

Construction of Phrae Cultural Tourism Training Curriculum for Teaching English Program Students of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University Phrae Campus

Nopparat Rattanawong¹, Supot Keawphaitoon², Chakriya Khankham³

Phrae Buddhist College, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Thailand¹,

Phrae Buddhist College, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Thailand²,

Baan Mua School, Lampang, Thailand³

Corresponding Author Email: chakriya.khankam@gmail.com

Received: Aug 6, 2023

Received in Revised: Aug 9, 2023

Accepted: Aug 10, 2023

Abstract

The research entitled 'The construction of Phrae cultural tourism training curriculum for Teaching English program students of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya university Phrae campus' had 3 main objectives as follows; 1. To study the problems and needs of English language use on Phrae cultural tourism of MCU Phrae campus tour guide students, 2. To design the tour guide training curriculum for MCU Phrae campus tour guide students on Phrae cultural tourism, and 3. To evaluate tour guide training curriculum on Phrae cultural tourism. The sample group was represented by 7 Teaching English program students of the third year, faculty of Education who studied English for tourism subject in semester 2 of academic year 2018. Cultural tourism experts who were key informants were officers of Phrae Tourism and Sport, and instructor of Tourism program, faculty of humanities, Chiang Mai University. The research instruments were as follow; 1. Needs and problems assessment form of English language use of MCU Phrae campus students with Teaching English program on Phrae cultural tourism, 2. Training curriculum on Phrae cultural tourism for MCU Phrae campus students with Teaching English program, and 3. Training curriculum evaluation form.

The results revealed as follows. The students who were the subjects still had the problem in terms of listening skill, especially, problem in listening to face-to-face conversations. As for the speaking skill, the majority of them lacked of the skill for suggesting travel information. They also had the problem in reading and writing in English, especially, reading documents related to Phrae local tourism industry and producing tourist leaflets or brochures. They needed to improve their listening skill in order to understand face to face

conversations as well as the technique of suggesting travel information and providing information about travel plans. Moreover, the finding indicated that they needed additional skills in order to read documents related to Phrae local tourism industry and read articles from travel magazines. The specific writing skill in order to write texts for giving information was also needed for Phrae cultural tourism management.

The constructed training curriculum was based on Phrae cultural tourism. It was divided in to 5 learning units as follows; 1. Understanding cultural tourism, 2. Communicating with tourists, 3. Tour guiding process and skills, 4. Safety and security, and 5. Leading cultural and historical tour. This was considered to be a better tool for organize tour guide training for MCU Phrae campus students because it was oriented toward teaching from various kinds of methods in order to reinforce of student knowledge.

As for the training curriculum evaluation, the curriculum components which were evaluated to be much appropriate were curriculum importance, curriculum structures, and curriculum content in module 1: Understanding cultural tourism, consistency between principles and reasons and determination of the curriculum objectives, consistency between the curriculum contents and objectives, and appropriateness of the curriculum for use in training tourist guides. The remaining components which were evaluated to be most appropriate were curriculum objectives, curriculum contents in module 2: Communicating with tourists, module 3: Tour guiding process and skills, module 4: Safety and security, and module 5: Leading cultural and historical tour.

Keywords: cultural tourism, training curriculum, English for tourism

Introduction

The Tourism Industry provided the main income of Thailand, dating back to the year 1992, which was promoted as VISIT THAILAND YEAR. As a matter of fact, the number of tourists was increased from 2 million at that time to 10.80 in 2002 and then to 13.38 million in 2005 (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2006). Up till now, the number tends to increase continuously. This is the reason why Tourism Industry is recognized as the most important policy of the Thai government. In addition to the enormous amount of income, there are many other benefits such as the increase in jobs for local people, the conservation of natural resources, the promotion of Thai culture and traditions, the quality of Thai products (OTOP) and so on. At the present, English is considered to be a language that is widely used all over the world as an instrument for communication and information. Additionally, people in over sixty countries use English as an official or semi-official language, and around 300 million people in over seventy countries have accepted English as a second language. In the rest of the world, approximately 100 million people in the mid-1980s used it as foreign language. Moreover, English is used as the first language among many developed countries. These developed countries are in competition to develop their technology in order to be

the leader of technology. Therefore, English becomes the most important language in the world because it is the medium of communication. It is also the medium to carry the high technology from developed nations to the developing nations.

