

## DEVELOPMENT OF A MODEL FOR EFFECTIVE BUSINESS ENGLISH CURRICULUM IN AN INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY IN THAILAND

Hathaichanok Komintarachat<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** The purpose of this study was to develop a model for effective Business English curriculum in Thailand. This research focuses on Business English curriculum of Assumption University. The subjects of the research includes BE graduates of Assumption University batch thirty-eight, graduate users of BE graduates in Thai employment market, and the Commission of Higher Education's five domains of learning from the Thailand Qualifications Framework for Thailand's higher education. This research used Business English curriculum of Assumption University as major data source since it is the biggest producer of Business English graduates in Thailand employment market. The data was collected by means of questionnaires and interviews which were reviewed by three Business English experts for content validity and reliability. The data collected from the questionnaires was descriptive statistically analyzed by Mean and Standard Deviation method. The mean from the analysis indicated the average level of the respondents' satisfactions towards the current BE curriculum. Standard deviation is used as a measure for analyzing variation or dispersion of the scores around the mean. Content analysis was employed to analyze the interview data. Finally, the results was thoroughly interpreted and analyzed by employing the method of content analysis to reveal the essential elements for developing an effective model for BE curriculum based upon the satisfaction of BE graduates and BE graduate users, the needs of BE graduates and BE graduate users, and TQF's five domains. The finding revealed that the graduates rated the high level in all four Business English effectiveness criteria. The criteria which received the highest effectiveness is 'Degree of learning' (Mean = 3.87), followed by 'Usefulness of Skills' (Mean = 3.76), 'Continuance' (Mean = 3.73), and 'Relevance' (Mean = 3.66), respectively. In addition, the graduate users are highly satisfied with graduates' ability and core character traits with reference to the TQF's five domains of learning (Mean = 4.29, SD = 0.70).

**Keywords:** Content analysis, Effective Business English Curriculum, Assumption University

### Background

The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) is an international organization founded by countries in South East Asian to promote cultural, politics, and economic development. ASEAN was officially created

in 1967 with the mutual agreement of the Bangkok Declaration. Since then, ASEAN has played an important role in its member nations culturally, politically and, most importantly, economically. ASEAN has brought many major changes to Asia, and the biggest change so far is the AEC. In 2015, AEC (ASEAN Economic Community) which is formed by ten countries in ASEAN will be established in order to fulfill the shared visions of the association. At the 12<sup>th</sup> ASEAN summit, the key characteristics of AEC have been envisaged as follows: a) a single market and production base, b) a highly competitive economic region, c) a region of equitable economic development, and d) a region fully integrated into the global economy.

In addition to the key characteristics of AEC, the ASEAN leaders have also agreed upon AEC areas of cooperation which required not only governments to cooperate but also other sectors, especially, private sectors to cooperate as well. These areas of cooperation include human resources development and capacity building; recognition of professional qualifications; closer consultation on macroeconomic and financial policies; trade financing measures; enhanced infrastructure and communications connectivity; development of electronic transactions through e-ASEAN; integrating industries across the region to promote regional sourcing, and enhancing private sector involvement.

With the key characteristics and areas of cooperation, it is important to all sectors to prepare for this AEC transformation which will allow free flow of goods, services, and skilled workforce. The transformation will bring the biggest change ever to the member nations especially business sectors. There will certainly create a need for skilled labor with international standards. Thus, to produce workforce to cater this transformation, an effective curriculum must be developed in higher educational institutions.

To be more specific, the institutions that provide programs in business. Business English (BE) curriculum in Thailand have long been a major source for workforce in Thailand, but with the arrival AEC, the curriculums need to raise their standards to an international level to ensure that the graduates' qualifications meet the needs of graduate users both in Thailand and other ASEAN countries. BE curriculum incorporates English communicative skills and business competency. Students of Arts majoring in Business English should be equipped with knowledge and competency essential for Arts and Humanity. They also have the opportunities to choose from various aspects of business, or any other languages as their minor. The integration of language and business skills can offer wider prospects for the future career and higher education. The career opportunity for graduates of BE includes business entrepreneurs, airlines and

<sup>1</sup> Ph.D. Candidate in Educational Leadership, Graduate School of Education, Assumption University, Thailand