

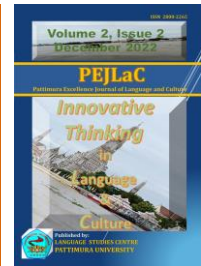


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**Development of Competency-Based Instruction in the Challenging Era:
A Case Study of French for Airline Ground Services**

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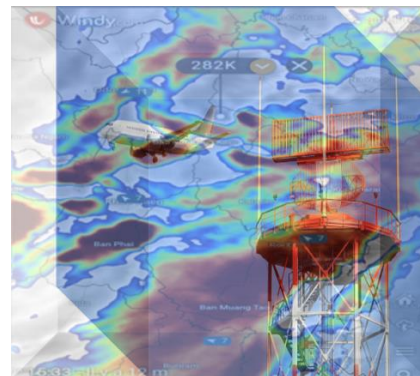
Abstract

In this decade, the world faces to several challenges such as economic volatility and transformation of work styles and lifestyle changed at the moment. It is undeniable that the travel by plane is in high demand before and after Covid-19. The airport ground services need competent personnel. The teaching of French at the university does not neglect these situations. French Program of Khon Kaen University created the French for Airline Ground Service course in 2011. Nowadays, this course opens its doors to accommodate 80 percent of the 3rd year of French major. It is interesting to study the development of the course and analyze the teaching and learning methods. This research was based on the action-oriented approach to pedagogy and teaching on the basis of competence. The results show that this course offers learners French at the B1+ level of CEFR and the basic skills for the airport ground staff in relation to the Rome N2201 of the Pôle Emploi of French Republic. In terms of learning activities, learners follow the Interaction Mode of Instruction to acquire life and career skills. Moreover, the software applications on flight preparation: Flightradar24 and Windy are used in the learning activities. This brings the learners to practice digital language and technology. Nevertheless, this research lacks the satisfaction of the airline entrepreneurs.

Keywords: Curriculum development, Competency-based curriculum, French active learning, French for Airline Business

The significant finding:

Learners of French at the B1+ level of CEFR and the basic skills for the airport ground staff in relation to the Rome N2201 of the Pôle Emploi of French Republic have been found to be very effective in terms of learning activities by following the Interaction Mode of Instruction to acquire life and career skills.



ARTICLES

I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the contribution to Thai university education has to face the challenge in several areas: political-economic change, health disruption, communication transformation. These factors have prompted the revision of the goal of training 21st century graduates for digital citizenship. In order to face the challenge of the century, learners will be trained to have the following skills: intellectuality, know-how, foreign languages and life-skills. (Suthirat, 2016) These educational environments make us want to think about pedagogical means that are compatible with the Challenge era.

In 2019, the Department of Western Languages held meetings¹ to revise the curriculum entitled "B.A. in Western Language 2017" so that the training of the learners and graduates of the department would be in line with the development directions of the country, especially those of the job market. After brainstorming, the Department obtained the goals of the new curriculum by finding the table of Stakeholders' Needs on communicative

¹ The participants are composed of the department committee and the following stakeholders: official agent of the French Embassy in Thailand, entrepreneurs, higher education experts, former and current students

grammar, culture, language for jobs, new digital technologies and morality. (**Western Language Department, 2021: 263**) In order to achieve these points mentioned, the paradigm of particular teaching would be applied.

As far as the career-oriented courses offered at the meetings are concerned, these are FOS² courses whose proposed subjects are divided into two pedagogical areas; one for the hospitality tourism service and the other for the technological and medical services. Among them, it seems French for Airline Ground Service was proposed. Nevertheless, this subject has had a place in the curriculum of the French major since 2011 as an elective course (**French Language Section, 2011: 24**) that the lecturer was trained in the Passengers Service of Air France, a leader airline of the World. Prior to the launch of the 2011 curriculum, content on airline work had been assigned to students during the professional translation course: French-Thai translation: airline work task documents. This assignment was completed at the request of former students (**Chitkla, 2013: 2**). Here, it seems to us that the renewal of the curriculum obviously brings the development of the course. And the content appropriated to the integration between language and profession has started gradually.

