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## English Curriculum Development Process of the Cultural Tourism Communication Course for Elderly People: A Case Study of the Community of Doem Bang Nang Buat, Suphan Buri

กระบวนการพัฒนาหลักสูตรภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อการสื่อสารการท่องเที่ยวเชิงวัฒนธรรมสำหรับผู้สูงอายุ: กรณีศึกษาชุมชนเดิมบางนางบัว จังหวัดสุพรรณบุรี

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### Abstract

The aim of this study was to develop an English curriculum development process of the cultural tourism communication course for elderly people in the community of Doem Bang Nang Buat, Suphan Buri. A needs analysis questionnaire, interviews, in-depth discussions, and participant observation were used to collect data from 21 elderly people purposely selected by the researcher. The descriptive statistics and content analysis were applied. The results showed the sample group expressed their active participation and willingness to improve their English skills in the curriculum development process. The six-phase curriculum process was developed and proven to be valid as the post-test scores of participants were higher than the pre-test scores at the statistical significance level of .05.

**Keywords:** English, Curriculum Development, Cultural Tourism, Elderly People

### บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อพัฒนากระบวนการการพัฒนาหลักสูตรภาษาอังกฤษการท่องเที่ยวเชิงวัฒนธรรมสำหรับผู้สูงอายุในชุมชนเดิมบางนางบัว จังหวัดสุพรรณบุรี เครื่องมือวิจัยใช้แบบสอบถาม การสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึก การสัมภาษณ์กลุ่มย่อย และการสังเกตการณ์แบบมีส่วนร่วม โดยเก็บข้อมูลจากผู้สูงอายุ 21 คน สุ่มเลือกแบบเจาะจง วิเคราะห์ข้อมูลเชิงปริมาณด้วยสถิติเชิงพรรณนาและเชิงเนื้อหา ผลการวิจัยพบว่า ผู้สูงอายุแสดงความสนใจและมีส่วนเข้าร่วมพัฒนาทักษะด้านภาษาอังกฤษพื้นฐานอย่างจริงจังในกระบวนการพัฒนาหลักสูตร ทั้งนี้ กระบวนการพัฒนาหลักสูตรภาษาอังกฤษสำหรับการสื่อสารเชิงวัฒนธรรมสำหรับผู้สูงอายุได้ถูกพัฒนาอย่างมีประสิทธิภาพ สามารถช่วยพัฒนาความรู้ด้านภาษาอังกฤษให้แก่กลุ่มผู้เข้าร่วมได้ ดังผลคะแนนก่อน-หลังฝึกอบรมพบว่า คะแนนหลังฝึกอบรมสูงกว่าคะแนนก่อนฝึกอบรมอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ .05

**คำสำคัญ:** ภาษาอังกฤษ, การพัฒนาหลักสูตร, การท่องเที่ยวเชิงวัฒนธรรม, ผู้สูงอายุ

## Introduction

The emergence of English as a lingua franca has had a huge impact on the quality of lives, not only for young people but also for elderly people. The Thai National Strategy for 2018-2037 proposed by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (2018) aims to prepare for an ageing population to improve quality and equality in education. Due to this, Suphan Buri is now regarded as one of 55 second-tier provinces with less than four million tourists a year aiming to develop destinations to meet market demands. As for the provincial development plan for 2018-2021, it covers six issues, nine goals and 26 strategies, but the most important issue is developing its tourism into a global tourism through the renovation of tourism resources, the development of the potential of people, the development of public relations and marketing and the development of infrastructure and facilities. Colardyn and Bjornavold (2004) state that the population at all ages need to improve themselves since they are influenced by the knowledge-based economy, new technologies, the speed of technological changes and globalization. The improvement of English skills and knowledge through an English curriculum for elderly people is much needed, and they need to have basic English skills not only to market their products and services but also to impart local knowledge about their way of life, tradition and culture to international tourists. However, elderly people in the community have faced language problems, so that an English curriculum is essential for them to practice their English. Based on the Ministry of Tourism and Sports (2020), it showed the number of tourists visiting Thailand which increased from 35.35 million in 2017 to 38.28 million in 2018 and 39.80 in 2019. With this growing tourist population, Thai people of all ages need to use English to communicate with foreign tourists to promote all types of tourism.

