Curriculum Evaluation: Measuring the Learning Outcomes and Satisfaction Levels of Thai Adult Learners with an English for Cultural Tourism Communication Course, Suphan Buri, Thailand

Thaweesak Chanpradit[1]

[1] Lecturer, Department of Service Innovation and Intercultural Communication, Faculty of Hospitality Industry, Kasetsart University, Nakhon Pathom, Thailand

Correspondence: Thaweesak Chanpradit, Lecturer, Department of Service Innovation and Intercultural Communication, Faculty of Hospitality Industry, Kasetsart University, Nakhon Pathom, Thailand.

Abstract

A curriculum on English for cultural tourism communication was designed, developed, and implemented for Thai adult learners in Doem Bang Nang Buat, Suphan Buri, based on adaptation of the grassroots model (Taba, 1962) and relevant research. This study focused on measurement of the learning outcomes and satisfaction levels of Thai adult learners with an English for Cultural Tourism Communication course. Participants were 21 adult learners living in the community of Doem Bang Nang Buat in Suphan Buri. Data were collected through pretests and posttests, a questionnaire, and participant observation, and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation. Content analysis was also applied. The results indicated that the learning outcomes of the adult learners improved significantly as the posttest mean scores were higher than the pretest mean scores at the statistical significance level ($p < .05$). The satisfaction levels of adult learners with the course were rated overall as *very satisfied* regarding teaching competencies, materials and methods, activities, learning facilitation, and knowledge and understanding of lessons. The study suggests that an English language development curriculum for adult learners should concentrate on learner needs and interests with the aim of presenting everyday English situations in an effort to enable learners to apply English language knowledge and skills to their professions. Furthermore, collaboration between native and non-native English speakers along with the utilization of technology in a positive learning environment is seen as necessary to enhance adult learning.

Keywords: curriculum evaluation, learning outcomes, course satisfaction, Thai adult learners

1. Introduction

Curriculum evaluation is at the forefront of foreign language education systems both formally and informally, and it has played a prominent role in the development of language learning and teaching, language standards, and diversification of experience, knowledge, and skills in a highly competitive world. To meet the English needs of a fast-changing world, it is necessary to constantly develop foreign language teaching and learning not only in formal but also in informal education. Effective foreign language teaching and learning result from a well-designed curriculum that mainly consists of objectives, materials, teaching methods, and means of evaluation. Among these components of curriculum development, evaluation of the learning outcomes or overall program success in achieving the shared goals set by the teacher and his/her learners lies at the heart of its consistent development in the long term (Brown, 1995; Taba, 1962; Rea-Dickins & Jermaine, 1992; Wiles & Bondi, 2011).

Thus, curriculum evaluation is a systematic process of information collection, analysis, and interpretation aimed at measuring the success of a curriculum (Gay, 2004). It involves gathering necessary feedback and information in order to achieve effectiveness and efficiency of the curriculum in the process of deciding whether to embrace, change, or even eliminate the existing curriculum and replace it with a new one that has been proven more effective and suitable for the target users of the curriculum (Orstein & Hunkins, 2009). Similarly, the grassroots approach of Taba (1962), which consists of seven phases of curriculum development, suggests using evaluation tools such as tests, assignments, in-depth interviews, and questionnaires designed and developed by teachers, without intervention from higher-level organizations, to assess teaching and learning outcomes.

To date, most English learning and teaching curricula and evaluation in Thailand have focused on students in formal education rather than adult learners in need of English knowledge and skills from educational institutions to support their language literacy. Relatively speaking, most Thai adult learners are involved in face-to-face interactions with English-speaking tourists who visit tourist attractions in their villages. Demographically, Thailand currently has an increasing number of people aged 60 and over, which has already led to an "aged society" and that will become a "super-aged society" with 28% of the population aged 60 and over in 2031 (Institute for Population and Social Research Mahidol University, 2017). In this respect, not only younger generations need to be well educated but also older generations, who have less opportunity to gain access to a good education than those students in the Thai formal educational system. Adult education also helps promote lifelong human development as people of all ages need to be educated not only to satisfy their job-related needs, but also to enhance the quality of their lives in the long term (Myers, 1992, pp. 23−26).

