-suited to capturing both the quantitative trends and qualitative nuances of these interactions. By examining the monks' experiences and identifying key IC strategies, this research seeks to contribute valuable insights into the broader field of intercultural communication within religious contexts.

The expected outcomes of this study include enhanced understanding of the specific challenges faced by monks, practical recommendations for language training and communication programs, and contributions to academic literature on

intercultural communication. The study's findings have the potential to inform policies and practices at Buddhist centers and educational institutions, ultimately promoting more effective global engagement and cultural exchange. With a rigorous methodological framework and ethical safeguards in place, this research endeavors to offer both theoretical and practical benefits, advancing knowledge and providing actionable solutions in the field of religious intercultural communication.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter presents the study's findings on the intercultural communication challenges and strategies employed by Thai Buddhist monks when encountering with foreigners at an IBC. The analysis draws from both quantitative and qualitative data collected through questionnaire and semi-structured interviews with the participating monks. The chapter is organized to first provide a demographic profile of the participants, followed by an analysis of intercultural communication challenges, and finally an examination of the strategies employed by the monks to address these challenges. The integration of both types of data offers a nuanced understanding of the monks' communication practices.

Background information of the participants

Table 4 Demography of Part I: Background Information

Demography of participants		Frequency	Percentage
Temple of Residence	Wat Chedi Luang	8	26.7%
	Wat Phakhao	4	13.3.7%
	Wat Yangkwang	4	13.3%
	Wat Pa Rattana	3	10%
	Mongkol Wat Sri	1	3.3%
	Ping Muang	1	3.3%
	Wat Srinuan	1	3.3%
	Wat Sri Pradit	1	3.3%
	Wat Sri Suthawas	1	3.3%
	WatInthakhil Sadue	1	3.3%
	Muang	1	3.3%
	Wat Thepprasit	1	3.3%

Table 4 (cont.)

Demography of participants		Frequency	Percentage
	Mae Pha Haen	1	3.3%
	Temple	1	3.3%
	Wat Lok Moli	1	3.3%
	Wat Chiang Saen	30	100%
	Wat Pa Chi		
	Wat Nong Chang		
	Kuen		
	Total		
Age Group:	20 – 29	27	90%
	30 – 39	2	6.7
	40 - 49	1	3.3%
	Total	30	100%
Educational	Bachelor's degree	27	90%
background:	Doctoral degree	3	10%
	Total	30	100%
Years of Experience	6 - 10	27	90%
as a Buddhist Monk	11 - 15	3	10%
	Total	30	100%
Level of English	Basic	14	46.7%
Proficiency	Intermediate	14	46.7%
	Advanced	2	6.7%
	Total	30	100%
Experience in	Yes	20	66.7%
English Training	No	10	33.3%
Programs	Total	30	100%
Experience of Living	Yes	30	100%
in an English-	No	0	0.00%
Speaking Country	Total	30	100%

Table 4 (cont.)

Demography of participants		Frequency	Percentage
Have you ever lived	Yes	0	0.00%
in a native-speaking	No	100	100%
country?	Total	30	100%

Table 4 presents the demographic profile of the 30 Thai Buddhist monks who participated in the study. These monks were drawn from various temples in Chiang Mai, with the highest representation from Wat Chedi Luang (26.7%), followed by Wat Phakhao and Wat Yangkwang (13.3% each). Other monks were from different temples in Chiang Mai, each contributing smaller percentages.

The majority of participants (90%) were aged between 20-29 years, while 6.7% were in the 30-39 age group, and 3.3% were between 40-49 years. Regarding educational background, most monks (90%) held a bachelor's degree, while 10% had obtained a doctoral degree. Notably, none of the monks had experience living in an English-speaking country.

These demographic insights highlight the educational level and age distribution of the monks, factors that may influence their intercultural communication experiences and strategies.

Answer to research question 1 (RQ1): What IC barriers do Buddhist monks in Thailand encounter when speaking English with foreigners about Buddhism at an International Buddhist Center?

This section provides an overview of the key intercultural communication barriers faced by Thai Buddhist monks based on both quantitative and qualitative data. The findings highlight four major barriers: language barriers, philosophical/religious barriers, cultural barriers, and pragmatic considerations.

1. Quantitative results from questionnaire

This subsection presents statistical findings from the Intercultural Barriers and Strategies Questionnaire distributed to 30 Thai Buddhist monks. The responses were analyzed using a five-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated "Never" and 5 indicated "Always." The overall mean score for intercultural communication barriers was 3.14 ("Generally"), suggesting that monks frequently encounter challenges when communicating with foreign visitors. Each barrier category is discussed in detail based on the questionnaire results.

Table 5 Demography of Part II: Intercultural Communication Barriers

Language Barriers		$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Percentage	Interpretation
1	I have trouble pronouncing certain English words.	3.60	1.07	72%	Usually
2	I encounter grammar mistakes when explaining religious concepts.	3.50	1.11	70%	Usually
3	I struggle to understand different foreign accents.	3.50	1.29	70.%	Usually
4	I have limited vocabulary for complex religious terms (like "karma" or "nirvana").	3.20	1.13	64%	Usually
	Mean score	3.45	1.15	69.0%	Usually

Table 5 (cont.)

Language Barriers		$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Percentage	Interpretation
Philosophical/	Religious Barriers				
1	The rules of monastic life (e.g., restrictions on interacting with women) cause misunderstandings with foreign visitors.	3.47	1.04	69.4%	Usually
2	It is difficult to explain complex Buddhist teachings (e.g., non-attachment, karma) in simple English.	3.13	1.10	62.6%	Generally
	Mean score	3.30	1.07	66.0%	Usually
Cultural	Barriers				
1	Foreign visitors seem to misunderstand my cultural and religious practices.	3.27	1.23	65.4%	Generally
2	I find it difficult to adapt to different cultural norms (such as greetings or eye contact).	2.83	1.17	56.8%	Generally
	Mean score	3.05	1.2	65.4%	Generally
Pragmatic	Considerations				
1	I have limited time to deeply engage with foreign visitors during conversations.	3.00	1.11	60%	Generally

Table 5 (cont.)

Language Barriers		$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Percentage	Interpretation
2	I struggle to use technology (e.g., translation tools or digital platforms) when communicating with foreign visitors.	2.50	1.14	50%	Generally
	Mean score	2.75	1.13	55.0%	Generally
	Overall Mean score	3.14	1.14	62.8%	Generally

Table 5 presents the intercultural communication barriers encountered by Thai Buddhist monks when communicating with foreign audiences. These barriers are categorized into four main groups: Language Barriers, Philosophical/Religious Barriers, Cultural Barriers, and Pragmatic Considerations. With an overall mean score of 3.14, interpreted as "Generally," the findings suggest that monks frequently face challenges in intercultural communication. To provide a clearer understanding, a detailed analysis of each category is presented below.

Language Barriers had the highest mean score of 3.45, indicating that linguistic challenges were the most significant issue for the monks. Specifically, the most prevalent difficulty was pronouncing certain English words, with a mean score of 3.60 ("Usually"), highlighting that monks often struggle with pronunciation when engaging with foreigners. Additionally, understanding different foreign accents and grammar mistakes both had a mean score of 3.50, suggesting that monks commonly experience difficulties in both comprehending and producing grammatically correct sentences when explaining religious concepts. Finally, the lowest-rated issue in this category was limited vocabulary for complex religious terms, such as "karma" with a mean score of 3.20 ("Generally"). This finding implies that, while monks are able to communicate in English, they sometimes struggle to articulate intricate Buddhist concepts due to a lack of precise vocabulary.

