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**THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH ORAL COMMUNICATION COURSE FOR  
EFL UNDERGRADUATE TOURISM STUDENTS: EMPLOYERS VIEWS  
TOWARDS A COMPETENCY-BASED COOPERATIVE EDUCATION  
CURRICULUM**

Nisita Rittapirom  
Songkhla Rajabhat University, Thailand  
lovely\_nisita@hotmail.com

**Abstract**

Being responsible for the tourism aspect of AEC, Thailand aims at pursuing ASEAN's vision to achieve a free flow of tourism service. Despite such determination, numbers of studies indicated Thai graduates' lack of English language proficiency and incapability to meet the demand of English in the workplace especially in the hospitality sector. This is similar to the results we received from the interviews with stakeholders concerning our students' incompetence in English once they start their field experience in the hospitality sectors. In response to such concern, the institutional policymakers at Songkhla Rajabhat University have recognized the importance of preparing the students for regional competitiveness. This study proposes the development of competency-based English for Field Experience Preparation course based on the needs analysis results gained from semi-structured interview with stakeholders in this specific Southern context of Thailand and site observation to observe the actual language use in workplace, with a focus on equipping our Tourism students with the needed competencies in English oral communication required performing functional tasks. 32 hotel management from eight hotels located in this Specific Southern regions where our alumni regularly go for their cooperative education field experience were interviewed to gather the information about the industrial needs together with 35 alumni who have been working in the hotel industry not less than two years. With the role of English as a lingua franca in ASEAN, English as a lingua-franca oriented on English teaching and evaluation will be presented to offer new alternative ways for ESP teachers in ASEAN context, with its implication to provide the new aspect of Cooperative Education ESP course development

*Keywords:* English for Specific Purposes, needs analysis, competency-based curriculum, cooperative education

**Introduction**

English has a dominant position in science, technology, medicine, computers, transactional business, commerce, tourism and education. It is obviously and commonly agreed that English nowadays has become not only the language of international communication at the worldwide level but also an official language for intra-communication between the ten South-East Asia countries which make up the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (Kachru 2005 cited in Kirkpatrick, 2010). In the tourism industry, English is considered a common language broadly used as language for communications with tourists and travelers from around the world. By the year 2020, international arrivals throughout the world are predicted to rise to 1.6 billion, with Southeast Asia, being expected to become the second most famous destination in the Asia-Pacific Region (World Tourism Organization, 2015). An analysis of international travel

has shown that 85% of all travel is between non-English speaking countries (Graddol, 2006). This figure coincides with Willis (1996) who has pointed out that over half the people of the world who speak English are non-native speakers and that over half the world's business is being conducted in English between non-native speakers.

The growth of the tourism industry and the requirements for the tourism professionals impacted Thai educational policy. Being responsible for the tourist aspect of the establishment of ASEAN Economic Community, The Thai Higher Education Institution is pursuing to achieve the agreement of the ASEAN committee blueprint emphasizing the importance of human resource development especially in tourism and hospitality industry within the phenomenon of workforce migration between the ten member countries. Despite such determination, a number of studies indicate the lack of Thai graduates in English oral communications and the failure to meet the demand of stakeholders in the workplace especially in the hospitality sector (Wiriyachitra, 2004). The study of Chobnitas (2008) involving a SWOT analysis of Thailand's hotel industry also indicates that despite the rich supplies of tourist attractions and products, Thai hoteliers lack the ability of tourism professionals in English communication skills which are the key factors to attract tourists and travelers to choose Thailand as their travel destination .

These situations are very similar to those at Sogkhla Rajabhat University where the researcher works. A preliminary interview with the Director of the Registration office and Department Head of the Tourism Department revealed that the stakeholders in this specific Southern context of Thailand are dissatisfied with the performance of our senior undergraduate tourism students once they start their cooperative education field experience in hospitality sector, mostly in hotel industry. The reason behind this is that their English proficiency is not strong enough to work in the field of hospitality sector and once graduate, are being replaced by those who are English major students. It seems that the ESP courses provided are not sufficient and too general with no focus on each particular job functions. In response to such concern, there is a need to set up a course to prepare the students to meet the Competency ASEAN Tourism Standard Curriculum and the ASEAN Common Competency Standard for Tourism Professions which covers the six divisions of labors in hospitality industry which are front office, food and beverage production, food and beverage services, housekeeping, travel agencies, and tour operation. This course will be taught alongside with other academic courses and is a part of a curriculum revision project 'Preparation for Pre-Cooperative Education' which senior students are required to attend before undergoing their pre-cooperative education field experience. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to develop an English oral communication course for undergraduate tourism students implementing a competency-based approach, with an effort to provide students with competency-based professional development opportunities to be competitive in the global world employment. Since English oral skills are reported as the most wanted and needed for tourism students (Adorján, 2013), the course emphasizes competencies in English oral communication especially in the area of hospitality industry.