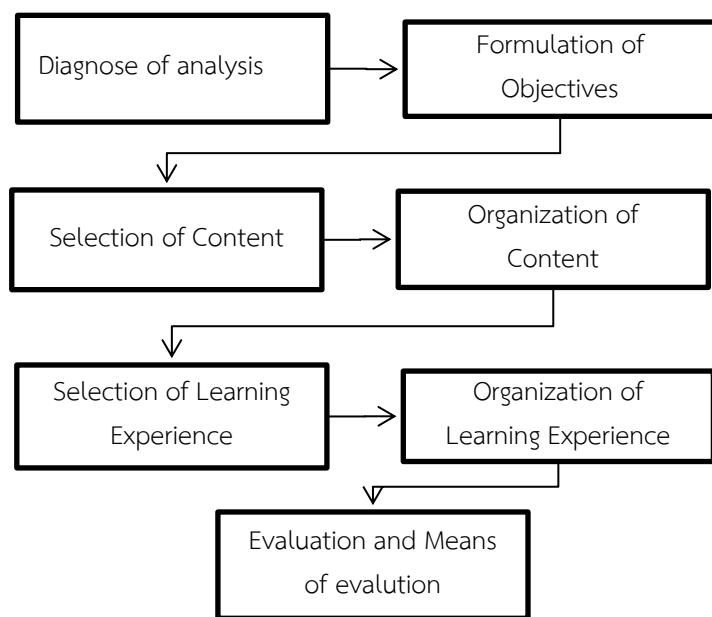
Murphy (2004) emphasizes the relationship between tourism and local communities that pave the way for new lines of investigation and for the possibility of tourism development with other alternatives. Association of Southeast Asian Nations Secretariat (2016, pp.1-2), community-based tourism (CBT) empowers communities to manage tourism growth and achieve community aspirations relating to their well-being, and includes economic, social and environmental development. Similarly, McFadden & Roehrig (2017) suggests the curriculum development with the focus on the identification of the philosophy, objectives, teaching and learning materials, teaching and learning method, and evaluation and assessment of a specific educational program. Significantly, the development of an English curriculum needs to be well designed as Brown (1995) states that the presentation of the language in a systematic way and teaching in learning situations matter to the curriculum development.

## Aim

To develop an English curriculum process of the cultural tourism communication course for elderly people in Doem Bang Nang Buat, Suphan Buri.

## Methodology

In total, 21 participants took part in this study with 1) two Buddhist monks, 2) nine community leaders, 3) two retired government officers, 4) two farmers and 5) six vocational group representatives in Doem Bang Nang Buat district, Suphan Buri. All the participants of the group of 21 elderly people in the study were purposely selected based on their consent and convenience. In this mixed-methods study, a needs analysis questionnaire, interviews, in-depth discussions and participant observation were used. Quantitative data were collected from the needs analysis questionnaire using the five-point Likert scale and analyzed by the descriptive statistics. Qualitative data were collected from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions and analyzed based on content analysis. The needs analysis questionnaire (IOC: 0.67-100) consisted of the five parts: 1) personal information, 2) questions about English communicative abilities of participants, 3) questions about English needs of participants, 4) questions about the development of English abilities, and 5) questions about topics of conversation. Besides, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were also employed. The model of Taba (1962) was adapted in the study. The model can be seen in Figure 1 below.



**Figure 1:** The curriculum development approach

**Source:** Taba (1962)

## Results

Based on the adaptation of the approach of Taba (1962), the results of curriculum development process in the six phases were as follows:

### Phase 1: Planning

In this phase, a needs analysis form was used. In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were also included. Field trips to the community and workshops were attended by the elderly people to

explore their community and English needs. With their active participation and contribution to the design and development of research tools, the draft of needs analysis was revised and used to assess elderly people's needs of English. Besides, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were also held to ensure their needs of English and other important issues were related.

### Phase 2: Analysis

This phase analyzed their English needs from the needs analysis form, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. The characteristics of participants, the needs of English for cultural tourism communication, knowledge and skills were identified and the goals and objectives were established. Based on the 5-point Likert scale-based needs analysis questionnaire, their English abilities were considered very low, with a mean of 1.86 (S.D.=1.32) for listening, of 2.29 (S.D.=1.48) for speaking, of 2.14 (S.D.=1.39) for reading and of 1.81 (S.D.=1.37) for writing.

