



Problems in the Use of English of Tourist Police in Khon Kaen Province

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Abstract

The purposes of this research were to study the English language problems of tourist police in Khon Kaen Province, and to find guidelines to the solutions of such problems. It was the quantitative and qualitative research. The target group was all 198 tourist police under the Sub-Division 3 of Tourist Police Division in Khon Kaen. The research instruments consisted of a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. Fifty-eight percent of the tourist police returned the questionnaire. Six of their representatives selected by them and three experts in English for tourism were interviewed by the researchers. The research results revealed that the tourist police had problems in giving information on transportation (99.13%), giving directions (98.20%), answering the telephone (96.50%): applying the listening and speaking skills (95.60%), greetings, saying goodbye, and offering help (86.08%). For solutions to the problems, the representatives of tourist police and the experts suggested that there should be an effective text on English for tourist police (based on the problems they have had), and there should be more English training programs for them.

Keywords: Tourist police, problems in the use of English

Introduction:

English is very important and necessary in Thai society nowadays. It plays an important role in all organizations that use English to communicate with foreigners such as tourism organizations, which are important to the national economy. (Skyscanner News, 2016).

Khon Kaen is one of the most visited provinces in the Northeast. It is the third largest city (in terms of population) in the Northeast of Thailand. It could attract many foreign tourists because there are quite a few interesting and fascinating tourist attractions: historical and natural sites. (Wikipedia.org, 2016).

Historical sites in Khon Kaen include four royal temples: Wat Nong Waeng, the most famous temple in Khon Kaen City with the highlight of its fascinating and impressive nine – floor pagoda showing the seven-headed Naga,

glass walls surrounded by the Dvaravati period arts, and Indochina arts; Wat Srichan, an ancient temple that has been established for a long time in Khon Kaen city; Wat Pa Saeng Arun featuring the exquisite beauty of murals in Mudmee silk patterns and local architecture; Wat That with a very beautiful pagoda housing the relic of the Lord Buddha, not to mention its interesting Buddhism learning center on Sunday. (Wikipedia.org, 2016).

Besides the four royal temples, some other historical sites worth visited are Hong Moon Mang Muaeng, a museum exhibiting Khon Kaen antiques, traditional ways of life; attractive Khon Kaen City Pillar; Phrathat Kham Kaen with a sanctuary of Khon Kaen province; Arts and Cultural Gallery at Khon Kaen University; and Khon Kaen National Museum.

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The natural sites that most tourists enjoy visiting are Kaen Nakorn Lake with its beautiful lake view, King Cobra Village where visitors can watch boxing between a man and a king cobra, Phu Wiang Dinosaur Museum, and Khon Kaen University Science Park.

In 2017 and 2018, 156,136 foreign tourists visited Khon Kaen. (Tourism Statistics in Khon Kaen, 2018). When there are foreign tourists visiting Khon Kaen, it is the tourist police's duty to take care of them or help them when they do need help. Needless to say, the tourist police have to use English in order to communicate with them. However, from an interview with Pol. Lt. Col. Chaiwirat Chatsantikul, the researchers learned that the tourist police in Khon Kaen could not communicate well in English. They could not give the foreign tourists information about tourist attractions when they asked where they should visit or help them with their needs for the police themselves lacked communicative skills in English. (Interview with Pol. Lt. Col. Chaiwirat Chatsantikul August 30, 2018). Thus, the researchers determined to find out exactly what their problems were and what solutions could be done to help solve the tourist police's problems.

Literature Review:

Aldohon (2014) conducted a research study on "English for Specific Purposes (ESP) for Jordanian Tourist Police in Their Workplace: Needs and Problems". This study aimed at examining the needs, functions and problems of 46 tourists' police serving in different workplaces in Jordan. The results revealed that speaking and listening were the most important skills, followed by reading and writing. They also showed that speaking too fast in English by foreign tourists was the most serious problem for Jordanian tourist police. The other difficulties they encountered included using inappropriate English in speaking, lexis shortage and inability to use grammar for writing.

Phiriyasin (2014) conducted a survey research on the "Needs and Problems in English listening and Speaking of Tourist Police Officers at Suvarnabhumi Airport" and reported that English language needs of local organizations were greeting, welcoming visitors, and giving the information on tourist attractions.

Siwayingsuwan (2015) studied "Needs and Problems in English Listening and Speaking Skills of Tourist Police Officers at Suwannapumi Airport" They had a lot of trouble with the use of English use both in listening and in speaking skills. In terms of listening skills. Their incapability of translating words or conversations as well as the inability to remember the entire information were the major factors causing communication problems. Concerning speaking skills, they were confronted with difficulties in English pronunciation, followed by word stress and speaking English in complete sentences.

Qaddomi (2017) did a research study entitled "A Study of Tourist Police Translation Problems, Translation Needs and Cognitive Fitness". The findings revealed that translation problems due to the linguistic competence were ranked as high. In addition, non-linguistic translation problems were moderate. Their cognitive fitness skills that might enable them to deal with daily events were moderate. The study also showed that translation needs from the source language into English and vice versa were important as perceived by tourist police officers.