As already stated, an effective curriculum is required to meet the needs of learners, and an effective evaluation of the curriculum is the central element in achieving this. In the community of Doem Bang Nang Buat, Suphan Buri, older people as a huge proportion of the community engage in several goods and services-related professions such as farmers, vendors, and vocational group representatives. They make their living by selling handmade products, local dishes, and drinks at tourist attractions on special occasions. For this reason, an adult study group desired to improve their English skills, particularly listening as well as speaking, because they need to communicate in everyday English and interact with foreign tourists who enquire from them about tourist sites, products, and prices (Chanpradit, Sriruk, & Srinon, 2021). Furthermore, they thought that the ability to speak English could bring them more money-making opportunities due to an increasing number of foreign tourists visiting the tourist attractions in their community. To date, the community has become a center of attention with more arrivals of foreign tourists, encouraging older people who sell handmade goods, beverages, and other culture-related items to speak English.

In connection with Thailand's tourism, the country has attracted an enormous number of foreign tourists to visit not only the capital Bangkok, but also rural provinces where tourist attractions are linked with cultural aspects of the country. Thailand as a regional hub for tourism had increasing foreign arrivals before the coronavirus pandemic and generated around 1.93 trillion baht in revenue in 2019. Foreign arrivals in 2019 hit a record 39.8 million, equivalent to over half of Thailand's population after a rise of 7% from 38.2 million in 2018 (Ministry of Sports and Tourism, 2020). As part of long-term preparation for welcoming a growing number of foreign tourists visiting Thailand, an English curriculum was created for adult learners with a focus on English for cultural tourism communication, based on an adaptation of Taba's grassroots model, comprising 1) planning, 2) analysis, 3) design and development, 4) draft evaluation, 5) implementation, and 6) evaluation (Chanpradit, 2022). To evaluate the efficacy of this curriculum, this study focused on measuring the learning outcomes and satisfaction levels of adult learners with the English for Cultural Tourism Communication course.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definitions of Curriculum

The term "curriculum" has been given numerous definitions given by linguists, theorists, experts, and practitioners since the field of language learning and teaching first took its current form. Curriculum is primarily defined as a continuous reconstruction, from the child's present experience into the organized bodies of truth that are called "studies" equivalent to "themselves experience" (Dewey, 1902). Several definitions of the term "curriculum" have centered on a wide range of learning experiences and the abilities of the individual to control their life situation and attain their educational goals as planned and directed by the guidance of teachers (e.g., Bobbitt, 1918; Rugg, 1927; Tyler, 1949; Taylor, 1998; Caswell & Campbell, 1935; Ragan, 1960; Brown, 2006).

Curriculum includes plans for learning and the actual learning experiences provided by teachers, and it stresses the importance of materials and processes, both in formal and informal education. Thus, a curriculum aims at equipping learners with knowledge and understanding in order to develop skills and to change attitudes, appreciation, and values in an attempt to influence learning, whether inside or outside of the classroom, under the supervision of educational institutions (Doll, 1992; Saylor & Alexander, 1981). Curriculum may therefore be seen as a set of plans for the development of both learners and teachers in charge of translating any educational idea into a hypothesis testable in practice.

The functions of teachers also include setting objectives, selecting teaching methods, designing appropriate tests and materials, and evaluating the learning outcomes of students as a measurement of success and continual development (Stenhouse, 1975). Accordingly, curriculum can be referred to as a set of actions and plans for pedagogical development and learner-based development both formal and informal, inside and outside of the

classroom, under the responsibility of teachers and administrators.

2.2 Curriculum Development and Evaluation

A large number of studies on curriculum development in the field of language learning and teaching have focused on learning objectives, contents, materials, teaching methods, and evaluations (Taba, 1962; Brown, 1995; Walvoord, 2004). These key components form the essence of curriculum development. Effective curricula for both young and old learners begin with a needs analysis, a concept that was first introduced in the 1920s. A needs analysis is an essential part of the curriculum development process as it generates both subjective and objective information that teachers can utilize to determine objectives, contents, materials, teaching methods, and evaluations (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; White, 1988; West, 1997).

An evaluation system is included in any curriculum that paves the way for continuous development as it determines whether a program or a course is satisfactorily meeting its learning objectives and keeps teachers aware of learning outcomes. Furthermore, the purposes of evaluation are both general and specific. General purposes include accountability, curriculum development, and self-development, while specific purposes are centered on the development of the school's education goals, the design of programs, the improvement of standards for curriculum and institutional evaluation, and the evaluation and selection of textbooks (Rea-Dickins & Germaine, 1993).