So far, the French Section has given students the French for Airline Ground Service course for ten years. This period asks whether teaching is adapting to educational and professional movements and which approaches are being used to operate teaching.

² FOS is the French educational acronym. It stands for French for Specific Purposes

This study is a documentary research. The documentary research will bring us an analysis of the contents and classroom activities encouraging learners to have linguistic and professional competence, based on the CEFR framework and the ROME N2201 standard, related to the competence required for the airport ground staff or “agent d’escalade commerciale aéroportuaire” in French.

Theoretical approaches

Although the first part of this study is based on qualitative research, theoretical approaches are essential to assess the pedagogical qualities of course and student development, in relation to the overall movement of the contribution to learning. Based on the international language and professional competencies, it is essential to consult the CEFR European Common Frameworks and the Basic Skills for Airport Ground Staff as the course is given to students in French language. Nevertheless, the professional context of Thai airports was not overlooked. The personal interview of BFS³ the training manager, Mr. Manasak Phamornmaleerat, was set up at this stage of the work.

Language competency: B1+ of CEFR Framework

³ BFS stands for Bangkok Flight Services. The company provides passenger, ground and cargo services for more than 30 airlines in Suvarnabhumi-Bangkok International Airport (BKK). The company's cooperation is linked to the global World Flight Service (WFS) company which serves airports on 5 continents: Europe, North America, Latin America, Africa and Asia & Middle East.

It is 20 years since the Bureau de coopération pour le français launched the Common European Framework (CEFR) for the teaching of French in Thailand. This framework is to standardise French outside of mainland France and to guide teachers and learners in learning activities based on the action approach or action perspective. To achieve this goal, the pedagogical assignment must persuade learners to participate in the learning: listening, speaking discussing, reading and writing (Dejamornchai, 2021A: 9). The Active Learning must be enrolled in the class so that learners feel like enjoy to communicate in various situations with the appropriate language level.

BI+ Level is situated over the level B1. It seems to be a stronger level. The CEFR committee assigned the addition of a number of descriptors which focus on the exchange of quantities of information, for example: take messages communicating enquiries, explaining problems; provide concrete information required in an interview or a consultation but does so with limited precision; explain why something is a problem; summarise and give his or her opinion about a short story, article, talk, discussion, interview, or documentary and answer further questions of detail; carry out a prepared interview, checking and confirming information, though he/she may occasionally have to ask for repetition if the other person's response is rapid or extended; describe how to do something, giving detailed instructions; exchange accumulated factual information on familiar routine and non-routine matters within his/her field with some confidence.

Professional competency: Rome N2201

The Rome N2201 is the standard form deployed by the Pôle Emploi, a national bureau of the French Republic. This form is intended for those interested in applying for positions involving airport ground staff. The Rome N2201 declares the basic competences of this field and is part of the training provided by public or private organisations. Regarding the basic skills for airport ground staff in Thailand, Mr. Manasak Pamornmalirat listed the main tasks of airport ground staff at his special lecture entitled French for Airline Business, organised by the French Section in March 2020. After studying the information from both sides, the benchmarks of the skills were achieved. Let's have a look at the examples of competences (Pôle Emploi, 2021 & Manasak Pamornmalirat, 2020) :

- Welcoming passengers and informing them about check-in, boarding/disembarkation and flight conditions;
- Collecting flight information and carrying out check-in and boarding operations;
- Check and register passenger documents and baggage (referencing, overweight, etc.);
- Carry out boarding/disembarkation operations (bus reservations on the runway, accompanying passengers, handing over flight coupons, etc.);
- Checking boarding passes with the list of passengers on board, filling in and transmitting flight follow-up documents;

