

# **The Foresight of English for Community-Based Tourism (CBT): A Case Study in Nam Nao District, Phetchabun Province, Thailand**

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## **Abstract**

This study aims to develop an appropriate foresight model of English for community-based tourism (CBT) in Phetchabun province. Seventeen participants were selected by purposive sampling method. The majority of them have been active with CBT for more than three years and have made important contributions to its evolution. The instruments used in this study were semi-structured interviews, document analysis, participant observation, and focus group discussion based on the ethnographically-informed method. The data were analyzed by content analysis and thematic analysis. There are two main findings on the role of English for CBT in the community and the appropriate foresight model of English for CBT in Phetchabun province. Regarding the role of English used by local entrepreneurs in the community was found that the English language becomes a lingua franca between CBT entrepreneurs and international visitors. Most entrepreneurs have a strategy for communication if they do not understand each other for example, using body language and Google Translate. In terms of the foresight model, the results reveal the

following three scenarios. Firstly, “Driven Machinery” is compared to the need for English proficiency of CBT entrepreneurs. *Second*, “CBT Market” is implied as English for public relations in CBT. Finally, the “Community Learning Hub” is referred to the potential for CBT entrepreneurs in using English to communicate by utilizing the capacity of community members to support the community as well as develop a learning culture and autonomous learning, particularly in English language skills.

**Keywords:** foresight, English for tourism, community-based tourism

## Introduction

Foresight is the ability to look into the future, predict what will happen, and provide an explanation for that prediction so that the future can be better prepared for or constructed. Many problems, both public and private, are being posed nowadays with the help of the idea of foresight (Sukumal, Lincharoen & Panawong, 2018; Sukjaroen, 2019; Anupunpisit et al, 2016; Boonyued, Chaisena & Liengjindathaworn, 2016). The advantages of foresight can enable policymakers at the highest levels to establish a strategy or set of guidelines for enhancing English proficiency concurrently with the expansion of increasingly popular tourist destinations, for example, the study of Sukumal et al. (2018) investigate the preferred scenarios based on Scenario Logic for Mahachulalongkorn Rajavidyalaya University in 2023 with twenty-two participants and five experts: current and former administrators, members, students, alumni, and their staff; an education expert revealed the driving forces, the desirable scenario, and the proposed policies for the university. In addition, Anupunpisit et al. (2016) found that the future of professional

nurses upon entry into the ASEAN Economic Community should consist of individuals who are skilled in nursing theory and practice, as well as those who can communicate in multiple languages and use media technology to effectively manage the quality of the science being provided.

Therefore, it is evident that foresight can be applied to potential future plans in order to deal with future changes and uncertainties. A scenario forecast is a creative idea that focuses on a plausible that is neither expected nor desired and can be demonstrated through the use of a forecast that paints a picture of the future. Understanding the interaction of several factors that drive us into the future and equipping us to deal with changes and uncertainty is essential, as is understanding the direction of events or a continuous phenomenon (Popper, 2008).

However, the foresight of requirements for English in tourism contexts has not yet emerged although English plays a significant role and is needed for tourism entrepreneurs including in Phetchabun province. Several studies were done on the needs analysis of English for tourism in Phetchabun, Thailand in order to explore the means to develop English for CBT entrepreneurs, for instance, Meunchong (2022) investigated the importance of English language learning media design for CBT. While Am-thong (2021) created English materials to promote tourism in Ban Wang Rong village, Lomsak district, Phetchabun Province. However, it is only a short-term growth plan, especially in the province of Phetchabun, that still does not show tangible development results and is negatively impacting the English-learning atmosphere in a sustainable way. That means needs analysis by itself may be insufficient and unable to handle the actual needs of CBT entrepreneurs.

Thus, it is a challenge for policymakers, developers, or even academics in the area to create an educational atmosphere for English in tourism and to use English as a communication tool for diverse tourist-related purposes.

The foresight concept (National Innovation Agency, 2019, online) is another method to develop entrepreneur potential and community tourism stakeholders. Foresight is the practice of seeing into the future, anticipating what will occur, and explaining it in order to better prepare for or create a better future.

