

Chapter 1

Introduction

1. Rational and Significance of the Problems

Main incomes of Thailand are from agriculture due to the fertile resources. These resources are sufficient water resource for annually agricultural activities, fertile soil suitable for varieties of plants, and suitable weather conditions for plantations in different seasons. The cash crops of Thailand are in good quality, they are varieties of rice, oil palms, para rubbers, and sugarcanes. Thailand becomes the main cash crop supplier in the world market even though there are massive competition in ASEAN exporting countries. Thailand is affected by inadequate agricultural workers and higher production costs due to higher minimum wages. These are the barrier to the production and export of agricultural products. However, Thailand is still able to earn a lot of income from the export of these crops. It could be said that the development of Thailand is based on agriculture. And the strengthening of the agricultural sector is a security for the country at the same time.

Thai agriculture has been continuously developed from a small-scale agriculture which is intended for livelihood to a larger or commercial agriculture. When times pass by, relying on the original agricultural knowledge only cannot respond to a greater demand anymore. For this reason, new knowledge and modern agricultural technologies have been introduced. The purpose is to increase productivity to meet more demand. It can effectively control the cost of administration as well.

The body of knowledge and technology of agriculture does not mean only a modern technology but it also includes the body of knowledge that has been passed down from generation to generation as the folk wisdom. As mentioned in Niwat Masavanna (2007, page 2), the category of innovation and technology in the agricultural sector can be divided into three levels. They are 1) Highly-Developed Agricultural Technology, 2) Intermediate / Appropriate Technology, and 3) Indigenous Technology.

These technologies are important and have different advantages. For example, Advanced Agricultural Technology is a result of advanced research and development that was invented based on scientific principles and processes before applying. On the other hand, folk technology will be the traditional technology that people use for their careers. It may not have developed with modern science and technology, but it has passed between generations to generations. This folk knowledge has many advantages. It is often a low budget technology and uses local inputs. The impact on the equilibrium of the agricultural and social ecosystem is less than the advanced technology.

With the flow of changes, Thailand is moving from being an agricultural country to an agricultural and industrial country. As seen from the National Economic and Social Development Plans, the focuses are on infrastructure that is a key factor in manufacturing and industrial sectors. In the period before the Economic Crisis in 1997, there were many businesses in agriculture, real estate and movable property. People started to change their consumption behavior. Traditionally lifestyle which focused on living sufficiently shifted into a state of ecstasy in a competitive under liberal economy. The objective is to gain productivity and income with less emphasis on mind, virtue, moral and reasonableness in living. Unfortunately, in 1997 there was an economic crisis in Southeast Asia which affecting the economy in many sectors.

To overcome the problem, theories and practices have been applied in many ways, including the reform of government agencies, private sectors and financial institutions. One concept that has been introduced to solve the problem is The Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy that His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, King Rama IX of Chakri Dynasty suggested to Thai people in his royal speech on December 4, 1997. The aim of his speech was to introduce the principles in living, which can be applied for everyone in society. (Panjai Jirawatcharadej, 2012). After that, The Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy was included in the National Economic and Social Development Plans. The first one was No. 9 (2002-2006) with the aim to restore economic stability along with creating ethical learning. The Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy is a philosophy based on the middle path living, and the practice of people at all levels with consciousness in living. Sufficiency has three pillars: Moderation, Reasonableness, and Self-immunity, with two accompanying conditions: Knowledge

and Virtues. These components and conditions are essential in living, they form readiness for people to cope up with the impacts of unpredictable changes.

Agriculture is one of the important sectors driving the economy and the country. Strengthening and encouraging agricultural personnel to take up the situation by adhering to The Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy is necessary. The purpose is for living with happiness, having appropriate analytical thinking, having appropriate natural resources management, and ready to protect and deal with unexpected situations such as the previous regional economic crisis. When agriculture is stable, it will result in a solid foundation of the country. The country could step through the various scenarios, with stability and sustainability.

The Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy is very important because it promotes learning in all aspects and awareness in every step of living. The Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy guides the balanced living and sustainable way to live in globalization. From this reason, the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy is an interesting concept and should be promoted (Chaipattana Foundation, 2013 page 1). It could help solving the economic problems of Thailand, and promote people to live sustainably under various circumstances. If new generation has been cultivated and transferred the concepts of the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy along with the knowledge taught in schools, the proper characteristics in learning and living the right way would be prompted as well.