Turning to **Philosophical/Religious Barriers**, this category had an average mean score of 3.30, indicating that religious and philosophical aspects of communication also pose significant challenges. Notably, the rules of monastic life were the most problematic, with a mean score of 3.47, suggesting that restrictions related to monastic discipline, such as interactions with women, often lead to misunderstandings with foreign visitors. Furthermore, the second major challenge in this category was difficulty in explaining complex Buddhist teachings, which received a mean score of 3.13. This finding indicates that conveying abstract religious concepts in simple English remains a struggle for many monks. As a result, these barriers highlight how the complexity of Buddhist philosophy, combined with monastic traditions, can sometimes hinder effective intercultural communication and limit the depth of exchanges between monks and visitors.

Similarly, **Cultural Barriers** also posed considerable challenges, with a mean score of 3.05. Among the various cultural issues, the most frequently reported problem was misunderstandings by foreign visitors regarding Buddhist cultural and religious practices, which had a mean score of 3.27. This suggests that many visitors are unfamiliar with monastic customs, leading to potential confusion or misinterpretation. On the other hand, the lowest-rated issue in this category was difficulty adapting to different cultural norms, such as greetings or eye contact, which scored 2.83. This relatively lower score implies that, while monks do face some cultural adjustment challenges, they are somewhat more adaptable to different social behaviors and etiquette compared to the other barriers examined.

Finally, **Pragmatic Considerations** had the lowest overall mean score (2.75), though they still presented certain obstacles. The most significant issue in this category was limited time for deep engagement with foreign visitors, with a mean score of 3.00 ("Generally"), indicating that monks often have brief interactions that do not allow for meaningful or in-depth discussions. Additionally, difficulty using technology for communication, such as translation tools or digital platforms, had the lowest score in this category ($\bar{x}$ = 2.50). This suggests that, while some monks may struggle with digital communication, this barrier is less significant compared to language or cultural challenges.

In summary, the findings indicate that language and philosophical/religious barriers were the most significant challenges, while pragmatic considerations were less pronounced. These results underscore the need for targeted language training to enhance pronunciation and vocabulary, as well as simplified approaches to explaining Buddhist teachings in English. Furthermore, increasing cultural awareness among both monks and visitors could help minimize misunderstandings and foster more effective intercultural communication.

2. Qualitative results from semi-structured 0nterviews

The interview responses reinforced the quantitative findings that **language barriers, philosophical/religious barriers, cultural misunderstandings,** and **pragmatic considerations** were the most significant intercultural communication challenges encountered by Thai Buddhist monks when speaking English with foreign visitors. These qualitative insights provide a deeper understanding of the specific difficulties monks face, as well as the contextual factors that influence their communication experiences.

One of the most frequently mentioned challenges was **language barriers**, particularly **pronunciation difficulties, limited vocabulary**, and **grammar issues**. Many monks expressed that their English pronunciation was unclear to foreign visitors, making it difficult to convey Buddhist concepts effectively. Additionally, the lack of equivalent English words for certain Buddhist terminology created further communication difficulties. As seen in Excerpt 1, Monk 1 described his struggle with **vocabulary and pronunciation**, especially when explaining Buddhist teachings. At the same time, in Excerpt 2, Monk 2 highlighted the difficulty of **translating complex Buddhist terminology into English**, as some concepts have no direct equivalents. Finally, Excerpt 3 presents how Monk 3 discussed **pronunciation challenges**, emphasizing how certain English sounds and past tense forms are difficult for Thai speakers.

Excerpt 1 (Monk 1):

The main obstacle in communicating with foreigners is language limitations, especially technical Buddhist terms, which make communication less fluent.

อุปสรรคหลักที่พบในการสื่อสารกับชาวต่างชาติคือ ข้อจำกัดด้านภาษา โดยเฉพาะคำศัพท์เฉพาะทางที่เกี่ยวข้องกับพุทธศาสนา ซึ่งทำให้การสื่อสารมีความไม่คล่องตัว

Excerpt 2 (Monk 2):

Translating abstract Buddhist terms like 'Satipatthana' into English with accurate meaning is extremely challenging.

การแปลคำศัพท์ทางพระพุทธศาสนาที่เป็นนามธรรม เช่น 'สติปัฏฐาน' เป็นภาษาอังกฤษที่สื่อความหมายได้ตรงและครบถ้วน เป็นสิ่งที่ท้าทายอย่างยิ่ง

Excerpt 3 (Monk 3):

Yes, I struggle with pronouncing certain English words, especially past tense verbs with -ed ending.

ใช่ครับ ผมมีปัญหาเกี่ยวกับการออกเสียงภาษาอังกฤษบางคำที่ยาก เช่น คำที่เป็นอดีตเติม -ed ต่าง ๆ ครับ

These findings align with the quantitative data, where pronunciation difficulties received the highest mean score ($\bar{x}$ = 3.60, "Usually"), followed by grammar mistakes ($\bar{x}$ = 3.50, "Usually") and difficulty understanding foreign accents ($\bar{x}$ = 3.50, "Usually"). Monks also reported struggling with limited vocabulary ($\bar{x}$ = 3.20, "Generally"), particularly in articulating Buddhist concepts.

Another significant challenge was **philosophical and religious barriers**, particularly **misunderstandings about monastic rules** and **difficulties in explaining Buddhist teachings**. Many monks stated that foreign visitors often misinterpreted monastic discipline, such as rules regarding interactions with women. Furthermore, Buddhist teachings like karma and non-attachment were difficult to explain in simple English. As seen in Excerpt 4, Monk 4 described how foreigners sometimes question the teachings and may not fully believe what monks explain. Similarly, Excerpt 5 presents how Monk 8 highlighted the difficulty of clarifying monastic rules to foreign visitors. Finally, in Excerpt 6, Monk 3 emphasized how he overcomes this challenge by comparing Buddhist precepts to similar restrictions in other religions.

Excerpt 4 (Monk 4):

Foreigners like to explore new ideas, and sometimes, I don't know if they fully believe what I explain.

ฝรั่งเขาชอบศึกษาข้อมูลใหม่ๆ แล้วบางทีในสิ่งที่เราอธิบายไปไม่รู้ว่าเขาจะเชื่อเราทั้งหมดหรือเปล่าครับ

Excerpt 5 (Monk 5):

I sometimes struggle because monks have many precepts, and explaining rules like avoiding direct conversation with women is especially difficult for foreigners to understand.

ผมพบอุปสรรคนี้อยู่บางครั้งครับเนื่องจากศีลของพระภิกษุนั้นมีจำนวนมาก แล้วก็ข้อปฏิบัติ เช่น การจำกัดการคุยกับผู้หญิง เป็นข้อที่อธิบายให้ชาวต่างชาติเข้าใจยากที่สุด

Excerpt 6 (Monk 3):

When explaining why monks must follow certain precepts, I emphasize their role in mental development and compare them to similar religious principles in other faiths.

