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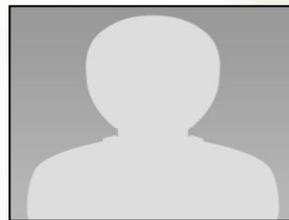
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**“Language and Computer Programs for Tourism
Industry Competitiveness”**



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Abstract

Both language skills and computer programs can play a crucial role in promoting the competitiveness of the Thai tourism industry competitiveness. They provide learners with the opportunity to learn to operate computer programs conveniently and effectively, while develop language skills at the same time. To address this issue, curriculum writers of tourism educational institutions and employers have to pay attention to the importance of both English and computer-mediated educational methods. Instructors who are involved directly with students attempt to assist their students to understand the computer program used (in the case of this paper, the program considered is called Amadeus). However, the instructors face some barriers, specifically that programmers may have technical skills but not necessarily content skills and knowledge. This paper aims to study the connection between English language and the computer program used for promoting the competitiveness of the Thai tourism industry and to investigate the benefits, problems and solutions arising from the use of Amadeus. In-depth interviews of 80 students, 3 instructors and 10 programmers were used to explore these subjects and a semi-structured interview form was created to obtain the information required to answer the research questions. The ways in which these skills can help competitiveness are discussed, as well as the problems associated with them. To maximise improvements in the quality of service, it is recommended that tour companies should also organize training sessions for their employees.

Keywords – Amadeus, Quality of service, Roles of computer program, Roles of language, Tourism industry

1. Introduction

Language is significant for communication (Robertson, 2006; Wilson & Thayalan, 2007). We can communicate with international tourists by using language, particularly English. Presently, the world has changed. We have to compete with other countries in terms of education, technology, business, especially tourism industry. Tourism has become the world's largest industry (Carr, 1997; McLean at al., 2008), and its growth shows a year-to-year increase (Kalodikis & Yannakopoulos, 2003). Tourist arrivals all over the world would enlarge over two hundreds percent (Blanke & Chiese, 2008). Tourism industry is extremely competitive. The competitiveness of tourist destinations is important, especially as countries attempt for a bigger market share (Tsai et al., 2009: 522-546). So, we have to learn about tourism industry, and know how we can make a country to be a bigger market share.

Thailand seems to be oriented towards high value tourism (Cernat & Gourdon, 2005; Dwyer & Forsyth, 2000: 22). Although the country, particularly Bangkok and some provinces in the north and the northeastern confronted with Thailand's crisis, still, some parts of Thailand such as Pattaya, Hua-Hin, Suratthani, Krabi, Phang-anga, Had Yai, Trang, Phuket, and other beautiful places are entirely secure for international tourists. Today's tourism industry is getting fast growth, and high customer expectations. Most of the market is driven by new technologies and new competitors. New industry models had expansions in technology and infrastructure transport, such as jumbo jets, low-cost airlines and more accessible airports have made several types of tourism more reasonable. Thailand is developing with more numbers of international tourists (Fuller, 1997). Tourism people have to be energetic, and apply new technology for tourism industry to support the development.

The computer program such as Amadeus is enabling tour companies and airline offices to book airline seats, and hotel rooms. Booking by using the computer program provides the back-end operations for an Internet-based reservation. Amadeus is one of the biggest processor of travel bookings in the world. It provides a range of technologies designed to bring perceptible results in the tourism industry (Bennett, 1993: 259-266). This is the solutions for the tourism industry. As a result, the program has a major impact upon all types of tourism transactions for tourism industry.

Additionally, the use of the program is a critical decision that every tourism business must make if they are to survive the competition. It attracts customers by customizing products and services to their needs and to reorganize business strategies in order to achieve competitive advantages (Kalodikis & Yannakopoulos, 2003). Also, the instant availability of travel information about tourism destinations and services, enables traveler's to compare among several tourism industry. Importantly, the program is in regular English words.

This study aims (1) to study the English language and the computer program used for tourism industry competitiveness, and (2) to investigate the benefits, problems, and solutions of the computer program namely Amadeus.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Importance of English Language in Tourism Industry

English is important for tourism industry so as to communicate with people (Leslie & Russell, 2006). It is often used at the airports, in restaurants, in shops, in hotels, in tour companies, and somewhere else (Eastwood, 1980: 324). Most of the tour companies use English for communication with international tourists. International tourists need to know information with the intention that they can make decisions (Nakalasin, 1997: 543).

In the same way, people who work for tourism industry, the language is to promote clearer, for communication of thoughts. In tourism industry, people who work with international tourists must be able to speak English well (Jones, 2005; Wongthon & Sriwanthana, 2007). It has become the language for travelers from many different countries (Kruse, 1982). Tour companies realize that English is truly the key. The achievement of tourism industry will depend upon how well communication of facts and ideas. In addition, the truth is that the tourism industry is one of the most significant economic influences of modern time including Thailand economic.