### Phase 3: Design and Development

#### 3.1 Formulation of Objectives

The researcher used the results from the needs analysis questionnaire, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to formulate objectives of the five units with the focus on the development of communicative English skills. Each unit had three objectives as follows: 1) To be able to understand basic word meanings, phrases, expressions, and sentences in the sample conversations in the five units, 2) To be able to speak simple English to English-speaking people based on the sample conversations in the five units and 3) To be able to ask and answer questions based on the sample conversations in the five units.

#### 3.2 Selection of Content

The researcher used the content selection criteria of (Clark, 1997). Based on the criteria, the content selection must be related to the unit topics, 2) interdisciplinary, 3) learner-centered, 4) designed to the needs, interests and learnability of learners, 5) connected and integrated with other related topics, 6) linked to real events or situations. As to the adaptation of the criteria, the selection of content was framed in the learner-centered approach, derived by interviewing the learners, using a questionnaire to assess their needs, and conducting focus group discussions. All 12 suggested topics of conversation are shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1:** 12 topics of conversation in Doem Bang Nang Buat

(n=21)

Topics of conversation	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Level
Greeting	3.33	1.94	Moderate
Introducing oneself and others	3.24	1.87	Moderate
Asking and giving personal information	2.90	1.90	Moderate
Telling and asking time and date	3.19	1.87	Moderate
Wecoming tourists to tourist places	3.19	1.84	Moderate

Topics of conversation	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Level
Introducing products to tourists	3.00	1.95	Moderate
Asking for and giving directions	3.14	1.83	Moderate
Explaining about food and products	2.95	1.94	Moderate
Buying products and services	2.81	1.82	Moderate
Introducing community activities and shows	3.00	1.95	Moderate
Talking about first aid kit	2.86	1.93	Moderate
Talking about phone calls	2.71	1.91	Moderate

Table 1 shows 12 topics of conversation rated by the participants. The highly-rated topics were greetings which had a mean of 3.33 with a 1.94 standard deviation, introducing oneself and others which had a mean of 3.24 with a 1.87 standard deviation, telling and asking time and date and welcoming tourists to tourist places which had an equal mean of 3.19 with a 1.87 and 1.84 standard deviation, asking for and giving directions which had a mean of 3.14 with a 1.83 standard deviation, and introducing community activities which had a mean of 3.00 with a 1.95 standard deviation. The rest had a mean of below 3.00.

### 3.3 Organization of Content

This phase aims at organizing the content based on the results of needs analysis. Personal information of participants such as age, gender, education, careers, academic achievements, and interests was crucial for the content organization. Contents were organized in order as shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2:** Organization of the content based on the needs analysis

No.	Unit	Outline of the content
1	Introduction	Greeting and introducing oneself, saying and responding to “thank you”, making and accepting an apology, asking for and giving information, and introducing others
2	Talking about tourist places	Introducing tourist places, suggesting tourist places, and explaining rules and tourist information
3	Talking about farming	Farming, gardening and fertilizer-making
4	Taking about OTOP products	Chili tamarind sauce, Khanom mo kaeng, Kanom Kong, Khao tom mat, Krayasat, and Khao tom luk yon
5	Talking about local shows	Horse riding, Thai horse shows, and Thai dance shows

### 3.4 Selection of Learning Experience

The needs analysis revealed that all 21 participants were elderly people mostly aged above 60 years, with a high school level of education attained. In addition, their four English skills were very low, but they had the desire to improve their skills in English to speak English with their customers visiting the places in their community. Due to this, activity-based learning and teaching methods were applied, and each unit was designed to have learning activities. These activities were also based on Bilbao et al. (2008), suggesting the following: 1) Self-sufficiency, which means learners should be given an opportunity to do activities sufficiently, 2) Significance, which refers to the significance of content selected and organized for the development of learning activities, skills, knowledge and attitude, 3) Validity, which refers to the authenticity of the selected content, 4) Interest, which refers to the needs and interests of learners, 5) Utility, which refers to the selected content being useful to learners, 6) Learnability, which refers to the selected content being within the capacity of the learners, and 7) Feasibility, which means full implementation of the selected content.

