

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Rationale of the Study**

The hospitality industry is one of the largest industries in the world, and it also links with other related industries such as the international travel and tourism industries. Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) figures for the year 2000 show that the international travel and tourism business in Thailand generated foreign exchange income of more than 7 billion U.S. dollars from almost 10 million foreign tourists (TAT, 2001). Accordingly, from the year 2004, the government and other related organizations (e.g., the TAT and the Thai Hotels Association) have given more importance to the ability of Thailand to remain at the forefront of the Asian tourism industry and to become the “Tourism Capital of Asia” under the promotional theme “Happiness on Earth” (TAT, 2005).

While a destination’s attractions are likely to remain the dominant motivation for most tourists, choices of destinations are also influenced by tourists’ perceptions and expectations of the accommodations available (Middleton, 1988). According to TAT statistics, in the year 2003, the highest proportion of expenditure by international tourists was on accommodation, comprising 42.90% (TAT, 2003). Thus, it is obvious that the hotel business creates immense benefits for the development of the tourism industry and plays a significant role in the whole economic system. However, with an increasing number of potential tourists seeking more information related to accommodations, hotels will have to invest more in information-based products. They will have to develop and increase the use of information media as marketing tools and utilize them in creating and publicizing more information on their products to meet the demand of tourists.

Marketing for accommodation is much more than just selling and advertising since it plays an essential role in providing consumers with “need-satisfying goods and services” (Sakulpipatana, 1996: 4). As stated by Roberts (1993: 24), “the hospitality products are more than just single items produced for sale; they are a mix of products, services, facilities, opportunities and benefits which have to be packaged and promoted in a special way”. In particular, the accommodation product is not one single product such as bedrooms, meals or conference facilities; it is rather a mix of products which adds benefits for the customers. Therefore, hotel operators tend to utilize various styles of marketing and sales promotion campaigns. Among the many forms of marketing communications used in the hotel industry, brochures are typically used in addition to advertising and public relations, sales promotion and merchandising (Middleton, 1988).

Brochures play such a vital role in advertising and promotional efforts of hotels that many hotel operators use brochures to inform travelers and visitors about their services and accommodations as well as to persuade them to be their guests. As stated by Poonlappanich (2001: 3), brochures are used as a “handy way of quickly communicating the essentials of the business to new customers, prospects, employees, and dealers”. Therefore, they have to be very carefully written and produced. In achieving these communicative purposes, the language used in brochures plays a significant role. In particular, English is an essential medium in writing brochures to attract international travelers or visitors to become a hotel’s guests. However, the copywriters of hotel brochures, especially those who are non-native speakers of English, find that writing a proper hotel brochure in English is not easy. It requires not only a high level of competence in English, but also special practice and skill on how to produce text effectively and it involves consideration of what the text in the brochure is used for, how the text is organized to achieve its communicative purpose(s), and what linguistic features should be used to fit the context and purpose(s).

The above mentioned skills are the concern of the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) field. Especially relevant is the concept of genre analysis, which typically is concerned with the study of the context in which the language is used, the analysis of move and step patterns, and the linguistic features of a text. As stated by Bhatia (1997: 181), “genres are meant to serve the goals of specific discourse communities, and in so doing, they tend to establish relatively stable structural forms and even constrain the use of lexico-grammatical resources in expressing these forms”. In the light of the genre-based approach to text analysis, the emphasis has been particularly given to the notion of moves. According to Swales (1990), a text can be viewed as comprising a series of moves (i.e., segments of a text). Bhatia (1993) also points out that each move of a genre serves a communicative intention that helps to fulfill the overall communicative purpose of the genre. Thus, knowledge of a genre provides models or guidelines that help show both writers and learners of that genre how to produce the genre.

In teaching English for Hotels, most of the exercises available are general conversations between hotel staff and guests with some practice in reading and few activities on writing descriptions of the hotel and its facilities. For example, in the textbook *English for Hotel and Catering Industry* by Revell and Stott (1988), the ‘Giving Information’ section includes only one exercise concerning information in a brochure, in which students are asked to fill in the blanks with appropriate vocabulary. Furthermore, in the textbook *First Class: English for Tourism* by Stott and Holt (1991), the writing exercise contains only general guidelines on writing a description of a hotel for a brochure and does not provide specific knowledge of linguistic features of the text (e.g., the use of adjectives that appear frequently in such texts). Thus, a genre analysis of hotel brochures that involves the study of authentic texts would be useful in giving a better understanding of the nature of language used in this specific genre, and could be applied to the design of English for Hotels courses and materials for teaching how to write hotel brochures.