2.2 Role of Language in Tourism Industry

Language is important for communication in Thai tourism industry (Cosh & Assenov, 2007). It helps create understanding among people, and promotes culture (Biyaem, 1997: 564). With the importance of English as a world language, an important aspect of the English language learning has never been ignored. Communication in English in tourism industry, most grammatical mistakes do not seriously affect communication (Jones, 1998: 16). Although grammatical mistakes are made, the conversation will still be understood (Clement & Kartik, 1998: 252).

The role of language, particularly English is becoming more important in the tourism industry and tourism curriculum (Hall, 2006:361) in Thai tourism education. In the tourism industry, it is used to correspond with the international tourists. Within the tourism curriculum, English is used a lot more often in learning and studying, especially in international programs. The

reason for this is the rapid growth of tourism industry and the tourism industry population. However, there are some facts that students or even instructors in regular program cannot read English book on travel and tourism well. For students, when they take some courses that involve English, they will feel uncomfortable, and they cannot perform well. Because of these reasons, the English language competence must be taken in consideration (Hall, 2004).

2.3 Computer Program for Tourism Industry Competitiveness

Using computers in tourism industry makes the whole thing a lot easier (Ding at al., n. d.), and can also make the business more successful. For example, in case of sending customers an email message, it will save time and money for the business. It also makes customers happier as they receive their information promptly and without worry (Rutherford & O'Fallon, 2002). Taking and receiving payments via the web are other benefits of the computer program. The computer program has had a dynamic impact in all forms of business enterprise including the tourism industry. It can be used not only to record information but also can be used to analyze other operations.

The computer program helps save time and money. It also helps controlling costs and maximizing profit. This includes current bookings for the future, accounting audit, registration of guests that will use services (Mathew, 2003:314). The computer program can also be used to look back through the files and calculate certain factors like the average guest check, the seat turnover, mix analysis, cost of sales analysis, inventory control and many more. The benefit of such a system is the fact that it has the capability to store such a large amount of data, and also keep everything in organized sections making it easy what people require and easy to maintain.

2.4 Roles of the Computer Program in Tourism Industry

The computer program namely Amadeus is very essential to tourism industry. It makes things easier for employees. For example, when the employees put the data for customers, the program helps the employees to save time. It also makes customers happier as they receive their information promptly and without worry (Earley, 1971:61) when they leave.

Furthermore, the computer program makes a tourism business more successful and organized (Kernighan & Plauger, 1982). It has a dynamic influence in all forms of tourism business activity. The computer program would bring back results of different tour routes, airlines, and different times, including availability of seats and flights costs of travel. This saves time for the tour companies and the customers. Particularly, customers can have a wider option (Glaser & Thompson, 1987). Once the customers are delighted, they will most likely return in the future to use the services of the business (Weinberg, 1985).

The literature undoubtedly shows that the English language and the computer program are keys for tourism industry competitiveness. The English language skills are important for using the computer program. It is important for communication since it assists to create comprehension among people. The computer program generates the whole thing easier. It helps to save time and money, control costs, and maximize profit.

3. Methodology

This study was based on interviewing of 80 students, 3 instructors, and 10 programmers. The aims were to (1) study the English language and the computer program used for tourism industry competitiveness, (2) investigate the benefits, problems, and solutions of the computer

program namely Amadeus. Semi-structured interview forms in English were designed to acquire information for the main objectives. They were checked by experts in designing semi-structured interview forms. The purpose was to make sure that questions can be understood by the interviewees. Some minor changes were made. The informants were scheduled for interviewing. Each student spent 20-25 minutes to give the information. For instructors and programmers, they spent about 45-50 minutes to grant information. The limitation focuses on the samples of students. They used the computer program namely Amadeus for the first time.

4. Research Findings

The research findings are divided into two parts: (1) the English language and the computer program used for tourism industry competitiveness, and (2) benefits, problems, and solutions of the computer program namely Amadeus.

4.1 The English Language and the Computer Program Used for Tourism Industry Competitiveness

The informants confirmed that the language, especially English is important in tourism industry and for operating the computer program namely Amadeus. It is crucial in tourism industry, particularly for better communication. Tourism staff ought to communicate effectively. When customers request to arrange their travel, they will be more likely to come back for business in the future. This resulted in understanding and communicating well with the staff. If the international tourists go out on a day trip to visit attractions, then it is far better if the staff can communicate clearly and understand the visitors. This makes the international tourists feel more comfortable. The international tourists are more likely to come back and visit again or recommend this place to other people as being a good attraction to visit with ease of communication.

For the computer program namely Amadeus, the informants pointed out that it is beneficial. It might be hard to learn and take time to study the program, but in the end, it will always be worth.

4.2 Benefits, Problems, and Solutions of Computer Program Namely Amadeus

The benefits, problems, and solutions of the computer program namely Amadeus based on the informants' comprehension are presented in the following figure 1.

