

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to establish a theory-based process for the improvement of the English oral competency of Thai tourism industry students and determine how far practical needs superseded theoretical demands. It was done firstly, by examining and blending genre and ESP theories in order to establish a genre-based ESP oral English teaching method, and secondly, identifying the specific features of the most common genres in the target language used by Thai tourist guides by means of genre analysis. Thirdly, the perceptions of the personnel managers of tour agencies and tourists towards the oral competency of Thai tour guides were explored before reaching the final stage of developing and teaching the course for teaching English for tour guides in Rajabhat Universities.

The first step in the course design process was to adopt a genre-based ESP teaching method, which included four stages: background to the genre, modeling the genre, construction of the genre, and assessment. Then field data of selected tour guide commentaries were identified. The results revealed four essential spoken genres, namely itinerary, description, narrative and procedure. The organization and features of these genres were utilized to implement a genre-based approach in the semester program for "English for Tour Guides" at Pibulsongkram Rajabhat University. In addition, a more general picture of the spoken competency of Thai tour guides was obtained from two sources: tourists from different countries and personnel managers of tourism agencies, and was introduced in the course. The thirty-four students, who participated in this study, were third-year tourism industry students.

At the end of the training course, student performances were assessed in two ways. Results from both these testing processes and student feedback to the course revealed that this tourist training course could improve the organization and language features of student commentaries and bring about some changes to overall competence.

Positive attitudes towards the course and its implementation were also produced. At the same time, it is evident that greater concessions should be made in the course to modifying the theoretical basis in the light of student needs for greater assistance with grammar and pronunciation. It is recommended that the adaptation of genre-based teaching and the learning cycle for this ESP course be employed by other teachers in similar situations.