Needs Analysis of Tourism Personnel for English Communicative Innovation in Sai Yao Community Silk Village, Thalunglek Sub-district, Muang District, Buriram Province

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Abstract

The objective of this research was to analyze the needs of tourism personnel for English communicative innovation in Sai Yao Community silk village, Thalunglek sub-district, Muang district, Buriram province.The sample group included 34 tourism personnel of the silk village in 2017. They were asked to complete a questionnaire, and 11 from the sample group were asked to participate in a focus group discussion. They were selected by using a purposive sampling method. A questionnaire and focus group discussion form were utilized in data collection.The statistics used in data analysis were percentage, mean, Standard Deviation, and content analysis.

The results showed that among the four skills, the questionnaire respondents thought that listening was needed at the highest level (4.91). The samples viewed that English for Specific Purposes (ESP) covering both vocabulary and conversations were needed at the highest level (4.82). They needed the English communicative innovation in the form of a booklet for practicing their English at the highest level (4.73). The topics they needed at the highest level (5.00) included greeting and welcoming, telling history of the community, describing the community's products details and bargaining. The results obtained from focus group discussion revealed that the topics they needed were telling the history of the community, talking about community's products, talking about thecommunity's learning stations (silk, organic rice, and cane sugar processing), and talking about the tourist attractions near the community. The suitable innovation they needed included a booklet and sound clips as well as products vocabulary with phonetics and translations. Moreover, they suggested that the youth in the community should be able to join the workshop for using the innovation and the topics in the booklet should be arranged from the general topics to the specific topics.

Keywords: needs analysis,tourism personnel, English communicative innovation,
        English for Specific Purposes (ESP), silk village

1. Introduction

English plays a very vital role as the tool for communication in the global community. It is used as a means to transfer thoughts, ideas, and cultures as well as to create good relationships between people from different countries. Nowadays, the role of English is very important for people in tourism industry since it is a means for communicating between tourism personnel and foreign tourists.Buriram isa province located in the Northeast of Thailand. There are a lot of tourist attractions in Buriram such as Phnom Rung Sanctuary, Prasat Muang Tam, Khao Kradong Volcano Forest Park, Chang International Circuit, and the I-Mobile Football Stadium. In 2015, Buriram was announced by the Tourism Authority of Thailand as one of 12 cities called "Hidden Gems" in Thailand (Twelve Cities Hidden Gems, 2016). As a result, the numbers of foreign tourists have increased in recent years. The statistics show an increasing number that the foreign visitors' number has arisen from 29,174 people in 2014 to 35,460 people in 2016 (Buriram Statistics Office, 2018).Moreover, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) also launched a new campaign called "Go Local" project in 2018 to promote Thailand's tourism and to spread benefits of tourism across local communities nationwide as Supasorn, TAT Governor, (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2018) stated that when local communities grow, the nation grows since travel and tourism is now widely recognized as the main contributor to grassroots economics, job creation, and income distribution, specific measures must be taken to ensure that the benefits distributed across the country.

Sai Yao Community silk village is one of the silk villages in Buriram. It is very famous for silk, silk farming, silk weaving, silk products, and learning stations. The number of the visitors has increased year by year. The researchers had opportunities to visit the village back in 2016 and again in 2017 for organizing one-day English training workshopand found that the tourism personnel in the village needed to practice more English for communication in order to be able to communicate with foreign tourists. They viewed that they could not communicate with the tourists with confidence because they did not have communication skills. Participation in one-day English training once a year was not enough for the tourism personnel, but they would like to have something such as handouts and sound clipsfor them to practice or learn English for communication with the local contents.So, they will be able to practice on their own, to review, and to communicate with the tourists with more confidence.

Needs Analysis (NA) is the first step in developing language because it is used to obtain a detailed description of the learners' needs (Ellis & Johnson, 1994). It has been employed by English for Specific Purposes (ESP) practitioners, researchers, course designers, materials writers, testers, evaluators, and course instructors for ages for planning courses (Boydell, 1970). It is one of the steps for gathering information of the learners for syllabus design (Nunan, 1988). Needs analysis can be done in many ways such as present situation analysisor learning situation analysis proposed by Hutchison and Waters (1987): this type of analysis aims to investigate strengths and weakness of the learners' state of language. This analysis can ascertain the learners' state of language development at the beginning of the language program. It can provide useful information about the language learners' purposes, the learner's

background, and important aspects of the language which the learners still lack and want to consider.