เมื่อต้องอธิบายเหตุผลที่พระสงฆ์ต้องรักษาศีล ผมจะเน้นย้ำถึงความสำคัญของการรักษาศีลในการพัฒนาจิตใจ และเปรียบเทียบกับหลักการทางศาสนาอื่นๆ ที่อาจมีข้อจำกัดที่คล้ายคลึงกัน

These findings support the quantitative results, where monastic rules were the highest-rated philosophical/religious barrier ($\bar{x}$ = 3.47, "Usually"), followed by difficulty explaining complex Buddhist teachings ($\bar{x}$ = 3.13, "Generally").

Cultural differences also emerged as a key challenge. Many monks found it difficult to adjust to foreign cultural norms, while foreign visitors often misunderstood Thai Buddhist customs. As seen in Excerpt 7, Monk 6 described how visitors **misinterpret Buddhist traditions**, such as bowing to Buddha images. Meanwhile, in Excerpt 8, Monk 10 highlighted how **foreigners sometimes unknowingly act in ways that Thai people consider disrespectful**.

Excerpt 7 (Monk 6):

Foreigners often have a limited understanding of Thai culture and religious practices, especially concepts like the Five Precepts, which are complex and different from Western cultural norms.

ชาวต่างชาติมักมีความเข้าใจที่จำกัดเกี่ยวกับวัฒนธรรมและประเพณีไทย โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งในเรื่องของศาสนาและการปฏิบัติทางศาสนา เช่น ศีล 5 ซึ่งเป็นแนวคิดที่ซับซ้อนและแตกต่างจากวัฒนธรรมตะวันตก

Excerpt 8 (Monk 10):

Foreigners often question why Thai people respect and bow to Buddha statues. Sometimes they point at them or direct their feet toward them, and Thai people correct them.

ฝรั่งเขามีความสงสัยในพระพุทธรูปว่าทำไมคนไทยเราถึงต้องเคารพและกราบสักการะ เพราะบางกรณีชาวต่างชาติอาจชี้ไปที่พระพุทธรูปหรือเอาเท้าชี้ไปทางพระพุทธรูป แล้วมีคนไทยมาตักเตือน

These findings align with the quantitative data, where cultural misunderstandings ($\bar{x}$ = 3.27, “Generally”) were among the most frequently reported challenges, followed by difficulty adapting to foreign cultural norms ($\bar{x}$ = 2.83, “Generally”).

Finally, **pragmatic considerations** emerged as another major challenge. Many monks reported that they **did not have enough time for in-depth discussions**, making it difficult to fully explain Buddhist teachings. Additionally, some monks **struggled with noisy environments**, which affected concentration and communication flow.

Excerpt 9 (Monk 9):

Some Buddhist teachings are lengthy and require significant preparation time to explain properly.

บางครั้ง หัวข้อธรรมบางข้อเป็นหัวข้อที่ยาว และต้องใช้เวลาเตรียมในการอธิบายค่อนข้างนาน

Excerpt 10 (Monk 5):

Unfavorable environments, such as noise and interruptions, disrupt focus and affect the flow of communication.

สภาพแวดล้อมที่ไม่เอื้ออำนวย เช่น เสียงรบกวน การขัดจังหวะ ทำให้ขาดสมาธิและส่งผลต่อความต่อเนื่องในการสื่อสาร

These findings align with the quantitative results, where limited time for engagement was rated at $\bar{x}$ = 3.00 (“Generally”), while environmental distractions were also identified as a communication barrier.

In summary, the qualitative findings confirmed that language barriers, religious challenges, cultural misunderstandings, and pragmatic constraints were the main difficulties Thai Buddhist monks faced when communicating with foreign visitors. Monks struggled with pronunciation, vocabulary, and translating Buddhist concepts, while monastic precepts and cultural customs were often misunderstood. Limited time and environmental distractions further hindered communication, emphasizing the need for better language training and cultural awareness programs to enhance intercultural interactions.

Answer to research question 2 (RQ2): What IC strategies are utilized by Buddhist monks in Thailand when speaking English with foreigners about Buddhism at an International Buddhist Center?

1. Quantitative results from questionnaire

This section presents the intercultural communication strategies that Thai Buddhist monks employ when engaging with foreign visitors. The findings are based on both quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative (semi-structured interviews) data, which provide insights into how monks navigate language barriers and cultural differences in their interactions. The data reveal that monks use a variety of strategies to overcome communication challenges, categorized into three main types: Verbal Strategies, Interactive Strategies, and Non-Verbal Strategies.

Table 6 Part II: Intercultural Communication Strategies

Verbal Strategies		$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Percentage	Interpretation
1	Self-Rephrasing/Self-Repair	3.90	0.92	78%	Usually
2	Message replacement	3.83	1.18	76.6%	Usually
3	Asking for Repetition/Clarification	3.77	1.04	75.4%	Usually
4	Circumlocution/ Paraphrase	3.73	0.94	74.6%	Usually
5	Approximation	3.73	1.06	74.6%	Usually
6	Use of all-purpose words	3.73	0.98	74.6%	Usually
7	Word coinage/ Foreignizing	3.67	1.061	73.4%	Usually
8	Message reduction	3.67	1.06	73.4%	Usually
9	Literal Translation (Transfer)	3.63	0.96	72.6%	Usually
10	Code Switching	3.50	1.11	70%	Usually
11	Message abandonment	3.40	1.10	68%	Usually
	Mean score	3.69	1.04	73.75%	Usually
Interactive	Strategies				
1	Own-Accuracy Check	3.73	0.87	74.6%	Usually
2	Interpretive Summary/Comprehension Check	3.43	0.82	68.6%	Usually
3	Direct Appeal for Help	3.33	0.88	66.6%	Usually
4	Guessing/Expressing Non-Understanding	3.33	0.99	66.6%	Usually
	Mean score	3.46	0.89	69.1%	Usually

Table 6 (cont.)

Verbal Strategies		$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Percentage	Interpretation
Non-Verbal	Strategies				
1	Mime (Non-Verbal Strategies)	3.67	1.06	73.4%	Usually
2	Use of Fillers/Self-Repetition	3.63	1.10	72.6%	Usually
3	Use of Similar Sounding Words	3.50	1.14	70%	Usually
4	Mumbling/Omission	3.43	1.01	68.6%	Usually
5	Over-Explicitness (Waffling)	3.40	1.13	68%	Usually
	Mean score	3.53	1.01	70.54%	Usually
	Overall Mean score	3.56	0.98	71.13%	Usually

Table 6 presents the intercultural communication strategies that Thai Buddhist monks use when communicating with foreign visitors. These strategies are categorized into three main groups: Verbal Strategies, Interactive Strategies, and Non-Verbal Strategies. The overall mean score of 3.56 ("Usually") suggests that monks frequently employ intercultural communication strategies to facilitate interactions with foreigners. Below is a detailed analysis of each category.

In terms of verbal strategies, this category received the highest mean score ($\bar{x}$ = 3.69, "Usually"), indicating that monks predominantly relied on spoken techniques to overcome communication difficulties. Among these, Self-Rephrasing/Self-Repair was the most frequently used strategy ($\bar{x}$ = 3.90, "Usually"), suggesting that monks often adjusted or corrected their speech to improve clarity. Similarly, Message Replacement ($\bar{x}$ = 3.83, "Usually") and Asking for Repetition/Clarification ($\bar{x}$ = 3.77, "Usually") were widely used, reflecting monks' proactive approach to ensuring mutual understanding.