### **The Present Study**

This paper aims to answer the following research questions as follows:

1. What competencies in English oral communication are needed for undergraduate tourism students in order to get a job and work efficiently as entry level tourism personnel in hospitality sector?
2. Based on the needs analysis, what components should be incorporated into a competency-based English oral communication course for undergraduate tourism students?

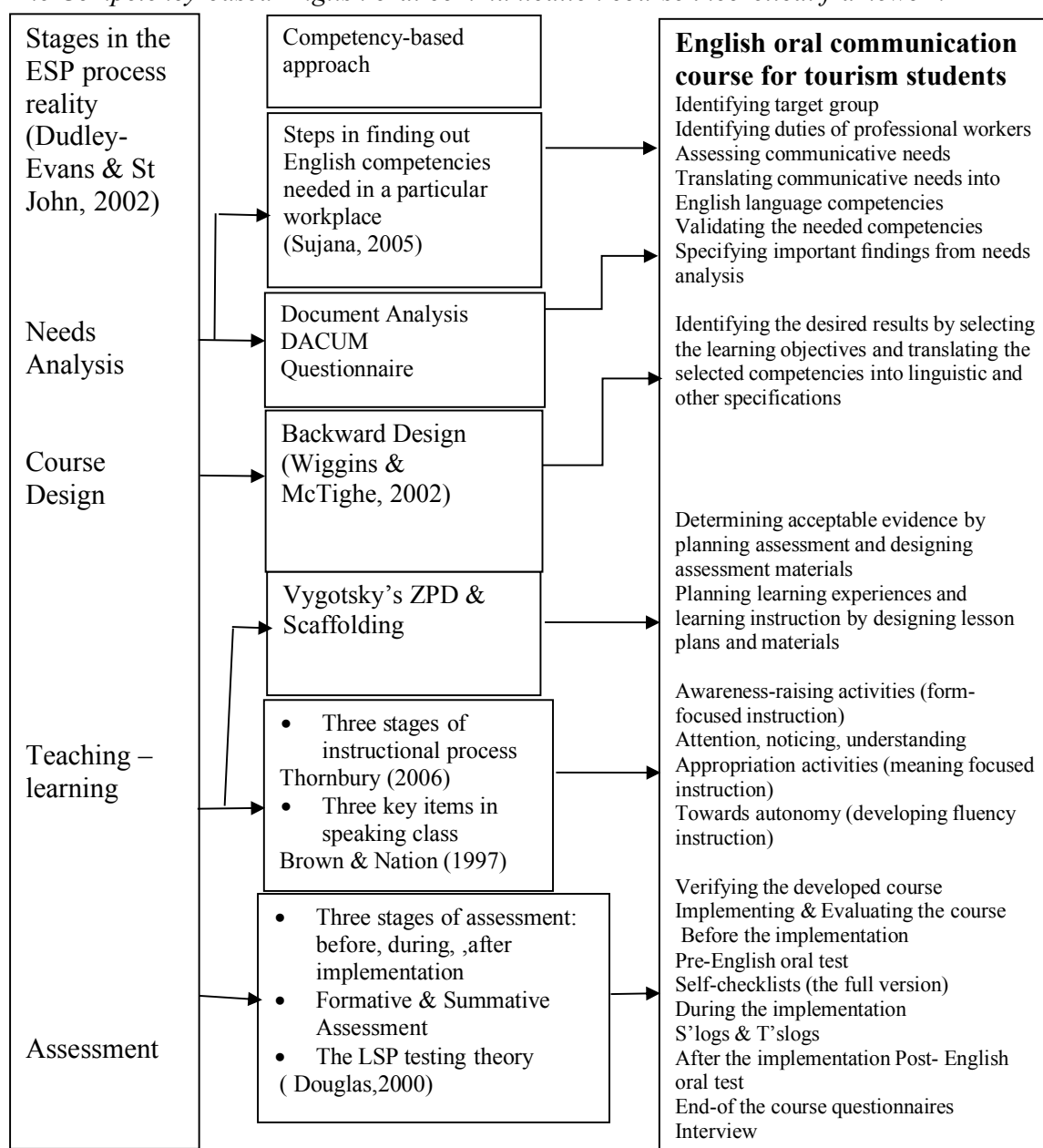
To answer these research questions, this paper presents the results of the needs analysis based on the modified DACUM technique, a questionnaire survey and a process of translating needs analysis to develop the competency-based English oral communication course for undergraduate tourism students.

