
Research and Development of English Language Skills of Hospitality Industry Personnel in Buriram Province towards the ASEAN Community Preparation

Nawamin Prachanant¹ / Sittisak Pongpuehee² / Rungnapa Moendee³ /
Phornpawith Chanuanchai⁴ / Chontichaline Kanson⁵ / and Jansuda Boontree⁶

¹ Lecturer, Business English Program, Buriram Rajabhat University, Thailand

Email: nawaminpt@yahoo.com

² Lecturer, Business English Program, Buriram Rajabhat University, Thailand

Email: Sittisak_1703@hotmail.com

³ Lecturer, Business English Program, Buriram Rajabhat University, Thailand

Email: arabicajung_poom@hotmail.com

⁴ Lecturer, Business English Program, Buriram Rajabhat University, Thailand

Email: Ppawitch@yahoo.com

⁵ Lecturer, Business English Program, Buriram Rajabhat University, Thailand

Email: Pingiee@hotmail.com

⁶ Lecturer, Business English Program, Buriram Rajabhat University, Thailand

Email: jeedajang@hotmail.com

Abstract

This research aimed: 1) to investigate problems and needs on English skills of the hospitality industry personnel (HIP) in Buriram province; 2) to develop the ESP curriculum of HIP; 3) to compare the learning achievement of HIP before and after training; and 4) to study the satisfaction towards the ESP curriculum. This research had three phases:

1) investigating problems and needs on English skills; 2) developing an ESP curriculum; and 3) implementing the ESP curriculum. The samples were 200 HIP and 30 students. The instruments were the interview, questionnaire, ESP curriculum, and achievement tests. The statistics were frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, E1/E2, and dependent samples t-test. The findings revealed that : 1. The problems on English skills of HIP were at serious level ; 2. The needs on English use of HIP were at much level ; 3. The contents of ESP curriculum consisted of six units;

4. The efficiency of the ESP curriculum was 77.44/79.00, which was higher than the standard criterion set at 75/75; 5. HIP had higher achievement than before learning at the .01 level of statistical significance; 6. The satisfaction toward an ESP curriculum of HIP was at more satisfactory level.

Keywords : Research and Development, English Language Skills, Hospitality Industry Personnel, ASEAN Community

บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีจุดประสงค์เพื่อ 1) สำรวจปัญหาและความต้องการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษของบุคลากรด้านอุตสาหกรรมบริการในจังหวัดบุรีรัมย์ 2) พัฒนาหลักสูตรภาษาอังกฤษเฉพาะกิจสำหรับบุคลากรด้านอุตสาหกรรมบริการ 3) เปรียบเทียบผลการเรียนรู้ทางภาษาอังกฤษของบุคลากรด้านอุตสาหกรรมบริการก่อนและหลังการอบรม 4) เพื่อศึกษาความพึงพอใจของบุคลากรด้านอุตสาหกรรมบริการที่มีต่อการอบรมหลักสูตรภาษาอังกฤษเฉพาะกิจ โดยการวิจัยแบ่งออกเป็น 3 โครงการย่อย ประกอบด้วย โครงการย่อยที่ 1 สำรวจปัญหาและความต้องการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษ โครงการย่อยที่ 2 พัฒนาหลักสูตรภาษาอังกฤษเฉพาะกิจและ โครงการย่อยที่ 3 ศึกษาผลการเรียนรู้ทางภาษาอังกฤษของบุคลากรด้านอุตสาหกรรมบริการ กลุ่มตัวอย่าง ในการวิจัย คือ บุคลากรด้านอุตสาหกรรมบริการ จำนวน 30 คนและนักศึกษาจำนวน 30 คน เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการวิจัย ประกอบด้วย แบบสัมภาษณ์ แบบสอบถาม หลักสูตรภาษาอังกฤษเฉพาะกิจ และแบบทดสอบ สถิติที่ใช้ในการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูล ได้แก่ ค่าความถี่ ค่าร้อยละ ค่าเฉลี่ย ส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน เกณฑ์ประสิทธิภาพ E1/E2 และ dependent samples t-test ผลการศึกษา พบว่า 1) ปัญหาในการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษของบุคลากรด้านอุตสาหกรรมบริการในจังหวัดบุรีรัมย์อยู่ในระดับมาก 2) ความต้องการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษของบุคลากรด้านอุตสาหกรรมบริการอยู่ในระดับมาก 3) หลักสูตรภาษาอังกฤษเฉพาะกิจสำหรับบุคลากรด้านอุตสาหกรรมบริการ ประกอบด้วยเนื้อหาทั้งหมด 6 บท 4) ค่าประสิทธิภาพของหลักสูตรภาษาอังกฤษเฉพาะกิจสำหรับบุคลากรด้านอุตสาหกรรมบริการคือ 77.44/79.00 ซึ่งสูงกว่าเกณฑ์มาตรฐานที่ตั้งไว้ที่ 75/75 5) บุคลากรด้านอุตสาหกรรมบริการมีผลการเรียนรู้หลังเรียนสูงกว่าก่อนเรียนอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ .01 และ 6) บุคลากรด้านอุตสาหกรรมบริการมีความพึงพอใจต่อหลักสูตรภาษาอังกฤษเฉพาะกิจสำหรับบุคลากรด้านอุตสาหกรรมบริการในระดับ มาก