However, there is one thing to consider above these points, it is the communication between tourists and Thais. The skill needed by people in this area is English especially communicative oral English proficiency. From Watchree's research, it can be seen that both career paths and most students were in need of this skill and she expressed that there should be enough compulsory courses of English in Colleges and Universities (Ngoenkaow, Watchree, 1991: 57–63). In fact, English is our foreign language and English is the international language that is used the most, therefore people who deal with tourists have to use English as a medium of communication effectively. If communication is broken down or mistakes are made, its effect will be obviously serious. There may be misunderstanding among tourists about rules, regulations, prohibitions and laws (Yasawas, Suradej, 2006). Furthermore, when communication fails, the service which is the heart of tourism is unimpressive and disadvantaged. This will cause market share to be lost. Accordingly, this leads to bad impressions and causes tourists to find new paths to our competitor countries nearby such as Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia, Laos, Cambodia or China. As a result, our national income will be severely decreased.

Nowadays, Phrae tourism is continuously growing. It is because the local government has seen the importance of Phrae tourism and has promoted Phrae tourism in order to stimulate development of economy of this province. Phrae tourism industry considerably brings about social and economic benefits. Meanwhile, the tourism industry has consumed tourism resources such as natural tourism resources and cultural art tourism resources. However, growth of Phrae tourism industry has stimulated deterioration and decrease of the tourism resources. Development of facilities and services on tourism for carrying more tourists causes destruction of nature and environments and extravagant use of resource. Some operators lacked conscience of environmental maintenance, responsibility, and sacrifice. Besides, they did not follow the law and regulation. At present time, Phrae province receives impacts from environmental pollution such as rubbish, air pollution, traffic jam as well as waste water. Moreover, local values and cultures might change due to tourists' behavioral imitation. This made Phrae province lose its identities. These impacts stemmed from opposition in development between economic needs and conservation and lack of suitable tourism model arrangement.

Because of the mentioned problems, Tourism Authority of Thailand tried to bring about development of tourism together with conservation. In 1987, TAT determined strategies of developing tourism and preventing impacts on tourism cultural resources under the guideline "Development and Cultural Conservation for Protecting Thai Tourism" (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 1997: 1). Therefore, TAT studied and accepted a new tourism model which emphasized quality tourism which brought about maintenance of culture and

tradition of tourist attractions and various resources which involved cultural and traditional systems of those tourist attractions. Such tourism model was called “Cultural Tourism”.

Development of cultural tourism wanted to develop tourism in general in order to have suitable changing direction and roles in encouraging cultural conservation and revival of original traditions and cultures and also maintenance of original cultures and traditions in general. It made the tourism developing process be a medium of tourists’ education and learning on cultural tourism. Besides, it creates conscience of cultural and traditional conservation to the government sector, private sector, and general people. Cultural tourism gave importance to education of Thai cultures and traditions of the community in the area as the main target. If there was not education giving process for creating knowledge and understanding of cultural and of traditional resources, it was difficult to create good conscience of conservation. Education should be given while tourism activities were being done. But information should be given before touring. And more education should be given at a later time (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 1997: 44). Tourist guides can help conserve natural and traditional resources although they are not directly responsible for managing tourist attractions. In addition, they are considered to be closest to tourists, cultures, and tradition. So, tourist guides play an important role in correctly giving information and interpretation. They have to inform tourists about cultural and traditional education and methods of conserving cultural and traditional resources in order to make tourists have realization and conscience of cultural conservation tourism. Tourist guide provide valuable experiences and lead tourists to follow regulations and Phrae local traditions. This is considered to be the conservation of cultural and traditional environments and bring about participation in conservation in the long period.

Due to such importance, the researchers, therefore, did research on the construction of tourist guide training curriculum on ‘the Town Built with Teak’ cultural tourism in order to increase knowledge and understanding to student tourist guides so that these student tourist guides can realize and had good attitudes toward tourist guides’ roles in creating conscience and encouraging cultural and traditional conservation tourism by using correct models and principles of cultural tourism. Besides, such research can help increase Phrae tour guides’ working efficiency.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the problems and needs of English language use on Phrae cultural tourism of MCU Phrae campus tour guide students.
2. To design the tour guide training curriculum for MCU Phrae campus tour guide students on Phrae cultural tourism.
3. To evaluate tour guide training curriculum on Phrae cultural tourism.

