CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This chapter presents a summary of the study and a discussion as well as an interpretation of the results. In addition, conclusions and recommendation are also given for further studies.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between Internet usage and learning achievement in reading courses (Reading Techniques, Reading, and Speed Reading) of the students who were studying in the fourth year majoring in English in the Faculty of Humanities at Naresuan University, Phitsanulok province, Thailand, in order to support more efficient teaching and learning of ESL or EFL reading by the use of the Internet as a tool. This study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. Is there a significant relationship between Internet usage and achievement in reading courses?
2. To what extent do the students majoring in English in the Faculty of Humanities at Naresuan University use the Internet?
3. Why do the students use the Internet?
4. Which services on the Internet do the students prefer?

The subjects of this study were 53 students who were studying in the fourth year majoring in English in the Faculty of Humanities in the 2004 academic year at Naresuan University. The instrument used to find answers to the research questions was a questionnaire.

The obtained data were analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences for Windows (SPSS). The results of the data analysis were presented in tables with statistical procedures and explanation of the findings in chapter IV.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings are discussed and interpreted as follows:

Discussion of General Information of the Sampled Students

The findings on the general information of the sampled students in Internet usage (Tables 1-10) indicated that all students were using the Internet and all of them agreed that using the Internet was useful for their everyday lives and studying. This fact indicates that nowadays most students use the Internet as a tool in their studying, especially foreign language learning because most of the Internet content is in English. The use of the Internet allows them to encounter authentic texts and authentic setting. Moreover, the Internet can provide a wealth of information; they can access and obtain information easily and quickly. Because of the benefits of the Internet, the students agreed that using the Internet was useful.

Regarding the benefits from Internet usage (Tables 3-4), the students chose "acquiring other knowledge besides English" and "enjoyment while using the Internet" as their first benefit. This fact shows that the Internet provides many interesting activities for the students and they always chose the activities that they were interested in. They used the Internet with enjoyment, and got knowledge at the same time. For example, when the students participated in a chat room, the benefit that they got was enjoyment, and at that time they gained knowledge by sharing information with other people. It is, therefore, clear that the first benefit that they got from using the Internet was acquiring other knowledge besides English and enjoyment while using the Internet.

According to the length of time in Internet usage (Table 5), overall students had mostly used the Internet for 3-5 years, followed by 5-7 years, 1-3 years, and more than 7 years respectively. However, when all student levels were examined, it was found that the percentage of the number of excellent students who had used the Internet for 5-7 years is 60%, while the percentage of the number of good students and fair students was only 33.3%. This result indicates that most excellent students had more experiences in using the Internet than good students and fair students. It can be seen that the students who had longer experiences in using the Internet showed higher achievement in their

studying. Consequently, it was quite clear that the length of time in Internet usage is related to English reading achievement of the students because the students who had longer experiences in using the Internet had more opportunities to encounter authentic texts and to practice and develop their reading skill and other skills.

Regarding persons who influenced the students to use the Internet, the finding (Table 6) revealed that the students listed persons who influenced them to use the Internet in the following order: myself, university/teachers, friends, and family members. From the result, it can be understood that university/teachers were important persons who influenced them to use the Internet. Therefore, it is important for university/teachers to motivate the students to use the Internet more as related to class objectives. This is a good way to make using the Internet as a tool in English class more effective.

With regard to training in Internet usage (Table 7), it was found that the majority of the students had never been trained in Internet usage, especially all excellent students. It can be understood that all excellent students had never been trained in Internet usage because they had long experiences in Internet usage, and they knew how to use it effectively. Hence, they do not need training in Internet usage. The excellent students could also get more benefits from the Internet than good students and fair students. Therefore, it is important for school and family to provide training in Internet usage to students because it could help students to develop Internet usage skill which leads to more benefits from the Internet for the students themselves.

According to the places where the students use the Internet (Table 8), the students mostly used the Internet at the university computer laboratory, followed by at an Internet café, home, friends' home, dormitory and parents' office respectively. From this fact, it can be understood that the students mostly used the Internet at the university computer laboratory as the first place because it was free of charge. Moreover, it was more comfortable to use the Internet here when they had free time during the class because the university computer laboratory is near the Faculty of Humanities' building. Moreover, when examining each student level separately, students from all levels also used the Internet at the university computer laboratory as the first place. Nevertheless,

the second place where each level student used the Internet was different. Excellent students used the Internet at their home as the second place, while good students and fair students used the Internet at an Internet café as the second place. From the finding, a possible explanation was that most excellent students had their personal computer and used them at their home because it was cheaper than using the Internet at Internet café. This gave them more opportunities to use the Internet than good students and fair students. When the students used the Internet a lot, they had more opportunities to get benefits from the Internet and to practice their language skills. Therefore, a suggestion rising here is to motivate students to use the Internet as much as they can and make use of this technology to help them develop their language learning.

