

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

A curriculum can be defined as a plan for action or a written document that includes strategies for achieving desired goals or ends. (Tyler, 1949).

Curriculum can be defined as a course of learning activities set out for the learner to perform to make them achieve certain goals prescribed by the educational system. The curriculum generally includes all subjects and activities over which the school has responsibility. It also defines the limits within which certain types of learning are to take place. It denotes those experiences and activities which are devised by the school or other institutions of learning for the purpose of changing a learner's behaviour, acquiring or reinforcing certain skills and preparing him to fit properly into his society (Robinson, 1983).

Based on the statements above curriculum is the device of subjects and educational programs provided by the organizers of an educational institution which contains lesson plans that will be given to participants of lessons over a period of education with certain goals. Setting the course is adjusted to circumstances and the ability of each level of education in the implementation of the education and employment needs. Length of time in the curriculum is usually adjusted with the intent and purpose of the educational system implemented. The curriculum is intended to be directed towards education and the intended purpose in learning activities overall.

A curriculum usually contains a statement of aims and specific objectives. It indicates some selection and organization of content; it either implies or manifests certain patterns of learning and teaching, finally it includes a programme of evaluation of the outcomes (Taba, 1962). Curriculum is all of the educative experience learners have in educational program, the purpose of which is to achieve broad goals and related specific objectives that have been developed within a framework of theory and research, past and present professional practice, and the changing needs of society (Parkay, 2006).

Two main approaches to curriculum design reported by the participating countries are the content or topic-based approach and the outcome-based approach (NIER, 1999). The content or topic-based approach lists the topics or themes of the subject area or discipline. The listing is generally broad and includes the aims and objectives for the subject area. The outcome-based approach to curriculum design defines the outcomes, usually as abilities or skills, that students are expected to achieve by the end of the period of study or period of schooling for the specific subject.

In learning second or foreign language, two problems faced by experts and practitioners of curriculum and learning is the adequacy of language exposure and motivation to learn in the language learning process. This issue in the past three decades trying responded by experts and practitioners language curriculum development by introducing an integrated curriculum model in learning foreign languages.

Every country have their own curriculum for learning foreign language. One of country in South East Asia that use English as foreign language is

Thailand. Thailand is developing countries which trying on and on to advance their development in every aspect of national life to gain success in this competitive global era. One of the efforts of the nations is developing their human resources through education. Thailand always review, revise or even reform their national curriculums in last years.

The major reform of the English language curriculum in Thailand was introduced in 1999. The 1999 National Education Act lays down guidelines for the provision of education, management of the learning process, and preparation of educational curricula at various levels. The Commission for Basic Education shall be responsible for prescribing the core curriculum for basic education geared towards preserving Thai identity, good citizenship, desirable ways of life and livelihood. It also paves the way for further education. Basic education institutes shall prepare details of the curriculum in part, dealing with community problems, local wisdom, and desirable characteristics of good members of one's community, one's society, and the nation. thus, according to the new curriculum.

English became a compulsory foreign language subject from the first grade. And now, the current Basic Education Core Curriculum 2008 with regard to English as a compulsory subject at the primary school level proposed by the OBEC, the Ministry of Education has been relatively underexplored. It is thus significant for Thai educational policy makers and scholars to engage in strategic English language teaching policies and practices in order to be competitive with the trend for primary level English language education in other ASEAN nations.. The review or the alteration of the curriculum usually covers all subject matters including English.

English is as foreign language (EFL) in Thailand . This EFL position might derive to how is the Thailand English curriculum? This study tries to answer these previous question. To focus the analysis, Thailand Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (A.D. 2008) Curriculum of Foreign Language is selected. The selection is rather subjective, based on researcher's experience background in teaching English at 11th grade Udomsasn Wittya School in Thailand.

Analyzing curriculum is an attempt to breakdown curriculum into its framework elements. The analysis is intended to see how they fit together a whole; to identify the underlying belief and ideas and to examine the implication of the belief for the quality of educational experience and how it implies the educational process (Posner, 1992).

The process of analyzing curriculum can be considered as the reverse process of planning curriculum. In planning curriculum, curriculum developers can follow Tyler (1950) or Johnson (1977) models which have similar procedures: determining what purposes (goals) to attain, what educational experiences to provide (process), how to organize the theme and how to evaluate the purpose (goal) attainment (Posner, 1992). Therefore, the analysis of the English curriculum below is based on the four elements of curriculum above as the framework and added by the underlying belief, approaches, expected teaching process in classrooms and the strength and weaknesses as well.

1.2 Problem Statement

Based on the background of the study above, the following research question will be addressed in this study:

1. How is the curriculum of English Subject at Thailand school designed ?
2. How is the syllabus of English Curriculum in Thailand at 11th grade designed ?
3. How is the lesson plan of English Curriculum in Thailand at 11th grade designed ?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Based on the problem statement above, the purpose of this study is to describe and explain :

1. The design of English curriculum at Udomsasn Wittya School in Thailand.
2. The syllabus of English curriculum at Udomsasn Wittya School in Thailand.
3. The lesson plan of English curriculum at Udomsasn Wittya School in Thailand.

1.4 Significance of the Study

1.4.1 Theoretical significance of the study :

1. The writer expected that through this study, it could make a descriptive analysis of the school curriculums based on reports of the national studies conducted in the participating country.

1.4.2 Practical significance of the study :

1. We can know the curriculum systems of the country in Southeast Asia especially Thailand.
2. It can be additional contribution to exchange experiences with one another for mutual benefit through cross-nationally.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The scope of this study focus on curriculum framework, syllabus (strands, learning standards, and indicators) and the lesson plan (instructional objectives, teaching activities and strategies , and materials). Therefore the limitation will be on English Curriculum in 11th grade senior high school.

1.6 Definition of Keyterms

To avoid misunderstanding about the problems, the writer defines keywords as follows:

1. Curriculum : a set of plans and arrangements regarding the purpose, content, and teaching materials and methods used as guidelines for the implementation of learning activities to achieve specific educational goals over a period of education.
2. Curriculum frameworks : a set of documents that sets standards for curriculum and provides the context (available resources, capabilities of teachers and system support) in which subject specialists develop syllabuses.

3. Syllabus : draft of learning plans that contains of spesific theme or topic in the spesific subject, with competences, indicators, material, teaching strategy, and time arrangement.
4. Lesson Plan : spesific lesson plan that based on indicator to more spesific basic competence.