To sum up, curriculum development involves a well-planned process encompassing several approaches, such as conducting a needs analysis, designing objectives, selecting appropriate teaching and evaluation methods, and forming a curriculum evaluation and review committee. Teachers and educational institutions commonly use these approaches to develop an effective curriculum with both teachers and learners involved in the process.

2.3 Adult Learning and Teaching

Adult learning and teaching have become popular since the concept of andragogy was first developed (Knowles, 1975). In contrast to the concept of pedagogy (the teaching of children in early childhood education), the term "andragogy" refers to the teaching of adults in adult education, with the aim of fulfilling adult learners' needs for career advancement and promoting lifelong learning. Teachers, educators, experts, and practitioners in adult education should be able to 1) create a cooperative learning climate; 2) analyze the needs and interests of the learner; 3) determine learning objectives based on the needs, interests, and skill levels of the learner; 4) design activities to achieve the objectives; 5) work with the learner to select proper teaching methods, materials, and resources; and 6) evaluate the quality of the learning experience and outcomes for further development (Taba, 1962; Knowles, 1984; Houle, 1996).

Several studies have revealed that adults do not have a strong interest in learning if what they learn does not meet their needs (e.g., Merriam, 2001; Oanh, 2007; Kaewpet, 2009). It is important that teachers assess the needs of learners and put them into practice through teaching plans from the beginning of the course to the end. Consideration of the learner's needs is essential for selecting learning and teaching methods, materials, activities, and evaluations because adults have individual characteristics, such as race, religion, way of life, belief, traditions, and culture. In an effort to respond to the needs and characteristics of learners, a larger number of learning and teaching methods have been used as part of adult education, such as experiential learning, environment-based learning, self-directed learning, learner-centered learning, transformational learning, cooperative learning, and learner autonomy (Brookfield, 1995; King, 2000; Cranton, 2000; Sherow, 2006).

2.4 English Language and Communication

In Thailand, English as a lingua franca has played a prominent role in the Thai educational system and all areas of business since the reign of King Rama III (1824–1851), who learned several foreign languages, especially English, to help him deal with the forces of Western colonization. Thailand is among the countries in the Expanding Circle, where English is used as a foreign language (Kachru, 1985). With English playing various roles in all fields, non-native adult learners like Thais are finding it necessary to learn English to survive in a fast-changing world. The most common types of English in the field of language learning and teaching in Thailand include English for Specific Purposes (ESP), English for Academic Purposes (EAP), Business English, English Language Teaching (ELT), Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, and Teaching English as a Foreign Language. All of these are part of the formal educational system, with the focus on the use of English for international communication in all professional fields.

However, the rapid advancement of technology and globalization has had an impact on the lives of people of all ages, so teaching English outside of the formal educational system is still essential. The English language skills of Thai people need to be improved so that they can communicate with international tourists as Thailand is well

known for its hospitality and tourism industry, with millions of international arrivals each year (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2020). A large number of previous studies on English language and communication (e.g., Kress, 2003; Schleppegrell, 2004; Palsa & Mertala, 2020) have focused on the development of English pedagogical strategies, multiliteracy skills, and communication abilities of children, primary school students and university students in academic settings. For example, Atabekova, Lutskovskaia, and Gorbatenko (2021) conducted a study with university law students who study ESP, to explore the multiliteracy skills and abilities of students to engage in efficient multilingual communication in various professional settings. A small number of studies have been conducted on enhancing the English communication skills and strategies of adult learners in various settings (Oxford & Ehrman, 1993; Wharton, 2000; Harmer, 2007).

In Thailand, few studies have been undertaken with the aim of developing the communicative English of Thai adult learners through training curricula and handbooks based on various approaches. Boonteerarak (2021) conducted a research study on the development of a communicative English curriculum for Thai counter clerks in convenience stores. The sample group consisted of 20 trainee clerks and 10 administrators in the curriculum development phase and 40 trainee clerks and 271 English-speaking customers in the curriculum evaluation phase. The findings showed that the communicative English competence of trainees improved significantly when compared with the pre- and posttests. Trainees' use of English impressed their English-speaking customers, and trainees valued the curriculum as highly efficient. The study suggested that an English curriculum for adult learners should include a wide range of tasks and cooperative language functions in real-life situations.

Sahatsathatsana (2018) originated a model for creating an English handbook to improve adult learners' communicative English through the utilization of a karaoke technique. In total, 40 participants were selected employing simple random sampling. Data were collected using an English handbook with a karaoke technique, a questionnaire, a semistructured interview, and a conversation test. The study concluded that adopting a karaoke technique to create an English handbook for the communicative English improvement of adult learners was effective and appropriate.