Therefore, the researchers would like to analyze what are the needs of the tourism personnel for the English communicative innovation in Sai Yao Community silk village, Thalunglek sub-district, Muang district, Buriram province in order to develop the innovation for them in the future. When the tourism personnel can communicate in English more confidently with the tourists, the local community will grow and the country will grow as well. When local economics is better, there will be more job creation as well as income distribution.

2. Research Objective

The objective of this research was to analyze the needs of tourism personnel for English communicative innovation in Sai Yao Community silk village, Thalunglek sub-district, Muang district, Buriram province.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Samples

The sample group consisted of 34 tourism personnel of Sai Yao Community silk village, Thalunglek sub-district, Muang district, Buriram province in 2017. They were selected by using a purposive sampling method. The criteria for selecting the sample group were: 1) they were tourism personnel who had the opportunities in meeting both Thai and foreign tourists; 2) their duties included welcoming the tourists and giving information relevant to learning stations in the community.

These 34 tourism personnel were asked to complete a questionnaire. Moreover, 11 from the sample group were asked to participate in a focus group discussion as the representatives of the sample group. They were selected by using a purposive sampling method as well.

3.2 Research Instruments

Two research tools were employed in this study: a questionnaire and focus group discussion form. The questionnaire consisted of six parts: 1) personal information of the questionnaire respondents, 2) opinions on English skills needed by the tourism personnel, 3) opinions on contents they needed for practicing English, 4) suitable English communicative innovation for the tourism personnel, 5) opinions on topics they needed for practicing English, and 6) additional opinions and suggestions. As for the focus group discussion form, there were 3 parts: 1) personal information of the focus group discussion participants, 2) opinions on problems the participants faced upon using English, their needs for English skills, contents they needed for practicing English, the suitable English communicative innovation for the tourism personnel, and topics they needed for practicing English, and 3) additional opinions and suggestions. It also noted that these two research tools constructed by the researchers were examined by three experts for approving the content validity and Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) of these tools were between0.67 and 1.00.

3.3 Data Collection

The 34questionnaire sets were distributed to the samples. The researchers collected the data by themselves after meeting with the samples for informing and explaining about the research study objective and details of the study. After that, the 11 focus group discussion participants were asked to join the discussion and the

researchers collected data by using the focus group discussion form, note-taking, and video recording.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data derived from the respondents of the questionnaire part 1 to 5 were computed by using percentage, mean, Standard Deviation while the data obtained from the questionnaire part 6 and the participants in the focus group discussion were analyzed by using content analysis and descriptively presented.

4. Research Results

The following results were presented in line with the research objective:

4.1 Personal information of the questionnaire respondents

The result representing the personal information of the questionnaire respondents was shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Personal information of the questionnaire respondents

No.	Personal Information	Frequency (N=34)	Percentage
1	**Gender**		
	Male	18	52.95
	Female	16	47.05
	Total	34	100.0
2	**Age**		
	Under 20 years	0	0
	20-29 years	0	0
	30-39 years	3	8.82
	40-49 years	6	17.64
	50 years or older	25	73.54
	Total	34	100.0
3	**Marital Status**		
	Single	0	0
	Married	31	91.17
	Widowed	3	8.83
	Divorced	0	0
	Separated	0	0
	Total	34	100.0
4	**Education**		
	Lower than high school level	24	70.58
	High school level orequivalent	10	29.42
	Bachelor's degree orequivalent	0	0
	Higher than Bachelor's degree	0	0
	Total	34	100.0
5	**Occupation**		
	Government officer/state employee	0	0
	Scholar	0	0
	Business owner	0	0

Student	0	0
Freelancer/merchant/agriculturist	34	100.0
Total	34	100.0

Table 1 revealed that out of 34 questionnaire respondents, the number of males (52.95%) was much greater than that of females (47.05%). The major samples were 50 years old or older (73.54%), followed by aged 40-49 (17.64%), and aged 30-39 (8.82%), respectively. Most of them had the married status (91.17%), followed by widowed status (8.83%), respectively. Most of them had education which was lower than high school level (70.58%), followed by high school level or equivalent (29.42%), respectively. All of them were agriculturists (100%).