On the other hand, Interactive Strategies had a mean score of ($\bar{x}$ = 3.46, "Usually"), indicating that monks frequently engaged in techniques that involved interaction with their conversation partners. The most commonly used interactive strategy was Own-Accuracy Check ($\bar{x}$ = 3.73, "Usually"), showing that monks actively monitored their speech for errors. In contrast, strategies such as Direct Appeal for Help and Guessing/Expressing Non-Understanding were used less frequently ($\bar{x}$ = 3.33, "Usually"), suggesting that monks preferred self-correction over directly asking for assistance.

Lastly, Non-Verbal Strategies had a mean score of ($\bar{x}$ = 3.53, "Usually"), revealing that monks frequently used body language to enhance communication. The highest-rated non-verbal strategy was Mime ($\bar{x}$ = 3.67, "Usually"), demonstrating that monks often used gestures to aid comprehension. Additionally, self-repetition and the use of fillers ($\bar{x}$ = 3.63, "Usually") were also commonly employed to maintain conversational flow.

Overall, the quantitative findings suggest that monks actively use a combination of verbal, interactive, and non-verbal strategies to navigate communication challenges in intercultural settings.

2. Qualitative results from semi-structured interviews

The interview findings confirmed that Thai Buddhist monks use a variety of **verbal, interactive,** and **non-verbal communication strategies** to overcome language barriers when interacting with foreign visitors. The most frequently reported **verbal strategies included self-rephrasing, message replacement, asking for repetition, and circumlocution** (paraphrasing or using approximate words). As seen in Excerpt 10, Monk 9 described how he modifies complex words and sentences to make them easier for foreigners to understand. Similarly, Excerpt 11 shows Monk 6 replacing difficult words with simpler alternatives to ensure clarity. Additionally, Excerpt 12 highlights how Monk 10 frequently uses paraphrasing when explaining Buddhist concepts, making abstract ideas more relatable for visitors.

Excerpt 10 (Monk 9):

The language strategy I use most often is changing difficult or complex words into simpler ones that are easier to understand.

กลยุทธ์ทางภาษาที่ผมใช้เป็นประจำก็คือการเปลี่ยนคำศัพท์ที่มีความยากและซับซ้อนให้มีความหมายที่ง่ายแก่การเข้าใจครับ

Excerpt 11 (Monk 6):

I change or replace difficult words with easier ones so that foreigners can understand more easily.

กลยุทธ์ที่ผมใช้เป็นประจำในระหว่างสนทนากับชาวต่างชาติก็คือการแปลงหรือเปลี่ยนคำที่มันเข้าใจได้ยากให้เป็นประโยคหรือคำที่เข้าใจได้ง่ายครับ

Excerpt 12 (Monk 10):

I use easier words instead of difficult ones, or I change long and complex sentences into shorter ones.

กลยุทธ์ในการสื่อสารที่ผมใช้อยู่บ่อยครั้งก็คือการใช้คำศัพท์ที่ง่ายแทนที่คำศัพท์ที่ยาก ครับ หรือการเปลี่ยนแปลงประโยคที่มันยากๆ แล้วกลับมาเป็นประโยคที่ชาวต่างชาตินั้นเข้าใจได้ง่าย

These qualitative findings align with the quantitative results, where self-rephrasing/self-repair ($\bar{x}$ = 3.90, “Usually”), message replacement ($\bar{x}$ = 3.83, “Usually”), and paraphrasing ($\bar{x}$ = 3.77, “Usually”) emerged as the most frequently used verbal strategies. Monks also employed interactive strategies to confirm comprehension and seek clarification. As seen in Excerpt 13, Monk 5 described how he checks his own word accuracy to ensure correctness when speaking English. Meanwhile, in Excerpt 14, Monk 4 mentioned how he asks follow-up questions to clarify misunderstandings**.**

Excerpt 13 (Monk 5):

I try to check whether the words I use are correct to make sure I am speaking properly.

บางครั้งผมจะถามเพื่อเช็คว่าคำที่ใช้ถูกต้องหรือไม่

Excerpt 14 (Monk 4):

I find that asking follow-up questions to get visitors to explain further is a highly effective strategy to overcome language barriers.

ผมพบว่าการถามคำถามเพื่อให้ผู้ฟังอธิบายเพิ่มเติมเป็นกลยุทธ์ที่มีประสิทธิภาพสูงในการแก้ไขปัญหาอุปสรรคทางภาษา

These findings are consistent with the quantitative data, where own-accuracy check ($\bar{x}$ = 3.73, “Usually”) and comprehension checks ($\bar{x}$ = 3.43, “Usually”) were the most frequently used interactive strategies.

Finally, monks also relied on non-verbal strategies such as gestures, facial expressions, and technology-assisted communication. As seen in Excerpt 15, Monk 1 described how he frequently uses body language to clarify meaning when words are insufficient. Similarly, in Excerpt 16, Monk 2 stated that he often points to objects or places to ensure mutual understanding. Meanwhile, Excerpt 17 presents how Monk 3 uses translation apps when struggling with language barriers.

Excerpt 15 (Monk 1):

I often use body language to support communication, especially when I face difficulties with spoken language.

ในการสื่อสารกับชาวต่างชาติ ผมมักใช้ภาษากายประกอบ เพื่อช่วยให้การสื่อสารความชัดเจนมากขึ้น โดยเฉพาะเมื่อประสบปัญหาในการสื่อสารด้วยภาษาพูด

Excerpt 16 (Monk 2):

Apart from spoken strategies, I also use gestures and visual aids, such as pointing to objects or locations, to ensure mutual understanding.

นอกจากการใช้กลยุทธ์ทางภาษาพูดแล้ว ผมยังใช้ภาษากายและสื่อประกอบ เช่น การชี้ไปยังวัตถุหรือสถานที่ เพื่อช่วยในการสื่อสารให้เข้าใจตรงกันมากขึ้น

Excerpt 17 (Monk 3):

I find that using translation apps is very helpful when communicating with foreigners.

ผมพบว่าการใช้แอปพลิเคชันช่วยแปลภาษาเป็นประโยชน์อย่างมากในการสื่อสารกับชาวต่างชาติ

These quantitative results show that mime/gestures ($\bar{x}$ = 3.67, “Usually”), visual aids ($\bar{x}$ = 3.63, “Usually”), and technology-assisted communication ($\bar{x}$ = 3.50, “Usually”) were common non-verbal strategies.

In summary, the qualitative findings reinforce the statistical results, demonstrating that Thai Buddhist monks rely on verbal, interactive, and non-verbal strategies to overcome intercultural communication barriers. They frequently rephrase, replace words, and paraphrase when speaking English. Additionally, monks use self-checks, follow-up questions, and comprehension checks to ensure understanding. Finally, gestures, visual aids, and translation apps play an essential role in supporting communication. These findings highlight the importance of training programs to enhance monks’ linguistic confidence and intercultural communication skills when engaging with foreign visitors.

Conclusion of the chapter

This chapter analyzed the intercultural communication challenges and strategies employed by Thai Buddhist monks when interacting with foreigners at an International Buddhist Center (IBC). The study, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data, identified four primary communication barriers: language barriers, cultural barriers, pragmatic considerations, and philosophical/religious barriers. Monks frequently encountered difficulties in pronunciation, vocabulary limitations, and grammar issues, which made conveying Buddhist concepts in English challenging. Additionally, cultural differences, such as varying social norms and misunderstandings regarding monastic discipline, further complicated communication. Pragmatic challenges, including time constraints and distracting environments, also emerged as significant concerns.