Most research studies revealed that the tourist police had problem communicating in English with Foreign tourist, especially in listening and speaking skills.

Purposes of the Study:

The purposes of this study were:

3.1 To study the English language problems of tourist police in Khon Kaen Province, and

3.2 To find guidelines to the solutions of problems



Conceptual Framework:

The conceptual framework of this study were as follows:

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables
1. Greetings, Saying goodbye, and offering help 2. Giving information on different aspects: 3. Giving directions 4. Answering the telephone 5. Applying listening and speaking skills	1. Problem in the use of English of tourist police. 2. Guidelines to the solutions of problems. 3. Information for training and writing textbooks for the tourist police.

Research Methods:

1. The Target Group

The target group was 198 the tourist police in Khon Kaen Province.

2. Research Instrument

The researchers used the mixed method of qualitative and quantitative research as follows:

2.1 For the quantitative phase, a set of five – scale questionnaire was use to collect the data. The questionnaire was

2.1.1 Part 1: Personal Information

This part of information was about each individual respondent’s personal descriptions in terms of sex, age, position, and educational qualifications.

2.1.2 Part 2: Problems in the

Use of English

This part of information was about problems in the use of English in terms of greeting and offering help, giving information on different aspects, giving directions, answering the phone, and listening and speaking skills.

2.1.3 Part 3: Open – ended

Questions

The questions were about their problems and needs in the use of English

2.2 For the qualitative phase, the researchers used a semi - structured interview with six tourist police and expert in English for tourism.

The researchers asked to specify what problems of tourist police were and suggestions to help solve the problems.

As for the interview with the

three experts in English for tourism, the researchers ask them their opinions on the English tourist police should know so as to communicate well with foreign tourists.

Data Collecting:

1. The researchers requested a letter of from the College of Asian Scholars to the office of Khon Kaen Tourist Police asking for the tourist police’s cooperation to work on the questionnaires. The researchers left the questionnaires with them and returned to pick them up a week later.

2. The researchers made an appointment for a semi – structured interview with six tourist police by permission from their department head. The researchers interviewed them on the day to pick up questionnaires.

3. The researchers made an appointment for a semi – structured interview with the three experts according to each individual convenience.

4. Check the accuracy of the returned questionnaires before data analysis.

Data Analysis:

1. For the quantitative data, the researchers checked the completeness of each questionnaire before the analysis of the data. Descriptive statistics was applied to analyze the data for percentage, mean, and standard deviation.



2. In analyzing the qualitative data, the researchers followed these steps:

- 1) Analyzing all answers and suggestions
- 2) Classifying the topics and information
- 3) Summarizing concepts and themes

of the information classified

- 4) Presenting all in descriptive writing

The Research Results:

1. **The research results revealed that** the tourist police had many problems about the use of English to communicate with foreign tourists. transportations (99.13%); giving directions (98.20%); answering the telephone (96.50%); applying the listening and speaking skills (95.60%); greetings, saying goodbye, and offering help (86.08%).

2. **For solutions to the problems,** the representatives of tourist police and the experts suggested that there should be an effective text on English for tourist police (based on the problems they have had), and there should be more English training programs for them.

The six tourist police interviewed specified that the problems of tourist police were that they were nervous when they had to talk to foreign tourists. They could not think of the formal English vocabulary when they had to speak. They could not understand what the tourists said or asked. They were unable to communicate in English. For the solutions to such problems, they said they would like to participate in more English training programs.

3. **The three experts recommended that** tourist police should be very good at all the language skill: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They should be able to give important information about the city, its tourist attractions and their regulations.

They should also be able to help foreign tourists according to their need e.g. taking them or giving them directions to different places.

Research Discussion:

The tourist police needs to use English in providing information about telling the tourist attractions, food, and rules of visiting places were the highest.

The results of this study correspond to the results of “English for Specific Purposes (ESP) for Jordanian Tourist Police in Their Workplace: Needs and Problems”. found that speaking and listening are the most important skills, followed by reading and writing, general discussion, answering questions, and solving service problems. The findings also show that speaking relatively fast. English speaking foreign tourists is the most important problem for the Jordanian tourist police. Other problems found include inappropriate use of English in speaking. Unable to use grammar in writing correctly. Experiencing problems with English language skills, especially listening, conversation, and reading.

Some tourist police that responded to open-ended questionnaires have listening problems and speaking quite comprehensively and did not compile sentences in English according to grammar and did not know some of the vocabulary needed to use tourist services.

The problems of tourist police in Khon Kaen in terms of listening and speaking skills correspond to those of Aldohon’s research (2014), Phiriyasin (2014), Siwayingsuwan (2015), and Qaddomi (2017). Their incapacibilities to understand the foreign tourists speaking in English are in line with those mentioned in Siwayingsuwan research result in (2015).

The solutions suggested by the six representatives of tourist police and the experts in English for Tourism are very valuable guidelines for English training program providers to prepare what the trainees should learn for better communication.



Recommendations

1. These research results should be seriously implemented by relevant work units if they want their workers to be able to communicate in English with foreigners.

2. For further research problems in the use of English of workers in other organizations should be investigate.

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