### Theoretical Framework

Several theoretical frameworks have been explored in order to develop specific frameworks to be used for the course. Figure 1 below shows an overview of theoretical frameworks used for course development of the study:

Figure 1

*The Competency-based English oral communication course theoretical framework*



In order to develop the specific framework for the course, several related theoretical frameworks were explored. Five components taken from 'stages in the ESP process

reality' (Dudley-Evans & St John, 2002) and principles of competency-based approach were chosen to be the core frameworks for course development. Sujana's steps in finding out English competencies needed in a particular workplace for conducting needs analysis were implemented via three channels: document analysis, DACUM technique and a questionnaire survey. Then, to design the course, three stages of the Backward Design (Wiggins and McTighe, 2002) were elaborated and employed. As for teaching and learning, underlying principles of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and scaffolding including three stages of instructional process proposed by Thornbury (2006) and three key items in speaking class suggested by Brown & Nation (1997) were combined in order to design lesson plans and materials. In terms of assessment and evaluation, three phases, before, during and after course implementation. Formative and summative assessments with the use of multiple means will be conducted for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data.

### **Methodology**

The present study consists of the first phase which involves the process of course development. In order to develop the course, a needs analysis adopted the basic principle of the DACUM technique has been conducted. To determine the needs of the stakeholders, the study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods as follows:

#### **Participant Profiles and Study Context**

The participants in the study were 32 hotel managements positioned in general manager, human resource managers, front office managers, food and beverage managers from eight hotels in Phuket, Krabi and Phang Nga where our alumni regularly go for their cooperative education field experience, 20 alumni who have been working in hotel industry not less than three years, and 30 senior students who are currently undergoing cooperative education field experience in hotel industry.

#### **Research instruments and procedures**

To examine the needed competencies in English oral communication for entry level undergraduate tourism students, the study conducted the needs analysis in three steps. The first two steps implemented the basic principle of the DACUM technique, which is an occupational analysis process and is widely used in human resource management to provide a picture of what the worker does in terms of duties, current practices, knowledge, skills and other important aspects. Predetermined questions were asked. Then, the researcher listened to their response to see if there are any clues to probe the next questions.

This technique allows the researcher to systematically collect data from experts in the field. Two groups of domain experts were selected based on purposive sampling and convenience sampling. Both groups are considered to have direct experience in the domain and familiarity with relevant situations so they would be able to provide reliable and accurate information as professionals in this area of the hotel industry. Convenience sampling was used to obtain participants who were able to contribute their time in the interview in spite of their tight schedules. Due to time and resource limitation, the DACUM technique in this study was modified to better serve the context of the study by utilizing two rounds of in-depth interviews with the experts instead of conducting a workshop as described below.

1. The first interview round was a semi-structured interview with 32 hotel managements positioned in general manager, human resource managers, front

- office managers, food and beverage managers from eight hotels in Phuket, Krabi and Phang Nga where our alumni regularly go for their cooperative education field experience.
2. All of them have experiences recruiting hotel and restaurant entry-level personnel. An in-depth semi-structured interviews were used to substitute for a one or two day brainstorming process due to lack of time and resources to gain information about the needs for competencies in English oral communication for hospitality jobs and the readiness of tourism new graduates as job candidates.
  3. The second interview was structured interview with 20 alumni who have been working in hotel industry not less than three years. The participants were asked to accept or to revise each statement on the list and also to give suggestions. Each item yielded a consensus based on the majority of the answers. The results of this interview round, called “the validate list of the competencies in English oral communication for tourism undergraduate students, were then included in the questionnaire for students to identify their wants and expectations of the needed competencies for their ESP course.
  4. The third step was a questionnaire with 30 senior students who are currently undergoing cooperative education field experience in hotel industry. This stage uses a Likert’s scale (1-5 choices) aiming to examine the students’ points of views and to gain insights about the importance of English oral communication, their English learning and teaching problems concerning English oral communication, their self-assessment of their competencies in English oral communication and their wants and expectations of the needed competencies to be included in the course.