Despite the great benefits of genre analysis, most studies on genre analysis are concerned only with academic genres (e.g. Hopkins and Dudley – Evans 1988; Brett 1994; Holmes 1997; Bhatia 1997) and aim mainly to prepare teaching materials. They offer knowledge concerning the organization structures and linguistic patterns for pedagogic benefit. Since little attention so far has been given to authentic texts used in hotels, this present research was undertaken as a genre-based approach to the texts in the hotel brochures. To obtain a model for writing hotel brochures in English, the analysis involves only those written in English. In Thailand, five-star hotels are regarded as the highest standard hotels according to Thai Hotels Association (THA)'s Hotel Standard. As a consequence, the present research deliberately focuses on brochures for five-star hotels because these hotels aim to attract foreign tourists to be their guests and they tend to produce more elaborate brochures than lower standard hotels. In particular, the present research focuses on brochures which are currently distributed in Thailand.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objective of the study was to conduct a genre-based analysis of five-star hotel brochures which are written in English and currently distributed in Thailand. In particular, this research aims to investigate the following areas:

1. General characteristics of the hotel brochures in the corpus
2. Prototypical text structure of the hotel brochures
3. Position of moves on the pages in the hotel brochures
4. Characteristics and position of pictures found in the hotel brochures
5. Prominent linguistic features, particularly focusing on personal pronouns, modal auxiliary verbs, imperatives and adjectival pre-modifiers in move 2 'Attracting Potential Guests' and move 3 'Presenting Hotel's Facilities'

6. Similarities and differences of the findings of the present research and those of some previous research on promotional genres

### **Benefits of the Study**

It was expected that the outcomes of the research would have fruitful implications for language pedagogy and research in ESP. In particular, the findings would be beneficial to ESP practitioners and copywriters, especially novices and non-native speakers of English, in the following ways:

1. The findings on general characteristics, text organization, and linguistic features of hotel brochures could be applied as a model for copywriters of this promotional sub-genre.

2. The findings would supply language descriptions for pedagogic applications in English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) settings, particularly English for Hotel and English for Advertising/Print Media Copywriting, which are branches of ESP.

3. Personnel in hospitality industry would gain ideas of how to write hotel brochures and thus be well-prepared for careers in the hospitality industry.

4. This study would provide insights into directions in conducting further research in ESP concerned with other genres or other aspects of genre analysis.

In sum, the results of the study would benefit the writers of this genre, especially the non-native speakers of English, in creating more effective hotel brochures. Personnel in the hospitality field would gain ideas of how to write and organize text in brochures. In addition, the findings would benefit teachers and learners of this particular genre and contribute to the effectiveness in teaching and learning English for Hotels and to the improvement of hotel brochure writing. This could serve as a way to improve the marketing communication in the accommodation business and to support marketing in the hospitality and travel industry in Thailand.

### **Scope of the Study**

1. Twenty-six hotel brochures used for promoting five-star hotels in Thailand were investigated.

2. These twenty-six hotels were classified and ranked by Thai Hotels Association.

3. Only hotel brochures that were written in English were considered in the study.

4. Only prominent linguistic features were investigated in detail.

5. The study did not aim to determine which text structure of the hotel brochures was the most effective.

6. Tariff and separated fact sheets were not included in the study.

7. The visual appearance, such as layout, color of pictures, pictures, and typography, was not taken into account in the study but overall characteristics and position of pictures were investigated.

### **Definitions of Terms**

#### **Conceptual Definitions**

‘Communicative purpose’ refers to the writer’s intention or what he/she intends to convey in the message to the readers.

‘Genre’ refers to “a class of texts characterized by a communicative function that tends to produce distinctive structural patterns”. (Holmes, 1997: 322).

‘Move’ refers to segments of a text. Each move aims to accomplish a particular intention of the writer which can contribute to the overall communicative purpose of the genre.

‘Prototypicality’ is the degree to which a text is typical of a particular genre.

‘Step’ refers to the chosen rhetorical choice by the writers in generalizing the communicative intentions of a certain move.

### **Operational Definitions**

‘Brochure’ refers to a leaflet or a booklet containing information about a five-star hotel in the corpus.

‘Hospitality and travel industry’ refers to “a group of interrelated organizations providing personal services to customers who are away from home” (Morrison, 1989: 25).

‘Head’ is a “noun surrounded by extensive modification” (Bloor and Bloor, 2002: 27).

‘Hotels’ refers to five-star hotels in Thailand.

‘Pre-modifiers’ are “some word classes placed before the head – notably adjectives and nouns” (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1990: 376).

‘Post-modifiers’ are “the items placed after the head and used to modify the head” – notably prepositional phrases, non-finite clauses, and relative clauses” (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1990: 376).