Suwanarak (2015) examined language learning strategies of Thai adult learners attending an English course to improve their work potential, and factors that influence their strategies. The participants were 40 adult officers. Data were collected through a questionnaire with 50 items adapted from the *Strategy Inventory for Language Learning* and a semistructured interview. The results of the study revealed that the learners had an overall preference for using social strategies, while individual learners selected appropriate strategies for their learning goals, affective needs, and work context. The main implication of this study was that teachers in the context of training courses should have an understanding of the language learning strategies of adult learners and their use in relation to professional engagement for further language development.

The review of the above studies underlines the importance of the development of communicative English in adult learners who require instructional support from educational institutions. A number of learning and teaching approaches and strategies are employed in adult education to enable these learners to use English to communicate in everyday life and to increase job opportunities.

3. Method

3.1 Participants

In total, 21 adult learners in the community of Doem Bang Nang Buat in Suphan Buri participated in this study, which included 16 females (76.19%) and five males (23.81%). The adult learners were divided into five groups: 1) nine community leaders, 2) two housekeepers, 3) two entrepreneurs, 4) six vendors, and 5) two monks. A purposive sampling was used to select the participants within the framework of the following criteria:

1) Participants must be aged 40 or above.

2) Participants must be interested in improving their English skills.

3) Participants must be available to take part in the course.

4) Participants must sign a consent form before taking part in the course.

Some of the participants were key informants. The total number of participants was reduced from 21 to 15 by the end of the course, due to their work or illness, which resulted in attendance below 100%.

3.2 Research Tools

Pre- and post-tests, a questionnaire, and participant observation were used in this mixed-methods study. The learning outcomes of the adult learners were measured through the pre- and posttests of 50 items each, with 10 items in the format of matching the words with their definitions and 40 items in a multiple-choice format based

on the five units (see Table 1). The questionnaire about adult learners' satisfaction levels with the course was designed within the evaluation framework of Taba (1962), and was composed of 1) personal information; 2) adult learners' satisfaction levels with the course in the five categories of teaching competencies, materials and methods, activities, learning facilitation, and knowledge and understanding of lessons; and 3) suggestions (if any). A five-point Likert scale was employed to assess the results of the questionnaire. Participant observation was also conducted.

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

Quantitative data from the pre- and posttests and the questionnaire were collected and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation. Qualitative data were collected using participant observation and analyzed using content analysis.

4. Results and Discussion

Before presenting the results, it is important to give an overview of the English for Cultural Tourism Communication course. Preparation for the course began after a needs analysis was conducted, based on adaptation of the grassroots model developed by Taba (1962) and other relevant studies mentioned in the Literature Review section, before the final phase of curriculum evaluation. The results are summarized in Table 1 (Chanpradit, 2022).

Table 1. Content selection and organization (n = 21)

Unit	Descriptions & Objectives	Materials & Methods	Means of Evaluation
1 Introduction	Greeting and introducing oneself to others, saying and responding to *thank you*, making and accepting an apology, asking for and giving information, and introducing others Objectives: 1) To be able to pronounce and comprehend simple words, phrases, and sentences in the sample unit conversations, and 2) to be able to introduce oneself, respond to *thank you*, make, and accept an apology, ask for and give information, and introduce others.	Handbook, video clips, pictures, and smartphone (vocabulary searching device) Learner-centered, activity-based, coaching, peer learning, real-life situation-based, and active learning	Pre and posttests, questionnaire, and participant observation
2 Tourist Attractions	Introducing and recommending tourist attractions, and explaining tourist rules and some tourist information to English-speaking tourists Objectives: 1) To be able to pronounce and comprehend words, phrases, and sentences in the sample unit conversations, and 2) to be able to introduce tourist attractions and explain rules and tourist information.		
3 Farming Activities	Describing the methods of farming, gardening, and fertilizer-making in an easy way Objectives: 1) To be able to pronounce and comprehend words, phrases, and sentences in the sample unit conversations, and 2) to be able to describe the methods of farming, gardening, and fertilizer-making.		
4 OTOP Products	Presenting local products, known as *One Tambon (sub-district) One Product*, such as chili tamarind sauce, Khanom Mo kaeng (Thai custard cake), Kanom Kong, Khao Tom Mat (Rice filled with sweet coconut milk and banana), and Krayasat (Thai snack made from rice, peanut, sesame, and sugar) Objectives: 1) To be able to pronounce and comprehend words, phrases, and sentences in the sample unit conversations, and 2) to be able to present local products.		
5 Local Shows	Giving tourists information about horse riding and Thai dance Objectives: 1) To be able to pronounce and comprehend words, phrases, and sentences in the sample unit conversations, and 2) to be able to give tourists information about horse riding and Thai dance.		