In this study, the researcher seeks to construct and analyze suitable future scenarios of English for CBT in Phetchabun, Thailand. The scenario presented in this study can be utilized to create and analyze a worldwide tourism development plan and to assist Thailand's 20-Year National Strategy Plan (2018-2037) and the Ministry of Tourism & Sport Plan. Furthermore, regarding the academic domain, it will support the instruction and study of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in tourism branches, which has never been done in this research site before. Additionally, the study corresponds with Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), with the objective of facilitating employment and entrepreneurship for people with technical and vocational skills (United Nations, 2019). Hence, both hard and soft skills must be cultivated, not only in the English language but also in other languages, in order to communicate with international tourists about their identity. In addition, the selected research sites are ready for construction and have already been created as community enterprises.

## **Objective**

The objective of this study aims to develop an appropriate foresight model of English for community-based tourism in Phetchabun province.

## **Methodology**

In this study, seventeen informants were split up into two separate groups. The first category consisted of decision-makers and supporters. They were the Vice-Governor of Phetchabun, the Officers of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports in Phetchabun, and the Chief Executive of the SAO in Nam Nao District. The second group consisted of CBT entrepreneurs who started out in the homestay community in Nam Nao District. They were selected by purposive sampling. The majority of them had been associated with CBT for more than three years and had played a significant role in the development of CBT. The informant groups and sampling strategies were described below.

**Table 1***Informant groups and sampling strategies*

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Sampling Strategies</b>	<b>Informants</b>	<b>Numbers</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
Policymakers/ Supporters	Purposive Sampling	Phetchabun Vice- Governor	1	1	<b>9</b>
		The Officers of Phetchabun Ministry of Tourism and Sports	4	4	
		Chief Executive of the SAO in Nam Nao District	4	4	
CBT stakeholders	Purposive Sampling	CBT Entrepreneurs from homestay group	8	8	<b>8</b>
<b>Total</b>					<b>17</b>

## **Research instruments**

In this study semi-structured interviews, document analysis, participant observation, and focus group discussion (Creswell, 2009) were employed for data collection as follows:

1. Semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and participant observation were used for deep horizon scanning in order to identify the tourism context in Nam Nao District and the driving force of English for CBT in Phetchabun province that is possible to affect dynamic or higher change as well as affect the future. The interview questions regarding the role of English for community-based tourism and English skill development for CBT in the future.

2. Focus group discussion was employed for brainstorming and building as well as analyzing future scenarios. The topics for focus group discussion were English language development that should be determined in the future and what comes after the COVID-19 situation for CBT stakeholders in Phetchabun province as well as the role of English for CBT in order to explore the appropriate foresight model of English for CBT.

## **Data collection**

To examine and design the future of English for CBT in Phetchabun, Thailand in the short term (3-5 years) after the COVID-19 crisis, the researcher adopted the toolkits of foresight which were designed by the National Innovation Agency (2019) by using semi-structured interviews, document analysis, participant observation, and focus group discussion which were illustrated as follows:

1. Entering the research site for participatory observation and field notes based on an ethnographically-informed method in order to explore general contexts

of tourism in Nam Nao District. Moreover, a document study was employed to confirm the data from observation and interviews.

2. Contact the policymakers for an interview in terms of the development plan of CBT in Nam Nao District as well as the driving force of English for CBT in Phetchabun province that is possible to affect dynamic or higher change as well as affect the future.

3. Focus group discussion was employed for brainstorming and building as well as analyzing future scenarios by using nine driving force cards concerning CBT with ten CBT entrepreneurs in Nam Nao District with the topics of English language development that should be determined in the future and what comes after COVID-19. Moreover, the role of English and the appropriate foresight model of English for CBT as well as the pictures of tourism entrepreneurs' potential for using English in Phetchabun, Thailand were explored.

### **Data analysis**

1. The data from the document study and participatory observation were analyzed by content analysis. The objective of content analysis is to organize and extract meaning from acquired material in order to develop plausible conclusions (Bengtsson, 2016).

2. The data from interviews and focus group discussions were analyzed by thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In qualitative data, thematic analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes. It is the first qualitative method that should be learned because it imparts fundamental skills that can be applied to many other types of analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

## Results

### 1. General contexts and the role of tourism in Nam Nao District.

According to the document study, participatory observation, and field notes based on an ethnographically-informed study, a number of national resources, such as waterfalls, a canyon, archosaur footprints cliff, and Loei Dun potholes, are exploitable as tourist attractions, and the community is supported by a number of government sectors to develop the tourist sites. The management of tourism in the community continues to be a problem for CBT entrepreneurs, especially in terms of the development of tour itineraries and public relations. Unfortunately, only one homestay can afford to offer tourists a daylong excursion in Thailand. The other homestays can merely recommend interesting tourist destinations.