คำสำคัญ : การวิจัยและพัฒนา ทักษะภาษาอังกฤษ บุคลากรด้านอุตสาหกรรมบริการ ประชาคมอาเซียน

1. Introduction

English language is one of the vital foreign languages which people are used to international communication. It is also an important tool to seek knowledge textbooks and sciences which are written in English. It is accepted that English is very essential to developing countries and widely used in education, business, and industries. In ASEAN countries, English is the language of communication. English is number one for ASEAN citizens to communicate and relations to the world of the ASEAN's region which as the wider world of boundless hospitality, a world of competition, and cultural boundaries. Thailand is to prepare the English language of the citizens for to be a member of the ASEAN countries in 2015. Especially, hospitality industry personnel (HIP), they can use English to communicate on the joint and negotiating with the production of goods and services, including, seminars to share knowledge and experience in the business.

Buriram province is considered the gateway to Indochina and Thailand is popular with both local and foreign tourists. The amount of the booking of hotels, restaurants and souvenir shops is increasing every year. Also, a significant number of foreigners working and living in Buriram is increased, so English is important and essential in the communication between people who stay in Buriram and foreigners, in particular, HIP such as hotel staff, resort, restaurants and survivor shops and so on. From the above mentioned, the researchers have realized the importance of English which is required to perform the work of HIP in Buriram and be prepared to become a member of ASEAN. Therefore, the researchers have decided to study the problems and needs on English skills as well as to develop and implement the ESP training course for HIP in Buriram province.

2. Research Objectives

- 2.1 To survey problems on English use of HIP in Buriram province.
- 2.2 To investigate needs on English use of HIP in Buriram province.
- 2.3 To develop an ESP curriculum for HIP in Buriram Province.
- 2.4 To determine an ESP curriculum for HIP in Buriram Province.

2.5 To compare HIP's learning achievement before and after learning through an ESP curriculum for HIP in Buriram.

2.6 To investigate hospitality industry HIP's satisfaction toward an ESP curriculum for HIP in Buriram.

3. Research Questions

3.1 What are the problems on English use of HIP in Buriram province?

3.2 What are the needs on English use of HIP in Buriram province?

3.3 What are the characteristics of the ESP curriculum development for HIP in Buriram Province?

3.4 What is the efficiency of the ESP curriculum development for HIP in Buriram Province?

3.5 Do HIP who learn English an ESP Curriculum for HIP in Buriram have higher post-test mean score than that of pre-test mean score?