The essential knowledge is presented in this standardization such as;

- Flight tracking or baggage check-in software
- Aeronautical terminology (IATA, aeronautical alphabet, etc.)
- Geography related to airport services (time zones, airports, etc.)
- Use of radio communication tools
- Airport security rules
- Cultural specificities of the customers
- Regulations on the transport of dangerous materials and products

II. METHODOLOGY

This research was based on the action-oriented approach to pedagogy and teaching on the basis of competence.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Specification of professional competency

Change of course description In order that the teacher and the learners to see the final goal after the training appropriate to the performance of airport ground staffs, the course description has been modified in 2021. The last description of the course specifies the 3 services given during the training: reservation and ticketing, passengers service and air cargo service. The last course description specifies the 3 services given during the training: reservation and ticketing, passengers service and air cargo service whereas the 2011 and 2017 curriculum only presents the language

competence. Please find below the course description table of the 3 curriculum.

Table 1. Course description in year

Years	Course description
2022	French vocabulary, expressions, and language use for Airline Ground Service; reservation & ticketing, passenger service, and air cargo service.
2017	Use of French vocabulary, expressions, and language for Airline Ground Service.
2011	Use of French vocabulary, expressions, and language for Airline Ground Service.

Nevertheless, this change is officially declared after the trial project of 2021 in which the MKO3 lesson plan had specified the 3 services. This is useful for learners to understand the framework at the airport. Note that the renewal of the 2022 curriculum was established at the end of 2020 when the covid-19 epidemic developed into the pandemic you knew it would. At that time, the cargo service is still functioning well. So this course would support learners to see the links of each service effecting the departure or arrival of a flight.

Modification of contents

Based on grammar level At the beginning of the teaching in 2012, the contents of the course were written by consulting the different French methods for foreign learners, in which there are dialogues about the plane trip. Then, the course of the class was rather the

explanation of the French grammar that the learners used to compose their dialogues, for example the interrogation with "*quel*" and "*lequel*", also the use of "*lequel*" as complex relative pronoun. With this pedagogical method, the learners and the teacher just reached the stage of checking in passengers and luggage for a semester of 4 months. In addition, the learners did not see the whole picture of this work. In relation to the tasks of airport ground staff, the teaching and learning would be finished at least by boarding in different cases. So, it seems that they have been working more on French as a foreign language.

Based on social interaction activities

At the end of the academic year, the French section committee organises the annual teaching management review. This allows the teachers to know the qualities and risks in their courses. In addition, the Section offers the budget to invite guest speakers to give a special lecture. The academic exchanges keep the teachers up to date with the latest trends in French teaching.

The guests of the French for Airline Ground Service course are former students of

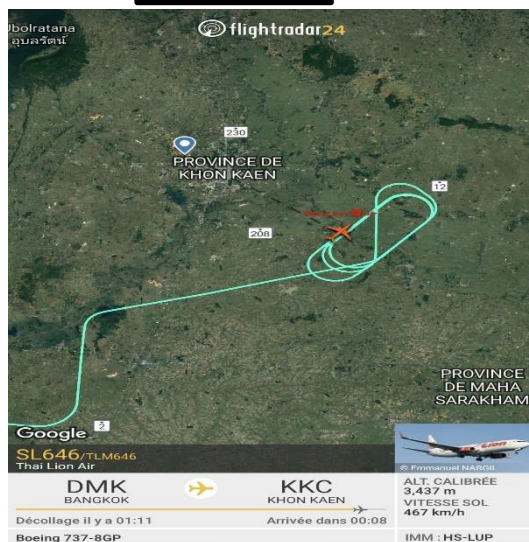
the French Section of Khon Kaen University. They read the pedagogical documents and proposed the current work topics and the digital applications necessary for the management of the flight. Note that the agents work at the check-in counter and at the flight operations office where the departure and arrival procedures await them. In addition, the objective of specific French is the understanding of particular terms. The teacher's task is to create the activities necessary to produce a linguistic tool for communicating with French-speaking passengers and colleagues.