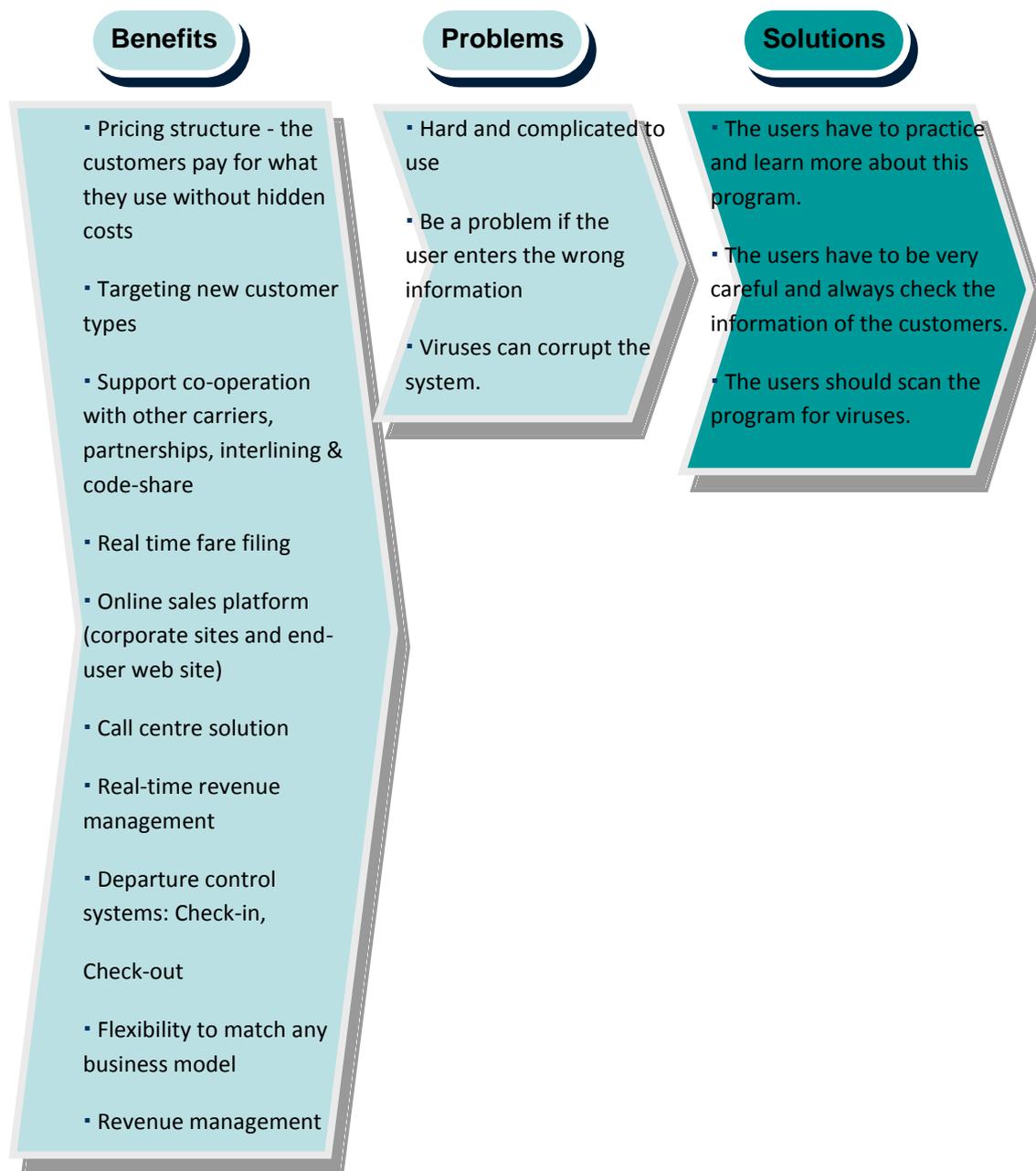


Figure 1 Show the benefits, problems, and solutions of the computer program namely Amadeus based on the informants' comprehension

The students as the informants, they realized that they have learned a lot about the computer program namely Amadeus. They stated that the language, especially English plays an important role to help them to be familiar with the program. Still, English as the foreign language is a barrier for some informants. They had to learn some specific terms to make them recognize how to use the program effectively. The instructors and the programmers as the informants confirmed that the computer program namely Amadeus is accepted for the tourism industry. The advantages of this program are various. In contrast, the computer program namely Amadeus had some problems such as it is hard and complicated to use. It can be a problem if the user enters the wrong information. Sometimes, viruses can corrupt the system. Thus, practicing, learning more about this program, being very careful and always check the

information of customers, and scanning the program for viruses are the ways to resolve these problems.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has been undertaken as a result of the language and the computer program for tourism industry competitiveness, and more specific on benefits, problems, and solutions of the computer program namely Amadeus. In tourism industry, most of the tour companies expected to have staff with experience about language and computers. This is the reason why we have to activate and apply new technology with tourism industry. Amadeus Program is a notable program for tourism industry competitiveness. Based on the research findings, recommendations intend to focus on learning and studying the English language and the computer program namely Amadeus which will support tourism industry competitiveness. Students should take a course to learn more about English for computer program, and need to learn more about computer programs to apply for tourism industry. Instructors need to understand how to use the program fully. The instructors need to be able to explain some technical terms to students clearly. Also, instructors as the users need to be more active in a self-improvement on how to use the program expertly, and to learn some technical terms found within the program. Programmers have to be ready to facilitate once the customers request for services.

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