Before conducting the research, all participants were informed and signed the consent form about the project.

## Literature Review

### Competency-based Education

As for language curriculum development, competency-based curricula have been called “*the most important breakthrough in adult ESL*” (Center for Applied Linguistics, 1983b:1). Unlike traditional programs, in which certificates and diplomas certify that the students has completed a specific number of credit hours, certificates and diplomas granted under CBE programs certify that the students can perform specified tasks. According to the article titled “*Educational Accountability*” in ERIC Digest (1985), it is one method of assuring the general public that degree attainment is a process of learning. Polk (1982) explains that CBE requires students to achieve mastery of sequentially ordered course material, require students to demonstrate competence in performing skills and behaviors that are central to specific tasks, activities or careers. Findley and Nathan (1980:222) support the approach as “*a successful model for the delivery of educational services that allows for responsible and accountable teaching*”. As the result, the approach has come to be accepted and widely used in many social survival or workplace-oriented language programs.

### English oral communication

English oral communication has become influential in Thai society in terms of a required qualification in many professions. In Thailand, The English Language Development Center (ELDC) developed standards of English for 25 occupations in order to use them as criteria to assess personnel English proficiencies and as a basis for

workplace English curriculum development, lesson planning, materials development, resource selection. The standard concerning English language skills for hotel front desk is described in table 1 below:

Table 1

*Standards of English for hotel front desk staff by the English Language Development Center (ELDC) Thailand*

Language skills	Communication skills : verbal communications in aspects to language appropriacy	Communication skills : non-verbal communications
<p>Using Spoken English.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use and respond to basic courtesy formulas, e.g. greetings, leave-taking, introductions</li> <li>2. Ask and respond to guests' questions, request, opinions, suggestions, and advice</li> <li>3. Give guests directions, instructions, suggestions, advice, confirmations, apologies</li> <li>4. Explain and describe information to guests, e.g. bookings, hotel facilities, current promotions, daily activities, problems, weather</li> <li>5. Promote house activities, special functions, special offers by providing specific details along with using convincing language</li> <li>6. Provide precise information upon guests' queries about Thai history, cultures, institutions, Thai dishes, drinks, fruits, current events</li> <li>7. Initiate and carry on small talk</li> <li>8. Handle phone situations and diplomatic replies</li> <li>9. Speak fluently with clear pronunciation patterns</li> <li>10. Adjust language for clarity and accuracy</li> </ol>	<p>Using an appropriate language variety and register according to audience, purpose and culture</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use appropriate language register to interact with guests/customers</li> <li>2. Respond appropriately to complaints, refusals, negative value judgments, criticism, and complaints from guests/customers</li> <li>3. Use polite language to interact with guests, especially when persuading, handling complaints, expressing value judgments, emotions, and negotiating</li> <li>4. Recognize humor and respond appropriately (optional)</li> </ol>	<p>Understanding and using non-verbal communication appropriate to audience, purpose and culture</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify nonverbal cues that cause misunderstanding or indicate communication problems</li> <li>2. Use appropriate gestures promptly and appropriately in various situations, e.g. when having more than one guest or group to attend to, when guests are faced with problems or difficulties</li> <li>3. Understand and use gestures, facial and body language appropriate to guests' cultures, e.g. hand signaling to accompany a verbal welcome and leave-taking, acknowledging guests' presence, level of eye contact, spacing</li> <li>4. Use intonation, pitch, volume and tone of voice and nonverbal behavior appropriately</li> </ol>

### Findings

The results are demonstrated below according to the sequence of the research questions.

**Research question 1:** What competencies in English oral communication are needed for undergraduate tourism students in order to get a job and work efficiently as entry level tourism personnel in hospitality sector?

To respond to this research question, important findings from the needs analysis are specified as follows:

#### **Summary of semi-structured interview with hotel managerial positions and Songkhla Rajabhat University (SKRU) alumni**

The results gained from semi-structured interviews with hotel managerial positions indicated the importance of developing the curriculum for Tourism/Hotel service major students to be in compliance with the standards of ASEN Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) on Tourism professionals. 90% of them indicated that the agreement of the labor flow of tourism professionals in ASEAN countries have led to high competition and mobility among labor in the ten ASEAN countries. As a result it is necessary for Thailand to develop the capacity of its labor to meet the mutual requirements to support the free flow of labor under the agreement.