The linguistic tool for this purpose is the language of communication. According to the CEFR 2001 common framework, communicative competence covers 3 aspects: linguistic aspect, socio-cultural aspect and speech acts. So, "*quel*" and "*lequel*" are introduced to the learners since lesson 1 whose theme is related to the questioning and the global aspect of the jobs in the airport, for example "*Quel agent s'occupe des passagers en Première classe?*" and "*Parmi ces agents, lequel est le plus gentil?*"

Not only are sentences important for communication, but also alphabet codes are essential for understanding text messages. These codes are typical tools. If a passenger says his destination "Tokyo", the ground handler needs to know which airport he is going to: NRT (Narita) or HND (Haneda). These codes are more accurate in registering that passenger in the system. Note that each flight has its own airport and that the ticket price is different. If there is a mistake, this station agent is responsible for the cause. The identity of the agent is marked on the boarding pass and on the airline's digital system. This alertness is integrated into the practical information in Lesson 5 "At the check-in counter".

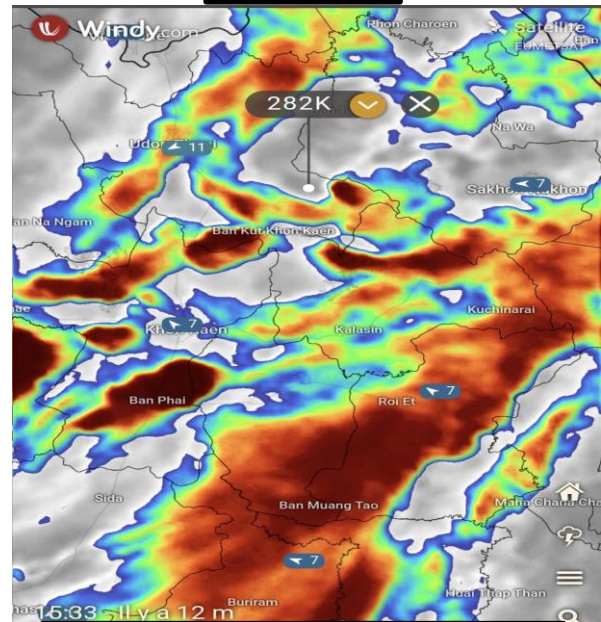
The aircraft is required to take on passengers. If there is an incident on the arriving aircraft, the station agent must know how to choose the appropriate announcements for the situation. In South East Asia, it is rare to have the expected delay in summer and winter. But during the rainy season, strong wind and

Photo 1



Source : windv.com

Photo 2



Source : flightradar24.com

storm often cause the flight to be delayed or cancelled. The station agent, in charge of the operation, monitors his flight via *flightradar24.com* to prepare the cargo or luggage load and *windy.com* to choose the right take-off time.

Photo 1 shows that this plane is facing bad weather conditions and the captain fails to land at Khon Kaen airport. Photo 2 shows that the storm and thunder are around Khon Kaen airport. The ground handlers in charge are studying this information to find the solution as soon as possible. This is to give the passengers good service and the company less damage.

So far, it should be said that language teaching has changed in order to train a citizen to live in the age of challenges. Although learners do not work at the airport, they would become a good traveller; knowing how to buy a

ticket, respecting the rules of the company and the airport, prepare him/herself to face different situations.

IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study presents the evolution of the teaching of the French for Airline Ground Service course at Khon Kaen University. It also reflects the trend of class technique and the integration of new digital technologies. So, the French language in the world of work is easily accessible more than before. Moreover, the knowledge center has changed. The instructor is not only a professor of the establishment. Experts from the external organization can do this. This reflects the cooperation between the university and the private organization. This cooperation provides learners with work and digital skills. And there is the trend of digital citizenship.

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