Literature review

Cultural tourism has gained significant attention in recent years as a means to promote intercultural understanding and economic development. The integration of English language teaching within cultural tourism programs has become a popular approach to enhance the experience of international tourists. This literature review aims to explore existing research and resources related to the development of a cultural tourism training curriculum for teaching English programs.

1. Cultural Tourism

It may appear relatively easy to distinguish the difference between the concepts of culture and tourism as their boundaries clearly separate their meanings, where the same goes for the concept of cultural tourism. For instance, it is generally agreed upon that visiting a cultural center in a country famous for its cultural manifestations is regarded as cultural tourism whereas a visit to a beach is not. However, in recent years, the two notions of tourism and culture and the meanings attached to them have experienced significant change, to a point where their distinctions have become blurred; for MacCannell (1993) “all tourism is a cultural experience” and Urry (1990) believes “tourism is culture”. These assumptions made some scholars believe that cultural tourism is something new or it is a postmodern phenomenon.

However, by examining the definition of cultural tourism, it becomes clear that “what has changed is the extent of cultural tourism consumption, and the forms of culture being consumed by cultural tourists.” (Richards, 1996)

Cultural tourism, arguably, is regarded as the original form of tourism considering its roots in the Grand Tour originated in the 16th century in Britain; (Hibbert, 1969). However, trying to define this concept is more challenging as it may sound; this complex concept may have different meaning for different people.

In order to clearly define the concept of cultural tourism it is first necessary to have a basic understanding of the two complex definitions of culture and tourism. However, it should be noted that recognizing the two concepts of culture and tourism separately is considered as a prerequisite for defining cultural tourism. The definition of cultural tourism itself is quite different and should not be assumed as a combination of the meanings of these two terms, culture and tourism (Feifer, 1985)

2. training

According to H. John Bernardin (B. Janakiram, 2011: 5) “training is any attempt to improve employee performance on a currently held job or one related to it”. Nadler (1971: 6) has stressed the difference between ‘training’ which is concerned with present jobs, and ‘development’ which is concerned with future jobs as opposed to Hamblin who assumes development simply as training for future jobs. Training is an educational process. It provides information to the people and increases knowledge and skills and can help them improve their effectiveness at work. Training can be given to individuals and groups. Content of trainings increases

skill development and improve behavior at workplace. Training and development are one of the key HR functions. Most organizations look at training and development as an integral part of the human resource development activity. Many organizations have mandated training hours per year for employees keeping in consideration the fact that technology is deskilling the employees at a very fast rate.

Technically training involves change in attitude, skills or knowledge of a person with the resultant improvement in the behavior. For training to be effective it has to be a planned activity conducted after a thorough need analysis and target at certain competencies, most important it is to be conducted in a learning atmosphere (Prachi J., 2018). While designing the training program it has to be kept in mind that both the individual goals and organizational goals are to be fulfilled. Organizations prepare their training calendars at the beginning of the financial year where training needs are identified for the employees. This need identification is called as 'training need analysis' and it is a part of the performance appraisal process. After training need analysis, the time period for training and training programs are decided.

Many times, training is confused with development, but both are different. Development is the opportunities created to help employees for their growth. Training focuses on the current job, but development provides competences for future job, so employees can work in more than one department and level. It is a program to develop them for future positions. This is done on the basis of existing attitude, skills and abilities, knowledge and performance of the employee. The major difference between training and development is, training focuses on the current employee needs but development focuses on preparing people for future job and responsibilities.

3. Tourist guides' role in cultural tourism

In the special issue of *Annals of Tourism Research*, Cohen's seminal article (Cohen, 1985: 5–29) on the tourist guide showed that the contemporary tourist guide comes from two antecedents: the pathfinder and the mentor.