Encouraging people's readiness in living is a good immunity in living. This is corresponded in line with education reform at all levels of the Ministry of Education, National Education Act, BE 2542 and Amended BE 2545, which emphasis on life skills and cultivate moral and ethical. The emphasis is on improving the curriculum and modifying teaching methods to develop learners to solve problems as well as appreciate Thai culture. (National Education Act, 1999). In higher education, students are prepared to live happily in society by focusing on student achievement. This is evidenced by the adoption of the TQF (Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education) in 2009 with the aim of setting the standard of learning outcomes for Thailand (Domains of Learning). The TQF must cover at least 5 areas: Ethics and Moral, Knowledge, Cognitive Skills, Interpersonal Skills and Responsibility, and Numerical, Communication and Information Technology Skills.

The Higher Education Commission has issued this announcement to serve as a mechanism for the development of the policy on quality development and educational standards as set forth in the National Education Act, BE 2542 and as amended (No. 2) in year 2002 on national educational standards and higher education standards for concrete action. It is used mainly in curriculum development, teaching process, and evaluation of student as a framework for effective communication to build understanding and confidence among stakeholders such as learners, parents, entrepreneurs, communities, societies, and other institutions in the country and abroad (Higher Education Commission, 2009, p.4).

In addition, education at all levels is encouraging learners to develop the skills needed to live in the 21st century, including Creativity, Critical Thinking, Communication and Collaboration, Information Literacy, Media Literacy, ICT Literacy, Self-Direction, Civic Literacy, and World Civic Literacy. The preparation of these skills will help students live happily and ready to adapt to the changing world. Cultivation of attributes requires time and skill of the instructor. This requires the cooperation of instructors in all subjects, both in the specific field of study and in the general education by creating appropriate content and teaching activities (Subcommittee on Social Communication, 2011, p. 10)

An important goal of promoting The Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy, Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, and the skills needed to live in the 21st century share some similarities. One important aspect is the promotion of intellectual skills. This allow learners to use their knowledge and critical thinking ability in solving problems logically.

From the above reason, teaching and curriculum of educational institutes should integrate the concept of Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy, Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, and the skills needed to live in the 21st century for learners' achievements. Maejo University is one of the institutes that produce graduates to develop countries with a foundation of agriculture as it appears in the philosophy of the university "Development of graduates who possess wisdom, persistence, perseverance and moral integrity for the prosperity of Thai people in an agriculture-based society." Therefore, the mission of the university is to create the intellectual from

the original foundation, traditional Thai agriculture, and integrating them with modern technological advancement without abandoning traditional wisdom.

At present, Maejo University has developed steadily. Various curriculum and disciplines has been formed and updated responding to the needs of society. New technologies and body of knowledge from abroad have been introduced to pursue the university vision: "A leading university with international excellence in agriculture" (Maejo University, 2013)

Maejo University also focused on learners' development of knowledge, moral ethics and ability to bring these body knowledges to serve society. The university defines the core values of the institution, aiming to create these values in the management, teaching and activities of the university. The core values were included in Maejo University Education Development Plan, Phase 11 (Maejo University, 2011) The core values of Maejo University are M (Mindfulness) Work with Heart and Soul, A (Aspiration) Carry on Unwavering Determination, E (Excellence) Weave Dreams into Mastery, J (Justification) Honor Justice, (Originality) Lead with Creativity and Integrity.

To achieve the core values of Maejo University and Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, all lecturers and staff are required to share appropriate learning experience to develop these core values in learners. Also, students should be encouraged to learn The Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy in order to have a stable life, morality, knowledge and reasonableness in life. Every subject contributes to the improvement of life quality. Form this reason, English courses, which is the subject of international communication and an important tool to pursuit knowledge should be considered and adapted to meet the policy and the quality of education and life skills in the 21st century as well.

Currently, English teaching at Maejo University is divided into two levels. The first one composed of general English courses that promotes English skills in everyday life. The other one is English for specific purposes (Content based) based on students' majors and specialty such as English for Social Science was a compulsory for students in Political Science. English for Science was a compulsory for students in the Faculty of Science. English for Tourism was a compulsory for students in the Faculty of Tourism Development. English for Agricultural is a compulsory of Students in the

Faculty of Agricultural Production. These courses will focus on language proficiency, including listening, speaking, reading, writing, and academic content on specific contents. Analytical thinking ability and life skills was minor promoted. To encourage learning in these subjects to meet the goals set by the Education Act, and prepare learners to keep up with the changing world, teaching and learning English should be organized appropriately. Learning activities are needed to focus on learners' improvement in their English proficiency and analytical thinking at a time.