3.6 What is the level of HIP's satisfaction toward an ESP Curriculum for HIP in Buriram?

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Population and Samples

The population included all HIP who in the hospitality sectors in Buriram province during 2014 - 2015.

The samples for the first phase were 200 HIP in Buriram province, consisted of 58 from hotels and resorts, 11 from tour companies, 72 from restaurants, 17 from souvenir shops, 13 from banks, and 29 from official organizations, while 30 Business English major students at Buriram Rajabhat University were used to try out the ESP curriculum in the second phase, and 40 HIP were employed in the third phase of this study.

4.2 Research Instrument

4.2.1 A self – developed questionnaire was used to collect data in this study. The questionnaire was focused on problems and need on using English language skills of HIP in their works. The questionnaire was written in Thai language in order to

minimize problems of ambiguity and misinterpretation. In terms of the reliability of the questionnaire, alpha coefficient of Cronbach was calculated. The result revealed that the alpha reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was .86 which was accepted with high reliability.

4.2.2 An ESP curriculum development for HIP was a curriculum conducted by the researchers entitled “English Language Skills for Hospitality Industry Personnel in Buriram Province”. The curriculum was designed based on useful English language skills for HIP according to the needs on English use of HIP in Buriram Province. The efficiency of the ESP curriculum was 77.44/79.00.

4.2.3 Achievement Test (pre-test and post-test) about English language skills for HIP, including 60 multiple-choice questions. The IOC of each item was between 0.91 – 1.00.

4.2.4 Satisfaction questionnaire which the researchers designed and created. It was concerning satisfaction of HIP towards an ESP Curriculum HIP in Buriram which comprised 3 parts: the first part is general information of the samples; the second part is the questions of satisfaction; and the third part is the suggestions with five-point rating scales questionnaire of Likert’s rating scale. Five-point Likert scales used for rating their satisfaction were as follows (Srisa-ard. 2002: 102).

Meaning	Opinion Level
5 means	Most satisfactory
4 means	Very satisfactory
3 means	Average satisfactory
2 means	Less satisfactory
1 means	The least satisfactory

4.3 Data Collection

4.3.1 The questionnaires were distributed to 200 participants and asked them to return within one week. The researchers collected all data by themselves during May – June 2014, in a total of two months.

4.3.2 An ESP curriculum development for HIP entitled “English Language Skills for Hospitality Industry Personnel in Buriram Province” was constructed by the researchers according to the needs of HIP in Buriram province, and submitted to the experts to check for the correctness and appropriateness during August 2014 - February 2015.

4.3.3 The ESP curriculum was tried out with 30 Business English major students at Buriram Rajabhat University during May – June 2015.

4.3.4 The complete ESP curriculum was used with 40 HIP in Buriram province during September – November 2015. They did the pretest at the beginning of a class and then were orientated to understand about learning via ESP curriculum for 1 hour. Then they were taught by using ESP curriculum for HIP for 30 hours. A post-test was given to all of the samples after the class for 1 period.

4.3.5 The HIP were recruited to fill out the satisfaction questionnaire towards an ESP Curriculum for Hospitality Industry in Buriram.

4.4 Data Analysis

4.4.1 The data obtained from the problems and needs on using English language skills of the HIP in their works were computed by mean and standard deviation.

4.4.2. The data obtained from the exercises, pre-test and post-test were analyzed and deduced by using the data analysis methods as follows:

4.4.3 In order to evaluate the samples' proficiency before and after being taught through ESP curriculum, the pre-test and post-test were computed to find out percentage, mean, and standard deviation.

4.4.5 The scores obtained from the exercises and a post-test were calculated to find out the efficiency of process (E1) and the efficiency of the outcomes (E2), respectively.

4.4.6 Dependent samples t-test was used to compare the difference between pre-test and post-test mean scores to detect significant differences at .05

5. Research Results

5.1 The problems on English language use of the HIP in Buriram province were at the serious problem. Speaking skill was rated as the most serious problem and listening skill was also the most serious problem when they communicate with the foreigners.