In the contemporary context of tourism, the pathfinder role is still extant in that the tour's itinerary shows the path to tourists wanting to discover more about the place they are visiting, or as Cohen (Cohen, 1985: 7) puts it, through a socially defined territory to which they have no accesses. Pearce (Pearce, 1984: 136) supports this proposition when he points out that in cross-cultural settings many tourists still need a guide since such visitors frequently break social rules and intrude upon others privacy'. In addition, the pathfinder role gives the tourist a sense of security in a strange environment, a precursor to a successful tourist destination region, as Leiper has noted. (Leiper, 1996)

While the original role of the mentor was one of spiritual and intellectual guidance, the contemporary mentoring role can be considered to be one of transmission of information and the interpretation of that information. The one constant in the evolution of sightseeing, as Adler observes (Adler, 1989: 7–29), is that

of discourse between the tourist, the mentor and eminent people encountered during the tour. As tourism has become a mass phenomenon, opportunities for discourse with eminent people have lessened somewhat for the great majority of tourists. The discourse of discovery of information now is mainly between the tour guide and the tourist and, if done well, results in transference of cultural understanding between guide and tourist.

Research Methodology

Quantitative approach was utilized in need and problem assessment questionnaire in terms of English language use on Phrae cultural tourism of MCU Phrae campus tour guide students. This questionnaire was based on the questionnaires in needs analysis of English in tourism made by Aunruen (2005). It consisted of the main three parts; personal information, needs of English use in Phrae cultural tourism, and problems of using English to deal with foreign tourists.

In the personal information, participants were asked about their personal information concerning such as gender and age. The second part of the questionnaire was adapted from Aunruen's earlier work, which covered four main domains of language skills to ask needs of English used most built on a five-point Likert scale from (5) Most, (4) A lot, (3) Moderate, (2) A little and (1) Least. In the last part, participants were asked about problems they encountered in English use when communicating with foreign tourists. This part was also adapted from Aunruen, divided into four main domains on a five-point Likert scale from (5) Most, (4) A lot, (3) Moderate, (2) A little and (1) Least.

Summary of the Study

This study was the creation of tour guide training curriculum on Phrae cultural tourism with its 3 main objectives; 1. To study the problems and needs of English language use on Phrae cultural tourism of MCU Phrae campus tour guide students, 2. To design the tour guide training curriculum for MCU Phrae campus tour guide students on Phrae cultural tourism and, 3. To evaluate tour guide training curriculum on Phrae cultural tourism.

The first investigation focused on problems and needs of English language use on Phrae cultural tourism of MCU Phrae campus tour guide students. The subjects were identified in the third year MCU Phrae campus students with major of English Teaching, faculty of Education who were studying English for tourism in the second semester of academic year 2018. As for the results of analyzing data deriving from surveying general characteristics of sampling found that the majority of them were male and they were below 30 years old. Most sampling still had the problem in terms of listening skill, especially, problem in listening to face-to-face conversations. As for the speaking skill, the majority of them lacked of the skill for suggesting travel

information. They also had the problem in reading and writing in English, especially, reading written documents related to Phrae local tourism industry and producing tourist leaflets or brochures.

As for the needs of English language use on Phrae cultural tourism, the results revealed that most of tour guide students needed to improve their listening skill in order to understand face to face conversations as well as the technique of suggesting travel information and providing information about travel plans. Moreover, the finding indicated that they needed additional skills in order to read written documents related to Phrae local tourism industry and read articles from travel magazines. The specific writing skill in order to write texts for giving information was also needed for Phrae cultural tourism management.

The second investigation focused on the creation of tour guide training curriculum in Phrae cultural tourism. It had the following characteristics and elements;

1. Specific objectives: The specific objectives were determined in each module in order to make the training participants have correct understanding on tourist guides role in promoting cultural tourism in their hometown which caused conservation of culture and tourism resources.

2. Training methods: There was the lecture of academic contents by experts who suitable for the contents determined in the curriculum. The training emphasized learners and participation, and the field practice made the training participants learn by real experiences.

3. Evaluation and measurement: Evaluation and measurement consisted observation of interest, participation in the training, and measurement of effectiveness by using the knowledge test in order to test knowledge before and after the training.

The third investigation focused on the evaluation of tour guide training curriculum on Phrae cultural tourism. According to the findings of the training curriculum evaluation by the experts, the curriculum was appropriate for training tour guide students. The curriculum elements and contents were consistent with the training participant needs.