### Figure 1

*One-Day Trip of CBT in Nam Nao*



**Source:** Baan Rai San Sook Homestay.

Considering the function of English utilized by local entrepreneurs in the community, English is used as a lingua franca for communication between CBT entrepreneurs and international visitors in Nam Nao district for describing locations and providing information about accommodations. Foreigners find Archosaur Footprints Cliff, waterfalls, and canyons to be the most alluring tourist attractions due to the promotion of geo-tourism's expansion. In addition, in accordance with the policymakers' perspective on the importance of English for tourist development, it was acknowledged that English is essential in tourism contexts since it will be a selling point in the province. They recommended the formation of a tourism association to promote tourist sites in more than two or three languages, such as Japanese, Russian, and Chinese. Regarding the English language development of CBT entrepreneurs, there should be no compulsion; rather, the student should be able to choose what they wish to study based on their actual needs.

Extract 1

"I believe that English and other languages are equally vital. The English-learning activities for CBT entrepreneurs should not be coercive, but rather based on their actual needs."

(Policymaker, in-depth interview)

The aforementioned interview extract highlights the significance of English in the tourism sector, which should be created according to the authentic demands of CBT entrepreneurs.

## **2. A foresight Model of English for CBT in Phetchabun province.**

The results of a focus group discussion addressing future scenario development along with the application of nine driving force cards relevant to CBT

reveal three key scenarios of English for CBT in the province of Phetchabun: driven machinery, CBT market, and community learning hub.

### 1. “Driven Machinery”

The metaphor of driven machinery was created by the researcher, which compared it to the need for English proficiency of CBT entrepreneurs. The driving force behind this mission will be the planning of all tourism-related sectors to meet the demands of the community. Specifically, in regards to providing English to entrepreneurs who will use it to communicate with international tourists in order to increase the number of foreign tourists which can generate extra income for the community.

Furthermore, the “Driven Machinery” illustrates English for CBT development in terms of contents and learning materials, most CBT entrepreneurs expressed the interesting transformative patterns of English training for tourism. They do not require short-term learning, on the other hand, they would like sustainable learning along with learning through technology or digital platforms, both online and offline, namely, websites or mobile applications (apps) as well as create an English learning culture in the community.

#### Extract 2

“We would like to improve our English skills, but we are not interested in short-term training. We would like self-directed learning, whether online or offline, to be sustainable.”

(Homestay group members, focus group discussion)

This extract illustrates the driving force that CBT entrepreneurs would like governments to consider while determining the most suitable means to increase English language abilities.

## 2. “CBT Market”

Regarding “CBT Market”, the researcher implies it as English for public relations in CBT. The market in CBT contexts is not only promoting products but also promoting every element of CBT, particularly in accommodation, tourist attractions, traditional food and products, festivals and beliefs, and transportation endeavors that should be expressed in two or more languages, such as Thai, English, Chinese, Russian, etc. Apart from Facebook pages, promoting CBT should expand the channel for CBT advertising to international visitors in two or three languages, for instance, on signposts, and in a brochure. Additionally, having a QR Code with Thai and foreign languages as well as a package tour will be another means of promoting CBT globally.

### Extract 3

"If there are tourists staying in our homestays, we will take them on tours of local attractions." But, we would like to design a bilingual (Thai-English) package trip that includes information on tourist destinations, accommodation, transportation, and a price list."

(Homestay group members, focus group discussion)

This extract indicates that marketing is one of the tourist sector's components that should be pushed, particularly in community-based tourism.

## 3. “Community Learning Hub”.

The researcher interprets the "Community Learning Hub" as the potential of CBT entrepreneurs in using English to communicate by utilizing the capacity of community members to support the community as well as develop a learning culture and autonomous learning, particularly in English language skills. The English competence of CBT entrepreneurs in the near future is the key variable

in using English for communication with foreigners as local tour guides who have to be the children and CBT stakeholders who would like to be trained. They need to find a tour guide club in the community in order to improve their language skills to a greater level of fluency. Entrepreneurs need to employ the English language for communication regarding listening and speaking skills as well as learn to apply technology to assist themselves while they are learning.