Table 1 shows the contents were categorized into five units: 1) Introduction ($\bar{x}$ = 3.33; SD = 1.94), 2) Tourist Attractions ($\bar{x}$ = 3.19; SD = 1.84), 3) Farming Activities ($\bar{x}$ = 3.00; SD = 1.95), 4) OTOP Products ($\bar{x}$ = 2.95; SD

= 1.94), 5) Local Shows ($\bar{x}$ = 3.00; SD = 1.95). The unit descriptions, objectives, materials, methods, and evaluation were first examined through the evaluation form (Item-Objective Congruence Idex, IOC) by three experts and considered appropriate (IOC = 0.67). Then, the curriculum was implemented with the adult learners for six weeks of training (six hours each). Throughout the six-week training, participant observation was used to track adult learners' learning progress. After the end of the training, adult learners' satisfaction levels were measured by the questionnaire. Accordingly, the results from the pre- and posttests, questionnaire, and participant observation are shown below.

4.1 Pre- and Posttests

The pre- and posttests with 50 items each were used to measure the learning outcomes of adult learners from beginning to end. The results of the pre- and posttests taken by the learners are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Comparison of scores of pre- and posttests (n = 15)

	Score (50)					
	Xmin	Xmax	$\bar{x}$	SD	t	p
Pretest	12	46	27.47	10.01	1.76	.0003
Posttest	20	47	39.67	7.63		

Table 2 shows the mean the lowest and the highest scores of the adult learners who took the pretest and posttest, respectively. The posttest mean score was 39.67, the highest posttest score 47, and the lowest posttest score 20. These scores were significantly higher than the pretest mean score 27.47, with the highest pretest score 46, and the lowest pretest score 12. In comparing the pretest and posttest scores, it can be concluded that the posttest mean scores were higher than the pretest mean scores at the statistical significance level (p < .05). This demonstrates that the learners' communicative English learning outcomes were satisfactory as their English ability was seen to have improved significantly by the end of the course.

4.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was used to measure adult learners' satisfaction levels with the English course. Composed of 20 items in total, the questionnaire focused on five categories: 1) teaching competencies, 2) materials and methods, 3) activities, 4) learning facilitation, 5) knowledge and understanding of lessons. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Results from questionnaire (n = 15)

	Teaching Competencies	$\bar{x}$	SD	Meaning
1	Teachers explained all topics clearly.	4.67	1.01	Very satisfied
2	Teachers' language use was easy to understand.	4.47	1.15	Satisfied
3	Teachers created a positive learning environment.	4.80	0.40	Very satisfied
4	Teachers used teaching materials and aids effectively.	4.67	0.47	Very satisfied
	Total	4.65	0.76	Very satisfied
	Teaching Materials and Methods	$\bar{x}$	SD	Meaning
5	Materials and methods satisfied my needs.	4.33	0.70	Satisfied
6	Materials were suitable for real-life communication.	4.60	0.61	Very satisfied
7	Materials were easy to understand and follow.	4.67	0.60	Very satisfied
8	Materials were useful for autonomous learning	4.80	0.54	Very satisfied
	Total	4.60	0.61	Very satisfied
	Activities for Learners	$\bar{x}$	SD	Meaning
9	Activities were not difficult to do.	4.47	0.72	Satisfied
10	Activities helped me learn English by myself.	4.60	0.71	Very satisfied
11	Activities helped me understand how to learn English.	4.53	0.62	Very satisfied
12	Activities gave me English knowledge and skills.	5.00	0.00	Very satisfied
	Total	4.65	0.51	Very satisfied
	Learning Facilitation	$\bar{x}$	SD	Meaning
13	I was satisfied with the academic assistance of teachers.	4.73	0.57	Very satisfied
14	I was satisfied with the training location.	4.60	0.61	Very satisfied
15	I was satisfied with the duration of training.	4.60	0.61	Very satisfied
16	I was satisfied with the learning tools provided.	4.20	1.22	Satisfied
	Total	4.20	0.75	Very satisfied