To manage these barriers, monks utilized a range of verbal, non-verbal, and interactive strategies. The most frequently employed verbal strategies included self-rephrasing/self-repair, message replacement, and asking for repetition/clarification. Non-verbal strategies, particularly mime, fillers/self-repetition, and visual aids, played a crucial role in enhancing communication when language was insufficient. Additionally, monks engaged in interactive strategies such as accuracy checks and

comprehension checks, ensuring mutual understanding in conversations. These findings underscore the monks' adaptability and resourcefulness in overcoming language and cultural barriers.

Overall, this study highlights the importance of enhancing monks' intercultural communication skills through targeted language training and cultural awareness programs. The insights gained contribute to a broader understanding of the communication strategies employed in religious intercultural exchanges. The next chapter will discuss the implications of these findings and propose recommendations for future research and practical applications.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

As the final chapter of this thesis, this chapter aims to discuss and summarize the principal findings of the study in response to the research questions, focusing on the intercultural barriers and strategies employed by Thai Buddhist monks when communicating with foreign audiences. The discussion addresses the four key barriers Language Barriers, Cultural Barriers, Pragmatic Considerations, and Philosophical/Religious Barriers as well as the various strategies monks used, including Verbal Strategies, Non-Verbal Strategies, and Interactive Strategies. This is followed by a reflection on the implications of these findings for intercultural communication in Buddhist education. Finally, the chapter outlines the limitations of the study and offers suggestions for future research.

Discussion of the research results

1. Intercultural communication barriers

The findings of this study highlight the complex intercultural communication barriers faced by Thai Buddhist monks when engaging with foreign visitors. The most significant challenges include language barriers, cultural differences, pragmatic considerations, and religious or philosophical misunderstandings. Language-related difficulties, such as limited vocabulary, pronunciation issues, and grammatical errors, align with previous research on second-language acquisition challenges in religious contexts (Chand, 2021). The difficulty in translating Buddhist concepts into English, particularly terms without direct equivalents, echoes findings from Mancini-Cross et al. (2009), who noted that linguistic differences often hinder the effective transmission of spiritual teachings across cultures. Moreover, comprehension challenges arise due to monks' limited exposure to diverse English accents, a barrier also identified in Chaiyasit's (2018) study on non-native English speakers' struggles with cross-cultural communication.

Cultural barriers further complicate monks' interactions with foreign visitors, particularly differences in social norms, body language, and hierarchical relationships. Thai Buddhist monks occupy a position of high social status, and their interactions are governed by strict monastic codes, such as avoiding physical contact with women. These norms are often misunderstood by foreigners from more egalitarian cultures, leading to unintended disrespect or discomfort (Tangpathomwong, 2021). Misinterpretations of non-verbal cues, such as bowing to Buddha images or maintaining physical distance, align with research by Liu (2022), which emphasized the impact of cultural misalignment on communication. Stereotyping and ethnocentrism also present obstacles, as foreign visitors may impose their own cultural frameworks onto Buddhist practices, reducing the depth of religious exchanges. This corresponds with Tahir et al.'s (2020) argument that intercultural dialogues often fail when one party perceives the other through a narrow, preconditioned lens.

Pragmatic barriers, including time constraints, technological limitations, and environmental disruptions, further hinder meaningful dialogue. Monks often lack sufficient time for in-depth discussions with visitors at International Buddhist Centers (IBCs), leading to superficial conversations that fail to address visitors' deeper spiritual inquiries. Similar constraints have been documented in studies on religious tourism, where brief interactions between clergy and visitors limit the effectiveness of intercultural religious exchanges (Smith, 2024). Additionally, while some monks attempt to use translation applications to bridge language gaps, limited digital literacy remains a challenge, a trend also noted in studies on technology use in non-Western religious education (Pralahad, 2015).

Religious and philosophical barriers present unique challenges, as Buddhist teachings often contain abstract concepts that are difficult to translate into simple English. Core doctrines such as non-attachment, karma, and mindfulness are frequently misinterpreted by foreign visitors, especially those from secular or non-Buddhist backgrounds. This issue is consistent with Larbprasertporn et al. (2021) findings that Buddhist philosophy requires contextual understanding, which is often absent in short-term intercultural exchanges. Furthermore, variations within Buddhism, such as differences between Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna traditions, add another

layer of complexity, leading to misunderstandings about core teachings. Visitors' expectations for simplified, digestible spiritual insights also align with Tangpathomwong's (2021) study on the commercialization of religious tourism, where deep spiritual teachings are often reduced to surface-level experiences for international audiences.

2. Intercultural communication strategies

Despite these challenges, the study also identified several effective communication strategies employed by monks to overcome these barriers. Verbal strategies such as message replacement, circumlocution, and simplification enable monks to adapt their speech when explaining complex Buddhist concepts. This aligns with research on communicative competence in second-language acquisition, which highlights the importance of paraphrasing and approximation in overcoming lexical limitations (Swain, 2000). Monks also rely on non-verbal strategies, including gestures, facial expressions, and mime, to enhance comprehension. Studies on non-verbal communication in religious contexts emphasize that body language can be as effective as verbal explanations in conveying meaning (Gregersen et al., 2014). For example, demonstrating meditation postures rather than merely describing them helps foreign visitors grasp their significance more intuitively.

Interactive strategies, such as asking for clarification, summarizing visitors' statements, and checking for comprehension, further facilitate communication. These techniques reflect findings from Gregersen et al.,(1994), who assert that interactive feedback mechanisms enhance mutual understanding in intercultural exchanges. Additionally, monks' ability to adapt their speech based on the listener's proficiency level aligns with Zhu's (2016) research on the importance of adjusting communicative efforts to match audience comprehension in multilingual settings. Some monks also incorporate technology, such as translation applications, to aid communication, although their effectiveness is limited by monks' digital literacy, a challenge similarly noted in recent studies on digital tools in religious education (Smith, 2024).

Overall, the study's findings suggest that while Thai Buddhist monks face significant intercultural communication barriers, they employ a range of adaptive strategies to bridge linguistic and cultural gaps. These results contribute to broader

discussions in intercultural communication, religious education, and second-language acquisition, reinforcing the need for enhanced language training, cultural awareness, and technological support in Buddhist monastic education. Addressing these challenges will not only improve monks' ability to communicate with international visitors but also ensure the effective transmission of Buddhist teachings in an increasingly globalized world.

Limitations of the study

Despite its valuable insights, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research primarily focused on Thai Buddhist monks in International Buddhist Centers (IBCs) in Thailand, limiting the generalizability of its findings to other Buddhist contexts. While the study highlights key intercultural communication barriers and strategies, the experiences of monks in different countries or monastic traditions—such as Mahāyāna or Vajrayāna Buddhism—may differ significantly.

Second, the study relied on self-reported data from semi-structured interviews, which, while valuable, may have been influenced by social desirability bias. Monks may have presented their language abilities or communication strategies in a more favorable light, potentially affecting the accuracy of the findings.