#### Extract 4

“We think that the community should establish a tour guide club for teenagers and anyone interested in tour guide training.”

(Homestay group members, focus group discussion)

This extract demonstrates the potential of the community's residents by demonstrating how training and transforming the area into a learning center can assist people to improve their English proficiency over time.

## Discussion

Nam Nao District is characterized by its unique natural resources and has developed into a natural tourism and geo-tourism destination that may draw Thai and foreign tourists nowadays. The government and commercial sectors support the tourism development of this area. The research on the foresight of English for CBT provides the following noteworthy findings:

1. The role of English used by local entrepreneurs in the community has a status as a lingua franca among CBT entrepreneurs and international visitors. Most entrepreneurs have a strategy for communication if they do not understand each other for example, using body language and Google Translate. The findings could be related to Kirkpatrick (2010) who claimed that phonological, lexicogrammatically,

grammatical, and pragmatic norms as well as communicative characteristics have made up linguistic features. These linguistic characteristics enable effective communication and indicate a speaker's proficiency in English as a universal understanding. Similarly, from Seidlhofer's (2011) point of view, ELF is the process of language functions that are adapted and altered to suit the situations of its use. Moreover, It is consistent with Jaroensak & Saraceni (2019) that there have been emerging forms of ELF in respect to phonological and lexicogrammatical features regarding tourism encounters in Thailand and it was found that ELF forms in tourism contexts typically vary from other contexts of ELF use. The findings of this study rely on the concept that the communicative practices of ELF are context-bound communication.

2. A foresight Model of English for CBT in Phetchabun province demonstrates three main future scenarios which consist of driven machinery, a CBT market, and a community learning hub. Firstly, the "Driving Machinery" is likened to CBT entrepreneurs' demand for English proficiency. This mission will be driven by the planning of all tourism-related industries to suit the needs of the community. Secondly, "CBT Market" is the English term for public relations in CBT. The market in CBT contexts should be promoted all elements of CBT through technology, for example, package tours, signposts, Facebook pages, and QR codes. Finally, the "Community Learning Hub" is comparable to the potential of CBT entrepreneurs in communicating in English by harnessing the capacity of community members to help the community and establish a learning culture and independent learning, especially in English language skills. In the near future, the English proficiency of CBT entrepreneurs will be the determining factor in using English for communication with foreigners as local tour guides who must be children and CBT stakeholders who wish

to be taught. In order to increase their language skills to a higher degree of fluency, they must start a tour guide club in their neighborhood. Entrepreneurs must use the English language for communication in terms of listening and speaking abilities, as well as learn how to use technology to assist them in their studies. The finding is consistent with Anupunpisit et al. (2016), who forecasted the number of Thai nurses following the founding of the ASEAN Economic Community, the outcome mirrored their findings. It was determined that, upon entry into the ASEAN Economic Community, the future of professional nurses should consist of individuals who are skilled in nursing theory and practice and who are able to communicate in multiple languages while effectively utilizing media technology to manage the quality of the science being provided. Moreover, it is also consistent with Thailand's 20-Year National Strategy (2018-2037) in terms of competitiveness enhancement which focus on the diversity creation of tourism which is one of the main issues in this strategic plan. The plan accentuates the world tourism destination that attracts all tourists from around the world as well as increasing the proportion of higher quality tourists. This issue comprises cultural and creative tourism, business tourism, wellness tourism, cruise tourism, and regional tourism.

### **Recommendation**

The findings can be used as a guide for policymakers to construct a strategy for human potential development in the context of tourism. Concerning the implementation of English for Specific Purposes in the field of English for Tourism, English teachers in higher education can use these findings as a guide for designing the appropriate content, activities, and learning materials for English for CBT courses, as well as for developing a course that is appropriate for CBT entrepreneurs.

However, this model is only the study's recommendation, which represents the CBT stakeholders' ideal future situation. There is the scenario of English language competency, lifelong learning through integration with technology, an English-learning culture, the role of technology in promoting tourist attractions in the English language, and an influx of international tourists to their city. Therefore, English developers or policymakers can utilize this model to create a model of foresight based on their own research setting.

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