The preparation of the above skills by integrating the concept of The Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy into the English for Agriculture course may develop analytical thinking ability and proficiency in English communication. Learners must be prepared for the changes in the 21st century with the institute core values development and Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education. From this reason, the researcher wishes to undertake research on integrating Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy concepts in an English course to promote analytical thinking ability and English proficiency of Maejo University Students.

2. Research Objectives

1. To design an English for Agriculture course that integrates the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy concepts with Content-Based Instruction.
2. To study analytical thinking ability and understanding of The Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy concepts of Maejo University students taking an English for Agricultural course.
3. To study English proficiency of Maejo University students taking English for Agriculture course with an integration of The Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy.

3. Scope of the Research

Population Scope

Lecturers responsible for GE 243 English for Agriculture 1 and Maejo University students in the Faculty of Agricultural Production in the 1st semester of Academic Year 2016.

Content Scope

1. English for Agriculture 1(3 credits) in this study contained vocabulary, grammar and reading comprehension. The contents and reading passages of this course related to a variety of agricultural science from Thailand and abroad. The researcher integrated the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy concepts into reading activity. After learners read the passages assigned, they had to analyze the passages and answer questions from the reading tasks. And then did the analytical thinking activity and wrote a short paragraph to express their opinions, feelings and gave a practical solution based on three components of The Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy; moderation, reasonableness, and self-immunity, with two accompanying conditions: appropriate knowledge and ethics & virtues.

2. Analytical Think Ability in this study focused on learners' understanding and ability to distinguish factors related to the events or phenomena occurred in current agricultural issues. Finding an appropriate practice and guidance for themselves and others with environmental and society responsibility based on the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy concepts were emphasized.

3. English Proficiency in this research was the ability in reading English for agriculture contents and the ability to write a short paragraph expressing ideas, practice and guidance.

Research Duration Scope

The duration of the experiment was 30 hours, implemented in the first semesters of Academic Year 2016.

4. Definitions of Specific Terms

The Concepts of Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy refers to the philosophy that His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej presented in the royal speech as a guiding practice to survive in the economic crisis and make a sustainably living in. The philosophy is consisted of three pillars and two conditions. Three pillars are Moderation, Reasonableness and Self-Immunity. Two conditions are Knowledge and

Moral. The pillars and conditions are introduced as the principles for analytical thinking with an aim for a sustainable living.

English for Agriculture is a core focusing on agricultural science course for students in the Faculty of Agricultural Production. The structures of the course consist of vocabulary, grammatical structure, reading comprehension, and writing expression. Reading passages in the course related to current issues in agriculture from Thailand and abroad. The philosophy of Sufficiency Economy is integrated in the reading passages, reading tasks and writing tasks.

Integrating The Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy refers to using the contents and principles of the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy in teaching and learning activities of the course English for Agriculture. In each lesson, learners read the passage related to agricultural issues and do the reading task. Then, they would be given a situation or an example case to do the analytical thinking activity base on the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy. Learners had to give advice or solution of the problem by writing a paragraph based on the three pillars and two conditions. What would they do if they were in that kind situation? What would they do to make it a sustainable living and practice?

Analytical Thinking ability refers to the ability in applying the three pillars and two conditions for analytical thinking. Learners are needed to express opinions and provide appropriate suggestions for themselves and others in the situations given. The analytical thinking ability was assessed from learners' answers in the reading and writing tasks. Learners must have adequate background in the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy to do the analytical thinking activity. The assessment of analytical thinking ability was applied before and after the implementation of the lesson plans.

Understanding in the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy refers to basic Knowledge of the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy. The basic knowledge consists of the meaning, the origin, the purposes, the principles and the application of the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy in agriculture. The assessment of understanding in the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy was applied before and after the implementation of the lesson plans.

English Proficiency refers to English reading and writing ability. Reading ability is the ability to read the passage and identify topics, main ideas and supporting

details. Writing ability is the ability to write a short paragraph expressing ideas about the cases or situations given. English proficiency was assessed from the pretest and posttest. Development of English proficiency was also assessed from reading and writing tasks in each lesson.

5. Expected Outcomes

1. An example of the course that integrates English teaching with the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy concepts to promote analytical thinking ability and English proficiency.
2. A guideline for course development focusing on lives and society of learners.
3. A guideline for teaching English using Content-Based Instruction with the focus on contexts, learning resources, and background knowledge of learners.
4. A guideline to organize learning activity in an English course promoting learners to consider and analyze the appropriate forms of language use with reasoning.



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