Another limitation concerns the scope of language-related challenges. While this study identified key linguistic barriers, such as pronunciation, vocabulary limitations, and grammatical issues, it did not conduct a detailed linguistic analysis of monks' speech patterns.

Technological limitations were also an area that warranted further exploration. While some monks reported using translation applications, the study did not assess the effectiveness of these tools in bridging language gaps. Given the increasing role of digital communication in religious education and tourism.

Finally, this study did not extensively explore the impact of training programs on monks' ability to navigate intercultural communication. While some monks reported receiving English language training, the study did not assess the effectiveness of these programs or how they could be improved.

In conclusion, while this study provides important contributions to understanding the intercultural communication challenges and strategies of Thai Buddhist monks, there remain numerous avenues for further research. Expanding the study to include monks from diverse Buddhist traditions, incorporating observational and visitor perspectives, analyzing linguistic features in greater detail, assessing technological interventions, and evaluating training programs would deepen our understanding of how Buddhist monks can effectively communicate in an increasingly interconnected world. Addressing these gaps will contribute to the broader fields of religious communication, second-language acquisition, and intercultural competence, ensuring that Buddhist teachings continue to be accessible and meaningful to international audiences.

Recommendations for further research

espite its valuable insights, this study has several recommendations for further research that should be acknowledged. First, While the study highlights key intercultural communication barriers and strategies, the experiences of monks in different countries or monastic traditions—such as Mahāyāna or Vajrayāna Buddhism—may differ significantly. Future research could expand its scope to include Buddhist monks from diverse backgrounds to provide a more comprehensive understanding of intercultural communication challenges in Buddhism.

Second, future studies could incorporate observational methods, role-playing scenarios, or longitudinal research to gain deeper insights into real-time communication difficulties and adaptive strategies. Additionally, incorporating input from foreign visitors interacting with monks would provide a more balanced perspective on the effectiveness of these strategies.

According to limitations concerning the scope of language-related challenges, future research could employ discourse analysis or phonetic studies to examine the specific linguistic features that hinder monks' communication with foreign visitors. Such studies could provide targeted recommendations for language training programs tailored to monks' specific needs.

Next, future research should explore how digital literacy and technological interventions—such as AI translation tools or online learning platforms—can support monks in their intercultural interactions. Additionally, comparative studies on monks' use of technology in different Buddhist traditions could offer insights into best practices for integrating digital resources into religious communication.

Finally, future research could evaluate the impact of structured language and intercultural training programs, examining their long-term effects on monks' communication skills and confidence in engaging with foreign visitors. Furthermore, exploring how Buddhist educational institutions incorporate intercultural communication training into monastic curricula would provide valuable insights into how monks can be better equipped for their roles as global ambassadors of Buddhism.

In conclusion, despite its valuable insights, this study has several recommendations for further research that should be acknowledged. Firstly, future research could also incorporate observational methods, role-playing, or longitudinal studies to gain deeper insights into real-time communication, and crucially, include input from foreign visitors to balance perspectives on strategy effectiveness. Furthermore, employing discourse analysis or phonetic studies could pinpoint specific linguistic features hindering communication, informing tailored language training programs. Exploring the integration of digital literacy and technological interventions, such as AI translation tools, and conducting comparative studies on technology use across Buddhist traditions could offer insights into best practices. Finally, evaluating the long-term impact of structured language and intercultural training programs on monks' communication skills and confidence, alongside examining how Buddhist educational institutions incorporate such training into their curricula, would provide valuable insights into better preparing monks for their roles as global ambassadors of Buddhism.

Conclusion of the chapter

This chapter summarized the key findings on intercultural communication barriers and strategies used by Thai Buddhist monks when interacting with foreign visitors. The study identified four major barriers—language barriers, cultural barriers,

pragmatic considerations, and religious/philosophical barriers—which align with existing research on second-language challenges, cultural misunderstandings, and religious discourse (Byram, 1997). To navigate these obstacles, monks employed verbal, non-verbal, and interactive strategies, consistent with communication accommodation theories (Giles, 2019) and adaptive language learning strategies (Tarone, 1980). The findings highlight the need for enhanced language training, cultural awareness programs, and digital literacy support to improve monks' ability to engage with international audiences effectively. Addressing these challenges can help monks serve as better communicators and cultural ambassadors, ensuring that Buddhist teachings remain accessible and meaningful across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Conclusion of the thesis

This study explored the intercultural communication barriers and strategies of Thai Buddhist monks when engaging with foreign visitors at International Buddhist Centers. Through a mixed-methods approach, incorporating quantitative surveys and qualitative semi-structured interviews, the study identified four major barriers (i.e., language barriers, cultural barriers, pragmatic considerations, and religious/philosophical barriers) along with three key strategy types (i.e., verbal strategies, non-verbal strategies, and interactive strategies).

The study's findings contribute to the broader field of intercultural communication, second-language acquisition, and religious discourse. It highlights the unique challenges Buddhist monks face when conveying abstract religious concepts in English, reinforcing existing research on language barriers in religious contexts (Arunsutalangkarn, 2023) Additionally, the study supports the Communication Accommodation Theory (Giles, 2019) by demonstrating how monks adjust their speech, gestures, and interaction styles to bridge linguistic and cultural gaps.

From a practical perspective, the study underscores the need for enhanced language training programs, intercultural competence workshops, and digital resources tailored to monks' specific communication needs. Providing structured English courses focusing on Buddhist terminology, pronunciation training, and real-world conversational practice could significantly enhance monks' ability to communicate

with foreign visitors. Additionally, technology-driven solutions, such as AI-powered translation tools and online learning platforms, could help monks overcome language and time constraints, facilitating deeper intercultural exchanges.

Despite its contributions, this study has limitations, including its focus on Thai Buddhist monks, self-reported data, and the absence of visitor perspectives. Future research should explore monks from different Buddhist traditions, incorporate observational methods, and examine the long-term impact of language training programs on monks' communication skills. Additionally, studying how cultural expectations shape visitor-monk interactions would provide a more holistic understanding of intercultural communication in religious settings.

In conclusion, as Thailand's role as a global Buddhist hub grows, the ability of monks to communicate effectively with international audiences is becoming increasingly important. Addressing linguistic, cultural, and pragmatic challenges through targeted training and support will not only enhance monks' intercultural competence but also strengthen Buddhism's global reach. By fostering effective, respectful, and meaningful dialogues, Thai Buddhist monks can continue to serve as cultural and spiritual bridges in an increasingly interconnected world.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A Intercultural Communication Barriers and Strategies of Thai Buddhist Monks with Foreigners at an International Buddhist Center in Thailand

Welcome to the Intercultural Communication Barriers and Strategies of Thai Buddhist Monks with Foreigners at an International Buddhist Center in Thailand

Purpose: The aim of this questionnaire is to identify and analyze the intercultural communication strategies for Monks during the intercultural exchange using English as a lingua franca.

Confidentiality: Please be assured that your responses would be kept strictly confidential. The information collected would be used solely for research purposes and to inform the development of effective support mechanisms. Individual responses will not be identifiable in any report or publication derived from this survey.

Importance of Your Participation: Your honest and thoughtful responses are crucial. By sharing your experiences, you are contributing valuable insights that can lead to meaningful in which we can use the results to provide practical guidelines for Thai Buddhist monks and others in similar contexts to enhance their English communication skills, particularly in intercultural settings.