	Knowledge and Understanding of Lessons	$\bar{x}$	SD	Meaning
17	I gained knowledge of English after training.	4.20	0.83	Satisfied
18	I had simple English learning tips after training.	4.60	0.61	Very satisfied
19	I understood the English lessons I studied in the course.	4.47	0.62	Satisfied
20	I exchanged my English knowledge with my peers.	4.53	0.62	Very satisfied
	Total	4.45	0.67	Satisfied

Table 3 shows the questionnaire focused on 1) teaching competencies, 2) materials and methods, 3) activities, 4) learning facilitation, and 5) knowledge and understanding of lessons. The results revealed that the adult learners were most satisfied with the teaching competencies ($\bar{x}$ = 4.65; SD = 0.76) and activities ($\bar{x}$ = 4.65; SD = 0.51). The materials and methods ($\bar{x}$ = 4.60; SD = 0.61), and knowledge and understanding of lessons ($\bar{x}$ = 4.45; SD = 0.67) were rated as *very satisfied*. The learning facilitation ($\bar{x}$ = 4.20; SD = 0.75) was rated *satisfied*.

The results also indicated that the teaching competencies and activities met the interests and needs of the adult learners. This suggested that the activities both inside and outside the classroom helped them gain familiarity with real-life situations in which English is required. Correspondingly, the environmental familiarity also helped strengthen their knowledge and understanding of lessons provided in the course. Additionally, the training location, suitable training duration, and selected teaching tools satisfied them because they were based on their needs. The analysis suggested that the teaching of adult learners should aim to surround learners with everyday English situations and enable them to apply English knowledge and skills in real life.

4.3 Participant Observation

In the first training week, the adult learners received an English–Thai handbook with five units written based on their needs (see Table 1). Then, they were given a clear introduction to communicative English and assigned to practice English dialogues in the handbook and to practice using their smartphones to find words in the Cambridge Dictionary online. These assignments aimed to create a learning habit and promote autonomous learning. For example, learners were able to find words and imitate the audio pronunciation of words in online dictionaries. They continued doing the assignments until the last training week. To measure the learning progress of the adult learners from beginning to end, participant observation was conducted and divided into three stages, as presented below.

In the first stage, almost all of the adult learners were nervous and unconfident in speaking English with their peers and teachers, because they had little background knowledge of English and they had never experienced speaking English in real life. Moreover, their physical limitations such as age, memory, and nearsightedness were also learning obstacles. However, they were determined to practice English skills both in pairs and groups when they were assigned to pronounce simple words and phrases used in the sample dialogues.

In the second stage, native English speakers were invited to serve as teaching assistants in the course. As a result, most of the adult learners appeared more confident than they were in the first stage. They tried to speak English with the native English speakers. Despite the support of the native speakers, their spoken English was not considered *communicable* because they could not produce complete sentences when speaking with their peers. However, they could pronounce simple words and phrases with their peers without the help of the teachers in charge after three weeks of training, because the handbook provided them with English–Thai translations and transcriptions. They also used body language to support their speaking when they forgot words and phrases to make sentences.

In the third stage, all of the adult learners were confident in speaking English. Some of them could learn simple words and phrases and even guide their peers through the given practice activities (e.g., role-plays, presentations, and conversations). As shown in Figure 1, their communicative English level at this stage was considered *communicable*, as they tried to speak English with the native English speakers both in pairs and groups without the help of the Thai teachers in charge.

Figure 1. Samples of English activities for Thai adult learners

As previously mentioned above, it is reasonable to conclude that teaching adult learners to speak English requires appropriate teaching methods and activities that support their learning, with consideration of the personal limitations of adult learners such as age, education, memory, and nearsightedness. Significantly, the collaboration of native and non-native English speakers along with the use of technology are seen as essential to enhance their learning performance in a positive learning setting.

The main objectives of this study were to measure the learning outcomes and satisfaction levels of Thai adult learners in the community of Doem Bang Nang Buat, Suphan Buri. The results of the study indicated that the learning outcomes of adult learners improved significantly as their posttest mean scores were higher than their pretest mean scores at the statistical significance level of 0.05 (see Table 2). It can be concluded that the adult learners had a positive view of the curriculum implementation and evaluation.