Discussion

The three research objectives and the findings presented in chapter four are discussed in this section. According to the research objective number

1. "To study the problems and needs of English language use on Phrae cultural tourism of MCU Phrae campus tour guide students", the problem and need assessment questionnaire was constructed in order to survey the needs and problems of using English language on Phrae cultural tourism that students encountered in English for tourism course. After surveying the problems in terms of listening skill, the finding revealed that tour guide students by 90 percent had problem in listening to face-to-face conversations. As for the speaking skill, tour guide students by 96 percent had problem in suggesting travel information (e.g., information about

tourist attractions, accommodation, restaurant, insurance, etc.). Besides, tour guide students by 96 percent had problem in reading written documents related to Phrae local tourism industry in terms of reading skill. Moreover, in terms of writing skills, the results shown that tour guide students by 98 percent had problem in producing tourist leaflets or brochures. As for the need of tour guide students in terms of listening skill, the finding revealed that tour guide students by 100 percent need practicing listening skill in order to understand face to face conversations. As for the speaking skill, tour guide students by 100 percent need to learn the technique of suggesting travel information and providing information about travel plans. Besides, tour guide students by 96 percent need the additional skills in order to read written documents related to Phrae local tourism industry and read articles from travel magazines. Moreover, in terms of writing skills, the results shown that tour guide students by 100 percent need to practice specific writing skill in order to write texts for giving information.

2. According to the second research objective; “To design the tour guide training curriculum for MCU Phrae campus tour guide students on Phrae cultural tourism”, the training curriculum was based on Phrae cultural tourism. This was considered to be a better tool for organize the tour guide training for MCU Phrae campus students with Teaching English program who are studying English for tourism subject. It is because the constructed training curriculum was oriented toward teaching from various kinds of examples to the concept in order to reinforce of student knowledge. In addition, classroom-oriented instructional development (ID) could be adapted in the training in order to provide good understanding of Phrae cultural tourism for tour guide students.

3. According to the last research objective; “To evaluate tour guide training curriculum on Phrae cultural tourism”, The curriculum components which were evaluated to be much appropriate were curriculum importance, curriculum structures, and curriculum content in module 1: Understanding cultural tourism, consistency between principles and reasons and determination of the curriculum objectives, consistency between the curriculum contents and objectives, and appropriateness of the curriculum for use in training tourist guides. The remaining components which were evaluated to be most appropriate were curriculum objectives, curriculum contents in module 2: Communicating with tourists, module 3: Tour guiding process and skills, module 4: Safety and security, and module 5: Leading cultural and historical tour.

Recommendations

According to the evaluation of the training curriculum by specialists, the training curriculum on Phrae cultural tourism was appropriate for use in training MCU Phrae campus tour guide students. So, the related organizations should consider to apply such training curriculum for developing Phrae tour guide potential. Besides the work of MCU tour guide students who received the training should be followed and evaluated

after the training.

Reference

- Adler. J. (1989). Origins of sightseeing. *Annals of Tourism Research*. 16(1).
- Aunruen. R. (2005). *Needs Analysis of English for Travel Agents in Chiang Mai*. Thailand: Kasetsart University.
- Cohen. E. (1985). *The tourist guides*. *Annals of Tourism Research*. 12(1).
- Dr. B. Janakiram. (2011). *Training & Development*. biztantra.
- Feifer. M. (1985). *Tourism in History – From Imperial Rome to the Present*. Stein and Day. New York.
- Hibbert. C. (1969). *The Grand Tour*. Putnam. London.
- Leiper. N. (1996). *Tourism Management*. Melbourne. RMIT Press.
- MacCannell. (1993). *D. Empty Meeting Grounds; the Tourist Papers*. Routledge. London.
- Nadler. L. (1971). *Using critical events to develop training programmes*. Supplement to industrial training international.
- Ngoenkaow. Watchree. "The Study of Foreign Language Usage to Meet the Needs of Organizations and Learners Expectation.". *Research for Development Journal*. (14).
- Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board. (2006). *Thailand in Brief 2006*. Bangkok.
- Pearce. P. (1985). Tourist–guide interaction. *Annals of Tourism Research*. 11(1).
- Prachi J. (2018). Training and Development – A Key HR Function. [available online]
<https://www.managementstudyguide.com/training-development-hr-function.htm>
- Richards. G. (1996). *Cultural Tourism in Europe*. Wallingford. CAB International.
- Urry.J.. (1990). *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*. Sage: London.
- Yasawas. Suradej. (2006). *Boring Trip*. Bangkok: Ban Thung Nokrong.