In terms of the hotel front office's main competencies, everyone in the two groups of domain experts agreed on: the ability to deal with check-in check out, ability to use and respond to basic courtesy formula and business etiquette, ability to explain the available hotel services on the phone and in person, ability to give direction to the hotel guest, ability to carry on small talk with the guests, ability to recommend places of attraction, restaurants and shopping centers, deal with hotel guests' complaints, ability to promote and convince guest to use hotel facilities, and ability to give a brief account of the historical places in the province and nearby, Thai dishes, drinks, fruits and current events respectively. In addition, all of the stakeholders and experts (100%) provided very similar answers concerning the ability to answer basic job interview questions as those are what they use to assess the candidates. They are expected to just have the ability to express themselves and tell who they are, including the ability to demonstrate some basic knowledge about the job and the company they are applying for and also to use some basic communication strategies to help them get through problematic questions when being interviewed.

Regarding the important aspects for performing job duties at work and oral communication difficulties faced by front office staff, the results of the two domain experts seem to be correlated as 100% of the experts mentioned the lack of self-confidence in speaking which stemmed from many reasons including insufficient vocabulary knowledge, their own worries about speaking like native speakers, the inability to understand the variety of accents of hotel guests, and non-verbal clues (gestures, body language) appropriate to guest culture. Despite the solid theoretical knowledge in the field, the majority of them (90%) mentioned that they were unable to handle prompted problem-solving tasks as well as carrying on small talks. Part of all these difficulties came from a lack of skill in using communication strategies such as asking for clarification, comprehension check, confirmation checks, etc.

In addition, the domain experts all emphasized that educational institutions should seriously promote the importance of intercultural communication, both in theory and in practice within the classroom (58.33%). They also highlighted that the key barriers to equip undergraduate students with intercultural communication was namely the lack of

English speaking and listening proficiency, as well as insufficient courses available for students (58.33%). 80% of them agreed that to tackle these obstacles would be a time consuming task and involve adjusting the current teaching and learning curriculum within the schooling system. However, being aware of the problem and attempting to provide more real life situations for students to practice, along with highlighting the importance of ICC facilitated by the teachers, would initially help promote ICC for undergraduates and support them to enter the labor market with more confidence. 100% of the alumni experts indicated that they lacked the knowledge of intercultural communication when they first entered the labor market as hotel front office personnel and further stated that they needed to explore that from other available sources and from life experience. The intercultural competence with which they were equipped with from education institutions was inadequate. Finally, both groups of stakeholders and experts highlighted that the foundation of ICC domains, which are attitudes, knowledge about the diversities of cultures, skills and how to implement their knowledge to real life situations were necessary prerequisite for hotel front office personnel.

### Summary of Overall Quantitative findings to identify students' needs

The results from questionnaire responses from 30 senior undergraduate tourism students were categorized according to the following five parts of the questionnaire: However, only problems and their wants and expectations are presented as follows:

Table 2

*Problems concerning students' English oral communication ability and English language learning and teaching*

Criteria	4.51-5.00	High	
	3.51-4.50	Moderate to high	
	2.51-3.50	Moderate	
	1.51-2.50	Low to moderate	
	1.00-1.50	Low	
Problems concerning oral communication abilities		mean	S.D.
1	Feel nervous and not confident when speaking English with Non-Thais	4.48	.59
2	Having little knowledge of vocabulary and unable to orally convey their ideas and information to others	4.48	.56
4	Unable to catch the main ideas and details when receiving information either over the telephone or face to face contacts	4.30	.69
5	Unable to have basic daily life conversation fluently and properly	4.30	.78
Problems concerning English language learning and teaching		mean	S.D.
1	The content doesn't suit their real needs in the workplace	4.28	.73
2	Lack of practices in the class	4.27	.80
3	Too little time and too few English courses are provided	4.22	.71
4	Lack of motivation to learn	4.18	.85

Their ratings of the problems showed that lacking self-confidence when speaking with Non-Thais was the most difficult concern with regard to English oral communication ability. This could result from insufficient vocabulary knowledge and ability to catch the main ideas while conversing. Regarding the problems concerning English language



teaching and learning in past ESP English courses, these senior undergraduate tourism students indicated irrelevant contents to their real-life situations as the priority and the lack of practice in class which demotivated their learning.