The five-point rating from the questionnaire indicated that all adult learners were satisfied with the teaching competencies ($\bar{x} = 4.65$; SD = 0.76), materials and methods ($\bar{x} = 4.60$; SD = 0.61), activities ($\bar{x} = 4.65$; SD = 0.51), learning facilitation ($\bar{x} = 4.20$; SD = 0.75), and 5) knowledge and understanding of lessons ($\bar{x} = 4.45$; SD = 0.67). A key point is that the components of the course such as objectives, materials, methods, and evaluation have to correspond with the needs, interests, and limitations of adult learners. A similar point is made by Hutchinson and Waters (1987), highlighting the importance of learners' needs as preliminary information for the design of a course.

As the learning progress was monitored through participant observation, most of the adult learners in the first stage were unconfident and worried about making mistakes because they did not have background knowledge and prior experience speaking English. After weeks of training, however, they appeared to show signs of learning progress. For example, they maintained eye contact while practicing speaking English and enjoyed the assigned activities related to their professions throughout the course. As a result, they could all pronounce words and phrases, and some were able to speak simple English at an understandable level. The participant observation results also indicated that they were not only motivated by the activities but also by the engagement of native English speakers in the course.

In view of this, it is important to create a positive learning climate for adult learners by surrounding them with native English speakers when practing English in pairs and groups. Another important observation is that all activities should focus on their needs and interests to ensure that they can apply their knowledge and skills in their professions, as Knowles et al. (2012) state that adult learners are motivated and determined to learn what they need in order to meet their professional requirements.

5. Limitations

This study has potential limitations. First, the Covid-19 pandemic was a serious obstacle to the sample size and research plans, especially in the implementation and evaluation stages. Second, the study only focused on measuring the learning outcomes and satisfaction levels of Thai adult learners in the community of Doem Bang Nang Buat. Thus, it is necessary to anticipate potential challenging situations and make alternative plans. Apart from that, it would be interesting for future research to use other methodological tools such as focus-group

interviews and video recordings with a range of adult learners from different communities.

References

Atabekova, A., Lutskovskaia, L., & Gorbatenko, R. (2021). Developing multiliteracy skills and pragmatic communication awareness of university students learning a foreign language (English) for specific purposes. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, *42*, 1−15. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2021.100956

Bobbitt, F. (1918). *The Curriculum*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Boonteerarak, P. (2021). The Development of a Communicative English Training Curriculum for Thai Counter Clerks in Convenience Stores. *LEARN Journal*, *14*(2), 155−142.

Brookfield, S. (1995). *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*. San-Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Brown, D. F. (2006). It's the curriculum, stupid: There's something wrong with it. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *87*(10), 777−783. https://doi.org/10.1177/003172170608701014

Brown, J. D. (1995). *The elements of language curriculum: A systematic approach to program development*. Boston: MA Heinle & Heinle.

Caswell, H. L., & Campbell, D. S. (1935). *Curriculum development*. New York: American Books.

Chanpradit, T. (2022). English Curriculum Development Process of the Cultural Communication Course for Elderly People: A Case Study of the Community of Doem Bang Nang Buat, Suphan Buri. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Thonburi University*, *16*(1), 25−33.

Chanpradit, T., Sriruk, C., & Srinon, U. (2021). Needs of English for Elderly People in Doem Bang Nang Buat, Suphan Buri. *Journal of Graduate Studies Valaya Alongkorn Rajabhat University*, *15*(3), 61−74.

Cranton, P. (2000). Individual differences and transformative learning. In J. Mezirow & Associates (Eds.), *Learning as transformation* (pp. 181−204). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Dewey, J. (1902). *The child and the curriculum*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Doll, R. (1992). *Curriculum Improvement: Decision Making and Process* (8th ed.) Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Dudley-Evans, T., & St. John, M. (1998). *Developments in English for Specific Purposes: A multi-disciplinary approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gay, G. (2004). *Curriculum theory and multicultural education*. Handbook of research on multicultural education. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Harmer, J. (2007). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. Harlow: Longman.

Houle, C. (1996). *The design of education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Hutchinson, T., & Waters, A. (1987). *English for Specific Purposes: A Learner-Centered Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511733031

Institute for Population and Social Research Mahidol University. (2017). *Population ageing*. Retrieved from https://ipsr.mahidol.ac.th/ipsrbeta/th/ResearchClusters.aspx?ArticleId=46

Kachru, B. B. (1985). Standards, codification and sociolinguistic realism: The English language in the outer circle. In R. Quirk & H. G. Widdowson (Eds.), *English in the world: Teaching and learning the language and literatures* (pp. 11−30). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kaewpet, C. (2009). Communication needs of Thai civil engineering students. *English for Specific Purposes*, *28*(4), 266−278. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2009.05.002

King, P. M. (2000). Learning to Make Reflective Judgments. *Wiley Online Library*, *82*, 15−26. https://doi.org/10.1002/tl.8202

Knowles, M. S. (1975). *Self-directed learning*. New York: Association Press.

