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DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGY
INSTRUCTION FOR A TOURISM EDUCATION
PROGRAMME IN THAILAND

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Education
at Massey University, Palmerston North,
New Zealand

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to develop communication strategy instruction for Thai tourism students to enhance their English oral communication performance. The research was conducted with 24 fourth-year tourism students, who participated in different aspects of the voluntary short course of communication strategy, at a public university located in the northern part of Thailand.

Classroom action research was the methodological approach selected to investigate students’ needs, the key communication strategies to be taught, the ways to teach the communication strategies, and the effects of teaching the communication strategies. The process of data collection and analysis was undertaken in three phases. Phase One involved a pre-assessment to identify the students’ need for communication strategy instruction. Phase Two involved the development and implementation of communication strategy instruction, along with data collection and analyses from students’ self-report questionnaires and my teaching journals. Phase Three involved a post-assessment, followed by a comparison of the students’ pre- and post-assessment oral communication performance.

The findings revealed eight key communication strategies that could be taught for tourism students to enhance their English communication skills: circumlocution, approximation, literal translation, self-repair, self-rephrasing, lexicalised fillers, direct appeals for help, and modified interaction strategies. The study also revealed practical ways of teaching communication strategies, including teaching a wide range of communication strategies combined with language knowledge using a variety of communicative tasks. In addition, the findings showed the benefits of teaching communication strategies because these strategies contributed to raising students’
awareness of using communication strategies alongside linguistic knowledge, and also served to promote among students positive attitudes towards language learning and interaction. This study supports and highlights the significance of explicit teaching of communication strategies and suggests including this new and useful approach to English language teaching and learning for tourism students in Thailand.
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