5.2 The needs on English language use of the HIP in Buriram province both in overall and each skill were at the much level. In terms of the preferences and

suggestion for English training course, most samples wanted to attend English Training course.

5.3 The contents and characteristics of the ESP curriculum conducted by the researchers were: 1) Greeting, introduction, and leave taking; 2) Describing things and places; 3) Describing people; 4) Asking and giving directions; 5) The reception desk; and 6) Dealing with complaints at the front desk. This study was conducted for 12 periods: 10 periods for learning through an ESP curriculum, 3 hours for each period; and 2 periods for orientation, doing pre-test to check their prior knowledge before learning through instructional packages, and for doing an achievement test (post-test) to check their learning achievement. The mean score from all activities scores of an ESP curriculum was 46.47. The total mean scores from the achievement test or post-test was 47.40.

5.4 The efficiency of the constructed ESP curriculum development for HIP in Buriram Province was 77.44/79.00 which was higher than the standard criterion set at 75/75. Therefore, this ESP curriculum can be used to train the HIP in Buriram Province.

Table 5.1 Mean and Standard Deviation, and Percentage for Each ESP Curriculum Item ($n = 30$)

No.	Activities Scores of Learning through ESP curriculum (Efficiency of the Process) (60)	Post-test (60)
Total	1,394	1,422
\bar{X}	46.47	47.40
S.D.	1.89	2.25
%	77.44	79.00

As shown in Table 5.1 above, the efficiency of an ESP curriculum development for HIP in Buriram Province, which were conducted by the researchers was 77.44/79.00 which was higher than the criterion set at 75/75. It stated that samples who learned an ESP curriculum development for HIP in Buriram Province received total mean scores from the activities scores of an ESP curriculum at 77.44 % and total mean scores from the achievement test after learning through an ESP curriculum at 79.00 %.

5.5 The HIP in Buriram province who learned English by using an ESP curriculum for HIP after learning had higher achievement than before learning at the .01 level of statistical significance.

Table 5.2 *Difference between Pre-test and Post-test Mean Scores*

Achievement	n	Total Scores	\bar{x}	S.D.	t
Pre-test	40	60	44.00	7.699	.000
Post-test	40	60	50.05	6.181	

** significant difference at .01

As indicated in the table 5.2, the independent samples t-test was conducted in order to find whether there was a significant difference in the using an ESP curriculum for HIP of the pre-test and the post-test mean scores. The results showed that there was statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores in using an ESP curriculum for hospitality industry personnel at the .01 level.

5.6 Satisfaction of HIP in Buriram Province toward an ESP curriculum for hospitality industry personnel in Buriram as whole at more satisfactory levels as shown in table 5.3.

Table 5.3 *Means and Percentage of Satisfaction of Hospitality Industry Personnel toward Curriculum English for Hospitality Industry Personnel in Buriram*

Items	Numbers of sample	Level of Satisfaction	\bar{x}	S.D.
Registration and Handbook	40	More Satisfactory	4.39	0.650
Performance and Place	40	More Satisfactory	4.28	0.768
Lecturer	40	More Satisfactory	4.46	0.667
Knowledge	40	More Satisfactory	4.13	0.799
Application	40	More Satisfactory	4.49	0.583
Overall Satisfaction toward the training course	40	The Most Satisfactory	4.68	0.572
Overage	40	More Satisfactory	4.40	0.673

As revealed in Table 5.3, it indicates that the hospitality industry personnel's satisfactions in learning English by using an ESP curriculum for hospitality industry personnel as a whole were at "more satisfactory" level ($\bar{X} = 4.40$, S.D. = 0.673).