4.2 Their needs for English Skills

The result representing the needs of questionnaire respondents for English skills was shown in Table 2.

Table 2 English skills needed by the questionnaire respondents

	English Skills Needed	Mean	S.D.	Meaning
1	English is necessary for tourism personnel	4.45	0.688	High
2	English is necessary for tourism personnel in welcoming foreign tourists	4.27	0.786	High
3	Listening is necessary skill for tourism personnel	4.91	0.302	Highest
4	Speaking is necessary skill for tourism personnel	4.73	0.647	Highest
5	Reading is necessary skill for tourism personnel	4.36	1.027	High
6	Writing is necessary skill for tourism personnel	4.00	1.183	High

From Table 2, it showed that the respondents viewed that English is necessary for tourism personnel at the high level (4.45), followed by English is necessary for tourism personnel in welcoming foreign tourists (4.27), respectively. And the skill they needed most was listening (4.91), followed by speaking (4.73), and reading (4.36), respectively.

4.3 Their needs for innovation's English contents

The result representing the needs of questionnaire respondents for English contents was shown in Table 3.

Table 3 English contents needed by the questionnaire respondents

	English Contents Needed	Mean	S.D.	Meaning
1	General vocabulary and conversations are necessary for the tourism personnel	4.64	0.674	Highest
2	ESP vocabulary regarding selling and offering services are necessary for the tourism personnel	4.73	0.647	Highest
3	ESP conversations regarding selling and offering services are necessary for the tourism personnel	4.27	0.647	High
4	Both ESP vocabulary and conversations regarding selling and offering services are necessary for the	4.82	0.405	Highest

	tourism personnel			
5	Other contents such as English grammar are necessary for the tourism personnel	3.55	1.508	High

From Table 3, it revealed that most of the respondents viewed that they needed both ESP vocabulary and conversations regarding selling and offering services are necessary for the tourism personnel at the highest level (4.82), followed by ESP vocabulary regarding selling and offering services are necessary for the tourism personnel(4.73), and general vocabulary and conversations are necessary for the tourism personnel (4.64), respectively.

4.4 Their needs for the innovation

The result representing the needs of questionnaire respondents for the English communicative innovation was shown in Table 4.

Table 4 English communicative innovation needed by the questionnaire respondents

	English Communicative Innovation Needed	Mean	S.D.	Meaning
1	A booklet is suitable for practicing English	4.73	0.467	Highest
2	Cassette/CD is suitable for practicing English	3.09	1.446	Moderate
3	Sound clip is suitable for practicing English	3.82	1.537	High
4	Video is suitable for practicing English	3.64	1.433	High

From Table 4, it showed that the respondents needed a booklet and thought a booklet was suitable for practicing English at the highest level (4.73), followed by sound clip (3.82), and video (3.64), and respectively.

4.5 Their needs for English topics

The result representing the needs of questionnaire respondents for the English topics was shown in Table 5.

Table 5 English topics needed by questionnaire respondents

	English Topics Needed	Mean	S.D.	Meaning
1	Greeting and welcoming	5.00	0	Highest
2	Thanking and saying goodbye	4.91	0.302	Highest
3	Saying sorry	4.73	0.647	Highest
4	Refusing politely	4.18	1.168	High
5	Telling a brief history of the community	5.00	0	Highest
6	Talking about the tourist attractions near the community	4.55	0.688	Highest
7	Talking about thecommunity's learning stations	4.64	0.674	Highest
8	Asking for and offering help	4.55	0.688	Highest
9	Asking the foreign tourists to repeat	4.45	0.820	High