Instructions: The questionnaire consists of three parts. The first part gathers some personal information, the second part asks you to a degree which intercultural communication barriers you encounter when communicating with foreigners, and the third part asks you to a degree which communication strategies you encounter when communicating with foreigners.

Thank you for participating in this important survey.

Part I: Background Information

Direction: Please fill in the relevant information or tick (√) the appropriate alternatives.

I hereby [ ] grant [ ] withhold my consent for the collection and utilization of my personal data for the purpose of this research.

1. what temple where you reside in .....
2. Age:

( ) 13-19

( ) 20-29

( ) 30-39

( ) 40-49

( ) 50+

3. Educational background:

( ) No formal education

( ) Primary school

( ) Secondary school

( ) High school

( ) College degree

( ) Bachelor's degree

( ) Master's degree

( ) Doctoral degree.

4. Years of Experience as a Buddhist Monk:

( ) 1-5

( ) 6-10

( ) 11-15

( ) 16+

5. Level of English Proficiency:

( ) Basic

( ) Intermediate

( ) Advanced

6. Experience in English Training Programs

( ) Yes

( ) No

If yes, please specify: .....

7. Have you ever lived in a native-speaking country? If yes, what country?

( ) Yes

( ) No

If yes, please identify country: .....

Part II: Intercultural Communication Barriers

Directions: Please indicate how often you experience the following communication barriers when speaking English with foreigners.

5 = Always (เป็นประจำ)

4 = Usually (บ่อยๆ)

3 = Generally (เป็นปกติ)

2 = Infrequently (ในบางโอกาส)

1 = Never (ไม่เคย)

No	Barriers	5	4	3	2	1
1	I have limited vocabulary for complex religious terms (like "karma" or "nirvana"). ฉันมีข้อจำกัดเกี่ยวกับคำศัพท์ภาษาอังกฤษทางศาสนาที่ซับซ้อน (เช่น "กรรม" หรือ "นิพพาน")					
2	I encounter grammar mistakes when explaining religious concepts. ฉันมักทำผิดไวยากรณ์เมื่ออธิบายเรื่องศาสนา					
3	I have trouble pronouncing certain English words. ฉันออกเสียงคำภาษาอังกฤษบางคำได้ยาก					
4	I struggle to understand different foreign accents. ฉันฟังสำเนียงของชาวต่างชาติบางสำเนียงไม่ค่อยเข้าใจ					

Part II: Intercultural Communication Barriers (cont.)

No	Barriers	5	4	3	2	1
5	I find it difficult to adapt to different cultural norms (such as greetings or eye contact). ฉันรู้สึกว่าการปรับตัวเข้ากับวัฒนธรรมต่างประเทศ (เช่น การทักทายหรือการสบตา) เป็นเรื่องยาก					
6	Foreign visitors seem to misunderstand my cultural and religious practices. บางครั้งชาวต่างชาติเข้าใจการปฏิบัติทางศาสนาและวัฒนธรรมของฉันผิด					
7	I have limited time to deeply engage with foreign visitors during conversations. ฉันมีเวลาไม่เพียงพอที่จะสื่อสารลึกซึ้งกับชาวต่างชาติในแต่ละครั้ง					
8	I struggle to use technology (e.g., translation tools or digital platforms) when communicating with foreign visitors. ฉันไม่ค่อยถนัดในการใช้เทคโนโลยี (เช่น เครื่องมือแปล หรือแพลตฟอร์มดิจิทัล) เพื่อสื่อสารกับชาวต่างชาติ					
9	The rules of monastic life (e.g., restrictions on interacting with women) cause misunderstandings with foreign visitors. ศีลของพระ (เช่น ข้อจำกัดในการคุยกับผู้หญิง) ทำให้ชาวต่างชาติบางคนเข้าใจผิด					
10	It is difficult to explain complex Buddhist teachings (e.g., non-attachment, karma) in simple English. ฉันอธิบายคำสอนที่ยากๆ ของพุทธศาสนา (เช่น ความไม่ยึดติด กรรม) ให้เป็นภาษาอังกฤษแบบง่ายๆ ได้ยาก					

Other types of intercultural communication Barriers

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Part III: Intercultural Communication Strategies

Directions: Please indicate how often you use the following communication strategies when speaking English with foreigners.

5 = Always (เป็นประจำ)

4 = Usually (บ่อยๆ)

3 = Generally (เป็นปกติ)

2 = Infrequently (ในบางโอกาส)

1 = Never (ไม่เคย)

No	Strategies	5	4	3	2	1
1	I leave a message unfinished when I don't know the correct word (Message Abandonment). ฉันหยุดพูดเมื่อหาคำในภาษาอังกฤษไม่ออก (การละข้อความ)					
2	I simplify difficult language or avoid complex topics (Message Reduction). ฉันพยายามพูดเรื่องที่ง่ายขึ้นเมื่อไม่สามารถอธิบายเรื่องยากได้ (การลดข้อความ)					
3	I replace difficult words with simpler words (Message Replacement). ฉันใช้คำง่าย ๆ แทนคำศัพท์ที่ยากเมื่ออธิบาย (การแทนที่ข้อความ)					
4	I describe the meaning of a word when I can’t remember it (Circumlocution/Paraphrase). เมื่อจำคำที่ถูกต้องไม่ได้ ฉันจะพยายามอธิบายความหมายของคำแทน (การอธิบายโดยรอบ/การถอดความ)					
5	I use more general words when I don’t know the specific term (Approximation). ฉันใช้คำที่หมายถึงอย่างกว้าง ๆ แทนที่จะใช้คำที่เฉพาะเจาะจง (การประมาณ)					
6						

Part III: Intercultural Communication Strategies (cont.)

No	Strategies	5	4	3	2	1
7	I create new words by adapting Pali/Thai to English (Word Coinage). ฉันดัดแปลงคำไทยหรือบาลีเพื่อใช้ในภาษาอังกฤษ (การสร้างคำ)					
8	I translate phrases directly from Thai to English, even if it's not idiomatic (Literal Translation). ฉันแปลประโยคตรง ๆ จากภาษาไทยไปเป็นภาษาอังกฤษ แม้ว่าบางครั้งมันจะไม่ถูกต้อง (การแปลตรง)					
9	I rephrase my sentence to make it simpler or clearer (Self-Rephrasing). ฉันพยายามปรับประโยคให้เข้าใจง่ายขึ้นเมื่อพูด (การพูดใหม่/การแก้ไขด้วยตนเอง)					
10	I ask the listener to repeat or explain something I didn't understand (Asking for Repetition/Clarification). ฉันขอให้ผู้ฟังอธิบายหรือพูดซ้ำเมื่อไม่เข้าใจ (การขอคำอธิบายเพิ่มเติม/การขอให้พูดซ้ำ)					
11	I switch to Thai or Pali when I don't know the English word (Code Switching). ฉันเปลี่ยนไปใช้ภาษาไทยหรือบาลีเมื่อไม่รู้คำภาษาอังกฤษ (การสลับภาษา)					
12	I use hand gestures or facial expressions to show meaning (Mime). ฉันใช้ท่าทางหรือสีหน้าเพื่อช่วยอธิบายสิ่งที่ฉันหมายถึง (การใช้ท่าทาง)					
13	I use filler words like "uh" or repeat myself when I can't think of the right word (Fillers). ฉันใช้คำอย่าง “เอ่อ” หรือพูดซ้ำเพื่อคิดหาคำที่ถูกต้อง (การใช้คำเติม/การพูดซ้ำ)					
14	I mumble or skip over words when I'm unsure of the correct term (Mumbling/Omission). ฉันพูดคลุมเครือหรือข้ามคำที่ไม่รู้เมื่อพูด (การพูดคลุมเครือ/การละเว้น)					
15	I give very detailed explanations to make sure I'm understood (Over-Explicitness). ฉันอธิบายยาวเพื่อให้แน่ใจว่าผู้ฟังเข้าใจ (การพูดมากเกินไป)					

Part III: Intercultural Communication Strategies (cont.)