6. Discussion

6.1 The most problematic skill for HIP was speaking skill, followed by listening, writing, and reading, respectively. From the results, it means that the HIP had difficulty in four English skills while their most difficult skill was speaking. This may be because they lack of opportunity to practice their speaking skill with native speakers. They may have to work all seven days in a week. Also, they may be too shy to speak to foreigners since they don't have much practice and preparation. That causes them lack of confidence as well. The findings of this study are similar to the previous studies of Morakul (2003), whose respondents were lawyers working with PTT PLC, Tarinee Sinarkorn (2003), whose respondents were Thai Navy Personnel during Cobra Gold Joint Training, and Phaisuwan (2006), whose respondents were Seagate planners, all findings revealed that speaking was the most problematic skill. Therefore, a course designer needs to consider their problems.

6.2 The needs on English language use of the HIP in Buriram province both in overall and each skill were at the much level. Their highest need on using English for their work was listening skill followed by speaking, reading and writing skills, respectively. It means that when the HIP work in the hotel, restaurant, or souvenir shops, they need listening skill to communicate with foreign customers. This may be because they wanted to understand what customers talk to them in order to asking or ordering products and services. The results of study was consistent with the research by Sinarkorn (2003) who revealed that listening skill was the most necessary for the Thai Navy Personnel during Cobra Gold Joint Trainings. In addition, Phaisuwan (2006) also revealed that listening skill and speaking was the most needed English communication skills for Seagate planners. He found that the respondents needed to participate in human right training, which are normally conducted in English, in order to gain new and sufficient knowledge as well as skills and updated information that could be applied in their work.

6.3 This ESP curriculum was designed based on needs of HIP in Buriram Province for using English in their work. The content for ESP course were divided in to 6 topics : 1) Greeting, Introduction, and Leave Taking ; 2) Describing Things and Places ; 3) Describing People ; 4) Asking and Giving Directions ; 5) The Reception Desk ; and 6) Dealing with Complaint at the Front Desk. An ESP curriculum which developed for HIP in Buriram province had contents with validity quality mean score at 3.92 (S.D. = 0.37). This finding was consistent with a study of Lin and et. al. (2014) who studied on constructing a curriculum model of hotel English for undergraduate hospitality management in Taiwan. The main topics in his research focused on service such as the topic of Reception Counter Services, Introducing menus, and Complaint Responses. Also, the study of Iwata (2009) who conducted curriculum design for the tourism and hospitality Japanese course at the University of Guam. His topics related to hotel services and food and beverage services.

6.4 The efficiency of an ESP curriculum development for HIP was 77.44/79.00, which was higher than the criterion set at 75/75. This is because an ESP curriculum development for HIP were completely developed in three trails; an individual, a small group, and a field trail. For each step, the researchers could see both good and bad points of an ESP curriculum to be resources and guidelines to complete the efficiency of an ESP curriculum. The results illustrated that the efficiency of the outcomes (E2) were higher than the efficiency of the process (E1). That means the students got post-test score more than exercises score as Taraporn and et al. (2014) mentioned that the efficiency score of the hotel English Training Program was 83.13/78.48 which was higher than the expected. It might be that the students used instructed knowledge have learnt and prepared them before doing post-test. In addition, an ESP curriculum was developed appropriately step by step as experts made suggestion, gave comments, and evaluated the researchers' instruments. Furthermore, this curriculum focused on development for HIP which encouraged learners to practice English communication more in pairs and in groups. The target tasks also involved the real-life situations in hotels so the learners felt the curriculum was very practical. The participants required more time to practice their hotel English skills since they felt that the time of training was not enough for them

6.5 The HIP who learned English by using an ESP curriculum for HIP after learning had higher learning achievement of English for communication on post-test

mean score than in pre-test mean score with statistically significant difference at a .01 level. This could be concluded that an ESP curriculum for HIP in Buriram had the efficiency because it could make the hospitality industry personnel's achievement higher learning. It is quite inventive for the HIP to learn English for communication through an ESP curriculum for HIP. It can inspire the them to learn and be interested in the content more than they used to be. This result caused by an ESP curriculum for HIP were tried out and found the efficiency before using with the samples. In addition, an ESP curriculum for HIP consist of various components and activities which stimulate teaching and learning. This results confirmed the hypothesis and consistent with the past research works, namely, Puncharoen (2005), Yanworapong (2007), Kumchompoo (2008), and Chamnannarong (2013) who mentioned the learning achievement of learners through instructional packages in the post-test was higher than pre-test with statistically significant difference at .05 level.