10	Recommending housing/homestay	4.91	0.302	Highest
11	Making an appointment	4.64	0.505	Highest
12	Asking and telling the time	4.55	0.688	Highest
13	Asking for and giving directions	4.45	0.688	High
14	Describing the community's products details	5.00	0	Highest
15	Talking about silk/silk products making process	4.73	0.647	Highest
16	Talking about silk patterns	4.55	1.036	Highest
17	Talking about materials for making community's products	4.27	0.905	High
18	Talking about colors, shapes, and sizes of community's products	4.55	1.036	Highest
19	Telling prices of community's products and exchange rates	4.91	0.302	Highest
20	Telling how to use the community's products	4.45	0.688	High
21	Telling how to take care of the community's products after purchasing	4.64	0.505	Highest
22	Bargaining	5.00	0	Highest
23	Calculating and giving change	4.82	0.405	Highest
24	Talking about food	4.91	0.302	Highest
25	Talking about transportation	4.73	0.905	Highest

From Table 5, it revealed that the topics they needed to be included in the English communicative innovation at the highest level (5) included the topic of greeting and welcoming, telling a brief history of the community, describing the community's products details, and bargaining, followed by the topic of thanking and saying goodbye, recommending housing/homestay, telling prices of community's products and exchange rates, and talking about food (4.91), and the topic calculating and giving change (4.82), respectively.

4.6 Their additional opinions and suggestions

The additional opinions and suggestions obtained from the questionnaire were summarized below.

It was suggested that in the booklet, they needed the model conversations and lists of vocabulary with the pronunciation and translations. They needed 25 topics as suggested in the questionnaire to be included in the innovation since the topics covered their needs. They needed training workshops to ensure that they will be able to use the innovation when doing self-study. They also needed the community's youth to be able to practice using the innovation together with the tourism personnel.

4.7 Personal Information of the focus group discussion's participants

The result representing the personal information of the focus group discussion participants was shown in Table 7.

Table 7 Personal information of the focus group discussion's participants

No.	Personal Information	Frequency (N=11)	Percentage
1	**Gender**		
	Male	6	54.5
	Female	5	45.5
	Total	11	100.0
2	**Age**		
	Under 20 years	0	0
	20-29 years	0	0
	30-39 years	1	9.1
	40-49 years	2	18.2
	50 years or older	8	72.7
	Total	11	100.0
3	**Marital Status**		
	Single	0	0
	Married	10	90.9
	Widowed	1	9.1
	Divorced	0	0
	Separated	0	0
	Total	11	100.0
4	**Education**		
	Lower than high school level	8	72.7
	High school level orequivalent	3	27.3
	Bachelor's degree orequivalent	0	0
	Higher than Bachelor's degree	0	0
	Total	11	100.0
5	Occupation		
	Government officers or state employee	0	0
	Scholar	0	0
	Business owner	0	0
	Student	0	0
	Freelancer/merchant/agriculturist	11	100.0
	Total	11	100.0

Table 7 revealed that out of 11focus group discussion's participants, the number of males (54.5%) was much greater than that of females (45.5%). The major participants were 50 years old or older (72.7%), followed by aged 40-49 (18.2%), and aged 30-39 (9.1%), respectively. Most of them had the married status (90.9%), followed by widowed status (9.1%), respectively. Most of them graduated from educational level lower than high school level (72.7%), followed by high school level or equivalent (27.3%), respectively. All of them were agriculturists (100%).

4.8 Results derived from the focus group discussion

Results derived from the focus group discussion regarding opinions on problems faced by the participants upon using English, their needs for English skills, contents they needed for practicing English, the suitable English communicative innovation for the tourism personnel, topics they needed for practicing English, and additional suggestions and recommendations was summarized below.

They viewed that they had problems with listening and speaking when using English. The tourism personnel needed to be able to communicate with the foreign tourists. Topics they needed the most were: telling the history of the community, talking about community's products, talking about thecommunity's learning stations (silk, organic rice, and cane sugar processing), and talking about the tourist attractions near the community. The suitable innovation they needed included a booklet and sound clips as well as products vocabulary with pronunciation and translations. Moreover, they suggested that the youth in the community should be able to join the workshop for using the innovation and the topics in the booklet should be arranged from the general topics to the specific topics.