Knowles, M. S. (1984). *Andragogy in Action. Applying Modern Principles of Adult Education*. San Francisco,

CA: Jossey Bass.

Knowles, M. S., Holton, E. F., & Swanson, R. A. (2012). *The adult learner: The definitive classic in adult education and human resource development* (7th ed.). Routledge: New York. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780080964249

Kress, G. (2003). *Literacy in the New Media Age*. London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203299234

Merriam, S. B. (2001). Andragogy and self-directed learning: Pillars of adult learning theory. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, *89*, 3−14. https://doi.org/10.1002/ace.3

Ministry of Tourism and Sports. (2020). *Tourism in Thailand: Annual Statistics 2017−2020*. Retrieved from http://www.mots.go.th/more_news_new.php?cid=414

Myers, D. (1992). *The pursuit of happiness: Discovering the pathway to fulfillment, well-being, and enduring personal joy* (pp. 23−26). New York, NY: Avon Books.

Oanh, D. T. H. (2007). Meeting Students' Needs in Two EAP Programmes in Vietnam and New Zealand: A Comparative Study. *RELC Journal*, *38*(3), 324−349.

Ornstein, A., & Hunkins, F. (2009). Curriculum Design. In *Curriculum: Foundations, Principles and Issues* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson/Allyn and Bacon.

Oxford, R. L., & Ehrman, M. (1993). Second language research on individual differences. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, *13*, 188−205. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190500002464

Palsa, L., & Mertala, P. (2020). *Disciplinary contextualisation of transversal competence in Finnish local curricula: The case of multiliteracy, mathematics, and social studies*. https://doi.org/10.1080/20004508.2020.1855827

Ragan, W. B. (1960). *Modern elementary curriculum* (Rev. ed.). New York: Henry Holt.

Rea-Dickins, P., & Germaine, K. (1993). *Evaluation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rea-Dickins, P., & Jermaine, K. (1992). *Evaluation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rugg, H. (1927). *The Foundations of Curriculum-Making: Twenty-Sixth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*. Bloomington, IL: Public School Publishing.

Sahatsathatsana, S. (2018). The Development of Model for Creating an English handbook for Improving Thai Adults' Communicative English through the Use of Karaoke Technique. *Journal of Education Mahasarakham University*, *12*(4), 150−168.

Saylor, J. G., Alexander, W. M., & Lewis, A. J. (1981). *Curriculum planning for better teaching and learning* (4th ed.). New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.

Schleppegrell, M. J. (2004). *The language of schooling: A functional linguistics perspective*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410610317

Sherow, S (2006). *Adult Teaching & Learning Strategies for Tutors: PALiteracy Corps Theory to Practice*. Retrieved from http://www.ed.psu.edu/isal/PDFs/Lit_Corps_Theory_to_Practice.pdf

Stenhouse, L. (1975). *An introduction to curriculum research and development*. London: Heinemann.

Suwanarak, K. (2015). Learning English as Thai adult learners: An insight into experience in using learning strategies. *English Language Teaching*, *8*(12), 144−157. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v8n12p144

Taba, H. (1962). *Curriculum development theory and practice*. New York Harcourt: Brace & World.

Taylor, E. (1998). *The theory and practice of transformative learning: A critical review*. Columbus, OH: Center on Education and Training for Employment

Tourism Authority of Thailand. (2020). *International Tourist Arrivals to Thailand*. Retrieved from https://www.mots.go.th/more_news_new.php?cid=593

Tyler, R. W. (1949). *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction*. Chicago: The University of Chicago press.

Walvoord, B. E. F. (2004). *Assessment clear and simple: A practical guide for institutions, departments, and general education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

West, R. (1997). Needs Analysis: State of the Art. In R. Howard & G. Brown (Eds.), *Teacher Education for LSP* (pp. 68−79). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Wharton, G. (2000). Language Learning Strategy Use of Bilingual Foreign Language Learners in Singapore.

Language Learning, *50*, 203−243. https://doi.org/10.1111/0023-8333.00117

White, R. V. (1988). *The ELT Curriculum Design, Innovation and Management*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Wiles, J. W., & Bondi, J. C. (2011). *Curriculum development: A guide to practice* (9th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Copyrights