6.6 The HIP 's satisfaction toward an ESP curriculum for HIP in Buriram as whole at more satisfactory levels. This means that the HIP were satisfied with learning via an ESP curriculum for HIP. This could be explained that an ESP curriculum for HIP were evaluated the quality by the thesis advisors and experts. Thus, an ESP curriculum for HIP has high quality, appropriate content, and suitable for the level of them. The ESP curriculum are valuable in education since they endow with a systematized process for conveying the systematic learning (Khaunhawhech.1987) employed to ensure that the learning process is systematic and let learners learn efficiently. The results are in accordance with the past research works, including, Suriyawong (2001) , and Yanworapong (2007) who investigated the development of instructional packages, and found that learners' satisfaction towards instruction via instructional packages was at a high level.

7. Conclusion

The objective of the present study were: 1) to investigate problems and needs on English skills of the hospitality industry personnel (HIP) in Buriram province; 2) to develop and determine the efficiency of the ESP curriculum of the HIP; 3) to compare the learning achievement of the HIP before and after training by the ESP curriculum; and 4) to study the satisfaction towards the ESP curriculum of the HIP in Buriram

province. This research was divided into three phases: 1) investigating the problems and needs on English language skills use of the HIP; 2) developing and determining the constructed ESP curriculum; and 3) implementing the ESP curriculum. The samples for the first phase were 200 HIP in Buriram province while 30 Business English major students at Buriram Rajabhat University were used to try out the ESP curriculum in the second phase, and 40 HIP were employed in the last phase of this study. The instruments were the interview, questionnaire, ESP curriculum, and achievement tests. The statistics used to analyze the collected data were frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and E1/E2. The hypothesis was tested by dependent samples t-test. The findings were as follows: 1. The problems on English skills of HIP were at serious level; 2. The needs on English use of HIP were at much level; 3. The contents of ESP curriculum consisted of six units; 4. The efficiency of the ESP curriculum was 77.44/79.00, which was higher than the standard criterion set at 75/75; 5. The HIP had higher achievement than before learning at the .01 level of statistical significance; 6. The satisfaction toward an ESP curriculum of HIP was at more satisfactory level. In conclusion, the researchers believe that this study will be advantageous for HIP for their works. Also, the results from this study will help develop the English courses for HIP in order to improve their English not only in daily life but also for working.

8. Pedagogical Implications

The implications of an ESP curriculum for HIP in Buriram were as follows:

8.1 The results of this research can be used to provide an ESP curriculum for HIP in Buriram and other provinces.

8.2 The results of this research can be used for future students, especially English major and tourism major students because they can use the an ESP curriculum for HIP for their learning and practice communication in context of hospitality work effectively.

8.3 The teachers in universities and managers in hotels can use the results of this study when considering textbooks and teaching materials appropriate to the learning capacities of the personnel and students when conducting the ESP curriculum course.

9. Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the research findings of this study, some suggestions are proposed here for future researches.

9.1 This study was conducted to survey the problems and needs of the HIP in using English for their advocacy work. Most of the participants were hotel and restaurant staff. The future study should conduct with the other groups of participants, such as banker, journalists and official staff.

9.2 Studying the results of learning via as ESP curriculum development for HIP with other variables such as the level of intelligence, attitude, consistency in learning, etc. should be investigated.

9.3 A comparison of language learning through an ESP curriculum for HIP and other teaching materials should be done.

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