In terms of the students' wants and expectations, the results are shown in Table 3 below:

Table 3

*Students' wants and expectations of the needed competencies*

Criteria	4.51-5.00	High		
	3.51-4.50	Moderate to high		
	2.51-3.50	Moderate		
	1.51-2.50	Low to moderate		
	1.00-1.50	Low		
Students' expectations of hotel tasks		mean	S.D.	
1	I can use some proper communicative strategies to help myself when being asked some difficult questions.	4.50	<b>.62</b>	
2	I can use basic courtesy formulas and carry on small talk appropriately with foreigners.	4.47	<b>.60</b>	
3	I can communicate with hotel guests who are non-native speakers (Non-Thais)	4.42	<b>.72</b>	
4	I can answer and give information about places of attractions and local culture.	4.42	<b>.62</b>	
5	I can provide the information about the hotel facilities and other services.	4.33	<b>.75</b>	
6	I can use English to give directions to foreign guests.	4.32	<b>.75</b>	
7	I can persuade, convince the guests to use the services and products provided at the hotel	4.32	<b>.81</b>	

The survey results showed that proper communicative strategies played a significant role for these target groups of students, followed by the ability to handle and carry on small talk appropriately according to the hotel guests' various cultures. Knowledge about places of attraction and local culture also played a significant important role according to the students' expectations for the course to be developed.

**Research question 2:** Based on the needs analysis, what components should be incorporated into a competency-based English oral communication course for undergraduate tourism students?

It is obvious that the students need an English course to improve their English competencies. The results of the needs analysis reveal a list of the needed competencies consisting of nine needed competencies for hotel entry-level work.

The results of their wants and expectations indicate that all of the competencies are wanted and expected to be included into their English courses. Since the course consists of thirty sessions for instructions with two sessions for assessment and evaluation, nine of the needed competencies were chosen to be the learning objectives of the course.

The first three needed competencies for hotel personnel job interviews were chosen because these competencies are very essential for the students to get a job. The students need to go to a process of job interview before they work. As for entry level hotel personnel, the competency in dealing with check-in check out, using and responding to

basic courtesy formula and business etiquette, and explaining the available hotel services on the phone and in person were chosen as they were rated as the top three most wanted and expected course objective for working effectively as entry-level hotel personnel. In addition, literature and information from the preliminary interview indicate that communicating over the telephone is one of the tasks that entry-level hotel personnel need to handle daily and most frequently.

All of the theoretical frameworks previously stated were used as a blueprint to develop the competency-based English oral communication course for undergraduate tourism students. The course structure was designed based on the nine selected learning objectives. Since the first three learning objectives are parts of needed competencies for job interview while the last one is a part of needed competencies for hotel personnel working situations. The course therefore contained two modules: English for job interview and English for entry-level hotel personnel as illustrated in the proposed course structure below:

Table 4

*The course structure*

<p>English Oral Communication Course for undergraduate tourism students</p> <p><u>Module I: English for Job Interview ( 9 sessions)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to hospitality/hotel job recruitment process and job positions</li> <li>• Talking about your background and experiences</li> <li>• Talking about your strengths</li> <li>• Talking about your weaknesses</li> <li>• Talking about companies and organizations</li> <li>• Practicing a job interview</li> </ul> <p>+++ In-class Midterm Exam /Posttest 1 (1 session)</p> <p><u>Module II: English for entry-level hotel personnel embedded with intercultural communication aspects</u></p> <p><u>(20 sessions)</u></p> <p>II.1 Receiving telephone calls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking , Receiving telephone calls</li> </ul> <p>II.2 Dealing with check in check out procedures</p> <p>II 3 Using and respond to basic courtesy formula and business etiquette</p> <p>II 4 Giving information about hotel facilities to the hotel guests</p> <p>II 5 Giving direction to the hotel guest</p> <p>II 6 Carrying on small talk with the guests</p> <p>II 7 Recommending places of attraction, restaurants and shopping centers</p> <p>II 8 Dealing with hotel guests' complaints,</p> <p>II 9 Giving a brief account of the historical places in the province and nearby, Thai dishes, drinks, fruits and current events</p> <p>II.6 Wrap-up session (1 session)</p> <p>+++ In-class Final Exam / Posttest 2 (1 session)</p>
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The course consisted of 32 sessions (3 hours/session). The first nine sessions were dedicated to English lessons for job interview. Then, a week after the students needed to take a midterm exam which was considered their posttest 1. The content of the exam covered the first four learning objectives. For lessons under the module of English for entry-level hotel personnel, twenty sessions were dedicated to cover the most required aspects of business telephone conversations and duties of hotel personnel. A week later, in their last session at the end of the course the students needed to take in-class final exam which was their posttest 2.