### 3.5 Organization of Learning Experience

The learning experiences were selected in line with the basis of unit objectives and learners' experiences as shown in the fifth phase. They were organized in the curriculum in a way to serve maximum benefit to the learners. The following criteria were applied in the curriculum process: 1) Continuity, 2) Sequence, 3) Integration.

#### Phase 4: Draft Evaluation

As for the draft evaluation of content validity, the Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC) was 0.67-100, which was valid. Comments and suggestions from the experts were put into consideration and were employed to be complementary to the draft evaluation on learning goals, content, learning and teaching materials, learning and teaching activities, and evaluations in all the five units as shown in Table 2.

#### Phase 5: Implementation

After the evaluation of content validity by three experts in the fields, the curriculum was proceeded by the participants through a short training course with the focus on learning goals, content, learning and teaching materials, learning and teaching activities, and evaluations in all the five units. The training course continued for six weeks. Pre-and post-tests with 50 items each were based on the five units and used to evaluate participants' English knowledge and compare the pre-test with the post-test to see their English progress.

#### Phase 6: Evaluation

There were two evaluation tools: 1) the pre- and post-tests with 50 three-choice items each, and 2) participant observation. The pre-test and post-test with 50 items each were based on all the five units and participant observation and were used to evaluate the participants to see if they achieved the unit objectives and how much their learning progress gained from the first to the last training week. The scoring results of the pre- and post-tests can be presented in Table 3.

**Table 3:** The scoring results before and after the training course

Score (50)						
Training	Xmin	Xmax	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	t	p
Pre-test	12	46	27.47	10.01	1.76	.0003
Post-test	20	47	39.67	7.63		

Table 3 shows 15 participants were successful in the training course without absence from start to end, while the rest were absent due to their urgent errands. The pre- and post-tests had a full score of 50. Before the training, participants had a mean pre-test score of 27.47 (S.D. = 10.01), with the highest pre-test score of 46 and the lowest pre-test score of 12. After the training, all participants had a mean post-test score of 39.67 (S.D. = 7.63), with the highest post-test score of 47 and the lowest post-test score of 20. In comparison with pre- and post-test scores, the post-test scores of participants were higher than the pre-test scores at the statistical significance level of .05. From participant observation, all participants tried their best to use English to communicate with each other throughout the training course, but Thai was often used to give clear explanations to them to avoid misunderstanding and confusion as they had limitations.

**Picture 1:** Training course in Doem bang Nang Buat, Suphan Buri

**Source:** Chanpradit (2020)

## Conclusion and Discussion

All 21 elderly people lacked in four skills of English due to their limitations of age, education, experience and memory, but their active participation contributed to the curriculum design and development by suggesting the topics of conversation about greeting ( $\bar{X} = 3.33$ , S.D.= 1.94), introducing oneself and others ( $\bar{X} = 3.24$ , S.D.= 1.87), telling and asking time and date and welcoming tourists to tourist places ( $\bar{X} = 3.19$ , S.D.= 1.87), asking for and giving direction ( $\bar{X} = 3.14$ , S.D.= 1.83), and introducing community activities ( $\bar{X} = 3.00$ , S.D.= 1.95). These topics were relevant to their professions and were useful to communicate with international tourists, in line with the concept of needs analysis proposed by Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), stating that the needs analysis includes personal and professional information about the learners' lacks, learning goals, English

language learning and communication background. With limitations on age, education, experience and memory, the process was learner centered and processed through the phases of 1) Planning, 2) Analysis, 3) Design and Development, 4) draft evaluation 5) Implementation and 6) Evaluation. Similarly, Rungsimanwong (2014) conducted a research under the title of the Development of Local Curriculum on Chonburi Ban Rao with ASEAN Community Taught by E-learning Method for Vocational Certificate Students, developing its local curriculum through the four phases of curriculum development: 1) the fundamental information in curriculum development, 2) the curriculum development, 3) the quality assessment of curriculum and 4) the effects of curriculum implementation. The curriculum development varies depending on the context, and it needs to be flexible and suitable for the target group. As Thongsri (2009), his study on the development of training curriculum for teaching English used the communicative approach for primary school teachers with no English teaching degree at preparatory level, with the key development phases of personal information, curriculum design, curriculum implementation and evaluation.

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