No	Strategies	5	4	3	2	1
16	I use words that sound similar to the word I mean to use (Use of Similar-Sounding Words). ฉันใช้คำที่ฟังดูคล้ายกับคำที่ฉันต้องการใช้ แม้บางครั้งความหมายจะไม่ถูกต้อง (การใช้คำเสียงคล้ายกัน)					
17	I directly ask for help when I don't know how to say something (Direct Appeal for Help). ฉันขอให้ผู้ฟังช่วยเมื่อฉันไม่รู้จะพูดอะไร (การขอความช่วยเหลือโดยตรง)					
18	I make guesses about what the listener means if I don't understand (Guessing). ฉันคาดเดาความหมายหรือบอกว่าฉันไม่เข้าใจเพื่อให้ผู้ฟังอธิบายเพิ่ม (การคาดเดา/การแสดงความไม่เข้าใจ)					
19	I summarize what the visitor said to confirm I understood correctly (Interpretive Summary). ฉันสรุปสิ่งที่ผู้ฟังพูดเพื่อให้แน่ใจว่าฉันเข้าใจถูกต้อง (การสรุป/การตรวจสอบความเข้าใจ)					
20	I check if what I said was correct (Own-Accuracy Check). ฉันถามผู้ฟังเพื่อให้แน่ใจว่าฉันใช้คำที่ถูกต้อง (การตรวจสอบความถูกต้องของตนเอง)					

Other ty pes of intercultural communication strategies

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Thank you for your cooperation.

Appendix B Semi-structured Interviews

Intercultural Communication Barriers

1. What are the intercultural communication barriers you've faced when interacting with foreigners?

อุปสรรคในการสื่อสารข้ามวัฒนธรรมระหว่างคุณกับชาวต่างชาติคืออะไรบ้าง?

2. What specific challenges do you face when explaining Buddhist vocabulary or concepts in English?

คุณพบความยากลำบากใดบ้างในการอธิบายคำศัพท์หรือแนวคิดทางพระพุทธศาสนาเป็นภาษาอังกฤษ?

3. Do you have trouble pronouncing certain English words?

คุณออกเสียงคำภาษาอังกฤษบางคำได้ยาก ใช่หรือไม่?

4. Do foreign visitors struggle to understand the cultural significance of certain practices or behaviors? Can you give an example?

ชาวต่างชาติมีความยากลำบากในการเข้าใจความสำคัญทางวัฒนธรรมของการปฏิบัติหรือพฤติกรรมบางอย่างหรือไม่? คุณสามารถยกตัวอย่างได้หรือไม่?

5. Do environmental factors, such as noise or interruptions, affect your ability to communicate effectively?

ปัจจัยด้านสิ่งแวดล้อม เช่น เสียงรบกวน หรือการขัดจังหวะ มีผลกระทบต่อความสามารถในการสื่อสารของคุณหรือไม่?

6. Do you have limited time to deeply engage with foreign visitors during conversations?

คุณมีเวลาไม่เพียงพอที่จะสื่อสารลึกซึ้งกับชาวต่างชาติในแต่ละครั้ง ใช่หรือไม่?

7. Do you find it challenging to maintain fluency in conversations with foreign visitors due to a lack of vocabulary or confidence?

คุณพบว่าการรักษาความคล่องแคล่วในการพูดคุยกับชาวต่างชาติเป็นเรื่องยากเนื่องจากการขาดคำศัพท์หรือความมั่นใจหรือไม่?

8. Do the rules of monastic life (e.g., restrictions on interacting with women) cause misunderstandings with foreign visitors?

ศีลของพระ เช่น ข้อจำกัดในการคุยกับผู้หญิง ทำให้ชาวต่างชาติบางคนเข้าใจผิด ใช่หรือไม่?

9. How do you handle situations where monastic rules (e.g., avoiding physical contact) conflict with the expectations of foreign visitors?

คุณจัดการสถานการณ์ที่ศีลของพระ (เช่น การหลีกเลี่ยงการสัมผัสทางกายภาพ) ขัดแย้งกับความคาดหวังของชาวต่างชาติอย่างไร?

Intercultural Communication Strategies

1. What intercultural communication strategies have you used when interacting with foreigners?

กลยุทธ์ระหว่างวัฒนธรรมที่คุณใช้ในการโต้ตอบกับชาวต่างชาติมีอะไรบ้าง?

2. What strategies do you find most effective in overcoming language barriers, such as explaining Buddhist concepts or dealing with pronunciation issues?

กลยุทธ์ใดที่คุณคิดว่ามีประสิทธิภาพที่สุดในการแก้ไขปัญหาอุปสรรคทางภาษา เช่น การอธิบายแนวคิดทางพระพุทธศาสนาหรือการแก้ปัญหาการออกเสียง?

3. Do you use self-rephrasing or self-repair when speaking English with foreigners?

คุณได้พยายามปรับประโยคให้เข้าใจง่ายขึ้นเมื่อพูดภาษาอังกฤษกับชาวต่างชาติหรือไม่?

4. Do you use gestures or facial expressions to help convey meaning when speaking with foreigners?

คุณได้ใช้ท่าทางหรือสีหน้าเพื่อช่วยอธิบายสิ่งที่คุณจะสื่อความหมายเมื่อพูดภาษาอังกฤษกับชาวต่างชาติหรือไม่?

5. Do you adjust your strategies according to the cultural background or language proficiency of the visitor? If yes, how?

คุณปรับกลยุทธ์ของคุณตามภูมิหลังทางวัฒนธรรมหรือความสามารถทางภาษาของผู้มาเยี่ยมหรือไม่? หากใช่ คุณปรับอย่างไร?

6. Can you share an instance where you successfully used a particular strategy, like mime or paraphrasing, to explain a Buddhist concept?

จงบอกกลยุทธ์เฉพาะที่คุณใช้ เช่น การใช้ท่าทางหรือการปรับประโยค เพื่ออธิบายแนวคิดทางพระพุทธศาสนาได้สำเร็จหรือไม่?

7. How has your English training helped you develop strategies for intercultural communication? Are there areas where you feel additional training is needed?

การฝึกอบรมภาษาอังกฤษช่วยให้คุณพัฒนากลยุทธ์ในการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรมได้อย่างไร? มีด้านใดบ้างที่คุณรู้สึกว่ายังต้องการการฝึกอบรมเพิ่มเติม?

8. How do you assess whether your communication strategy is working during conversations with foreigners?

คุณประเมินได้อย่างไรว่ากลยุทธ์การสื่อสารของคุณได้ผลระหว่างการสนทนากับชาวต่างชาติ?

BIOGRAPHY

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