5. Discussion

The following points based on the research results were discussed:

5.1 The samples needed English for enhancing the tourism in their community in order to welcome and communicate with foreign tourists. Communication skills (listening and speaking) were needed in practicing English. This is in line with a research conducted by Nuemaihom and Sripattanasakul (2017) entitled Innovation Development of Tourism Personnel's English Ability Improvement for Preparation to ASEAN Community at Khao Kradong Volcano Forest Park in Buriram Province that for the English needs, the samples who answered the questionnaire and participated in the focus group discussion said that English was most important and necessary for entering the ASEAN community. They opined that two English skills, speaking and listening, were the most necessary. Since the tourism personnel in the silk village, most of them had lower than high school level education, only communication skills such as speaking and listening are enough for them. From the focus group discussion, the participants viewed that reading and writing were rarely used in their context. They would like to focus on what they will use only. So, they needed to emphasize only on listening and speaking skill.

5.2 The contents the samples needed included both general vocabulary and conversations and ESP vocabulary and conversations. They needed a booklet together with sound clips. In the booklet, they needed the model conversations and lists of vocabulary with the pronunciation and translations. They needed 25 topics to be included in the innovation. This is similar to the results of a research entitled Development of English Communicative Innovation for local Vendors at Koh Kret, Nonthaburi Province by Nikonkittikoson (2016) that Vocabulary and English conversation for specific purposes along with Thai translation and Thai phonetics were mostly required and the most desirable English communicative innovation were booklet and a CD.

5.3 The topics they needed the most were greeting and welcoming, telling a brief history of the community, describing the community's products details, and bargaining. This is in line with the study conducted by Nuemaihom (2016) entitled

ESP Need Analysis and Course Design for Local Vendors atPhnom Rung Sanctuary in Buriram Province that thesamples needed to study the content relating to their jobs, that is, the specific terms and conversations used in a daily life and for selling local products and services since the content was relevant to the local vendors' jobs. The content was also moreuseful and necessary for them than other general English content. To be able to know their real needs, their needs must be analyzed because needs analysis is the first step in developing language because it is utilized to obtain a deep description of the learners' needs (Ellis & Johnson, 1994). It has been employed for planning courses (Boydell, 1970). It is one of the steps for gathering information of the learners for syllabus design (Nunan, 1988a).

6. Conclusion

This research focused on the analysis of needs of tourism personnel for English communicative innovation in Sai Yao Community silk village, Thalunglek sub-district, Muang district, Buriram province.Thirty-four tourism personnel of the silk village in 2017 were purposively selected as a sample group. A questionnaire and focus group discussion form were utilized in data collection. Percentage, mean, Standard Deviation, and content analysis were used in data analysis. It was found that the samples needed English for enhancing the tourism in their community in order to welcome and communicate with the foreign tourists. Communication skills (listening and speaking) were needed in practicing English. The contents they needed included both general vocabulary and conversations and ESP vocabulary and conversations. They needed a booklet together with sound clips. In the booklet, they needed the model conversations and lists of vocabulary with the phonetics and translations. They needed 25 topics to be included in the innovation. They also needed training workshops to ensure that they will be able to use the innovation when doing self-study. It was suggested that the youth in the community should be able to join the workshops for using the innovation and the topics in the booklet should be arranged from the general topics to the specific topics.

7. Recommendations

The following are some recommendations based on the research results:

7.1 The ESP course designed for the tourism personnel should be based on the results found in this study, covering 25 topics.

7.2 The English communicative innovation for the tourism personnel should be developed base on the needs of the samples obtained from the questionnaire and the focus group discussion. Therefore, the booklet and the sound clips are recommended.

7.3 The results from this research should be utilized by organizations or institutes to provide ESP course to tourism personnel in the target area and also in other silk villages with the similar context.

7.4 Further studies on needs analysis should be conducted with different groups of professionals for finding the ESP contents and also English communicative innovation they need.

7.5 Further studies on needs analysis should be conducted with a larger sample size to obtain more information, to better determine the average values, and to avoid errors from testing the small sample size.

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