### **The inclusion of intercultural communication**

The findings indicated clearly that our senior undergraduate tourism students need to be exposed to hotel guests whose diverse identities, social norms, values, beliefs, cultural features and interests are different from their own. To achieve the aim of a mutually satisfactory outcome, they need to be well-prepared for effective communication in order to get their message across without any misunderstanding or confusion. Therefore, intercultural communication in terms of nonverbal communications, cultural background knowledge as well as the interactional context are considered to be essential and is embedded in every lesson of the entry-level hotel personnel competency (module 2). The lessons were developed and adapted from several sources considered relevant to the participants. Both internet-downloaded and tailor-made authentic listening inputs and audio visual material of hotel front office staff performing different duties are embedded into the course to help the students become familiar with a variety of accents. Exposure to teaching material on various types of authentic real-life situations will also help them to be able to engage in problem-solving activities resembling those they will encounter in real-life situations during their cooperative education field experience.

### **Discussion**

The findings derived from the needs analysis indicated the significance of English oral communication for tourism students. It also revealed that the two groups of experts and the students perceive needs quite similarly. Also, the ELDC list of competencies in English oral communication provides useful information and a good basis for developing the course of the study. However, as the ELDC list was developed based on working hotel front office professionals, it was occurred to the researcher that an in-depth investigation of the needed competencies for tourism/hotel students was still needed as there might be some slight differences. For example, competencies for job application are priority for the students as well as the significance of intercultural competence for hotel front office professionals.

This present study also demonstrates the significant process of conducting the needs analysis to identify the real needs of the target group of the students and the stakeholders who participated in this study. Several theories and principles were incorporated to construct the proper framework for the present study as stated in Figure1: 'The competency-based English oral communication course theoretical framework'. Although this study chose to follow stages in the ESP process reality proposed by Dudley-Evans and St. John (2002), the researcher needed to search for more information from some other sources in order to develop a more complete step-by-step framework to be used for the present study. This also includes some adaptation needed to be made so the framework was suitable for the context of the study. In response to the widespread role of English as a lingua franca, competency-based approach with an adaptation to English as a lingua-franca oriented on English teaching and evaluation is believed to be appropriate to this particular local context in Southern Thailand where most

communication is between non-native speakers. Learners should be taught and assessed according to the needs of non-native speakers who use English with non-native speakers. Therefore, it can be concluded that theories and principles of course development provide just a big picture of how a course is developed. Based on those theories, ESP course developers may need to adapt and create their own frameworks that are specific to the context of the course in order to better serve the purposes of the course and achieve their goal. In addition, this illustrates the counterclaim against the concern of a lack of creativity of the competency-based education. It supports Larson's argument that teacher creativity in designing instruction and developing learning activities is not restricted in a competency-based program. The above figure shows that based on the main theories of course development and the principle of competency-based approach, various applications showing creativity are possible in numerous ESP competency-based courses.

### **Limitations**

Due to a limitation of time and resources, the original DACUM technique study was modified by conducting in-depth semi-structured interview instead of a workshop.

### **Recommendations**

For further study, conducting site observations at workplace to observe how the staffs use English in handling their jobs and other relevant information would be a distinctive element in the process of needs analysis for course development.

### **Conclusions**

The study presents a process of developing the competency-based English oral communication course for undergraduate tourism students. The results and findings from each stage of the study are reported in response to the research questions. After the needs analysis was conducted, the tailor-made competency-based English oral communication course for tourism students was developed. The study presents the course development process and proposes frameworks for developing a competency-based English oral communication course to be used as guidelines in designing the course. If this study is successful, tourism students at Songkhla Rajabhat University will not only obtain improved English oral communication ability, but they will also gain better language skills, communication strategies, cultural knowledge, and intercultural interactions which are crucial for global communication. Moreover, since this course is aimed to prepare students to be ready for their cooperative education field experience in the hospitality sector, it also helps the students to be ready and qualified for future hospitality employment and to be able to get a job in the field of their expertise.

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