With regard to comparing between the time spent on Internet usage and reading texts (Table 9), the majority of students used the Internet less than reading texts. However, the majority of excellent students used the Internet more than reading texts while good students and fair students used the Internet less than reading texts. This pointed to the idea that using the Internet is another source in studying that allows students to have opportunities to practice reading skill and this improves their language learning achievement.

With regard to the students' experience in using ESL websites, the finding (Table 10) reveals that the first three websites that the students knew and used were www.google.com, www.hotmail.com, and www.yahoo.com respectively, while the last three websites were www.warnerbros.com, www.nytimes.com, and www.altavista.com respectively. From the findings, a possible explanation is that www.google.com is the first of the top three websites that is known and used because it is a search engine that can provided a wealth of information quickly and also categorize as web, image, groups, and news. This made searching information easier. In addition, searching information from www.google.com can be in both Thai and English. Because of good points of www.google.com, it makes this website the most popular. For www.hotmail.com and www.yahoo.com, they were in the first three websites that the students knew and used because they provided free e-mail and could also store a lot of e-mail. Moreover, using

e-mail from www.hotmail.com and www.yahoo.com was also quick and easy. For the last three websites that the students knew and used, it could be understood that for www.altavista.com, it was a search engine which provided limited information and also loaded information slowly. For www.nytimes.com, it is less attractive to the students to use because it is a website of foreign online-newspapers. Language used in this web site might be too difficult to them because it was authentic language that did not simplify for ESL learners and there were a lot of using slang in it. For www.warnerbros.com, it was not interesting to the students to use. It might be because it was about foreign movies some of which were not shown in Thailand. This made this website uninteresting to them. Moreover, this website offered too few activities and introduced only movies of Warner Brothers Company.

For the web sites that the students knew but did not use, the first three websites were www.siamguru.com, www.thaimail.com, and www.wanerbros.com respectively while the last three websites were www.hotmail.com, www.kapook.com\musicstion, and www.yahoo.com respectively. From the finding, it was noticed that www.siamguru.com was the first of top three websites that students knew but did not use because it was a search engine that provided limited information and the feature of the website was less attractive than www.google.com. For thaimail.com, it provided free e-mail like www.hotmail.com and www.yahoo.com but the way to register for new user was quite difficult. Furthermore, the website was not colorful and attractive. For the last three websites that the students knew but did not use, www.hotmail.com and www.yahoo.com were in the last three websites that the students knew but did not use. It might be understood that the students mostly used e-mail from www.hotmail.com and www.yahoo.com because they provided more benefits to users as the research stated above. For www.hunsa.com/entertain that was one of the last three websites, a possible explanation was that it offered many activities to users, such as, playing game, searching information, sending e-cards, discussing on web board, and reading news. Since these three websites provided many good points to users, they become the last three websites that the students knew but did not use.

For the websites that the students did not know, the top three websites were www.nytimes.com, www.eslcafe.com and www.icygang.com/jukebox/index-eng.php respectively while the last three websites were www.kapook.com/musicstaion, www.bangkokpost.com, and www.hunsa.com respectively. According to the finding, it can be understood that www.nytimes.com and www.eslcafe.com were the first two websites which the students did not know because they were foreign websites. Althought, www.icygang.com/jukebox/index-eng.php was Thai website, but the students did not know it either. This might be because the website were not interesting. Therefore, when people used it, they did not introduce this website to anyone because they thought that this website were not intertesting. This might make the students did not know this website. For the last three websites that the students did not know, it might be explained that all the three websites were Thai websites which were neither colorful nor interesting. Moreover, there were many interesting activities in these three websites to interest with. These made www.kapook,com/usicstation, www.bangkokpost.com and www.hunsa.com the last three websites that the students did not know.

Discussion of Finding One

The study aimed to investigate the relationship between Internet usage and English reading achievement of fourth year students majoring in English in the Faculty of Humanities at Naresuan University. According to the finding (Table 11), there was no statistically significant relationship between Internet usage and English reading achievement. It could be because of some factors as follows.

First, since the contents of activities that students used or read on the Internet did not relate to their studying, using the Internet of the students did not their relate to studying. As can be seen in Table 13, the most popular purpose in Internet usage was searching information ($\overline{X}$=3.85) which could be in English or Thai and could possibly concerned nothing about reading English at all. Therefore, using the Internet might not improve the students' achievement in reading English. Besides, as shown in Table 13, the students' second popular Internet service was E-mail, which again can be written in

either Thai or English, so using E-mails of the students might not be a factor to enhance their reading English ability.

Second, level of using the Internet of students (very often, often, sometimes, rarely, and very rarely) may affect their studying. As mentioned above, if students had opportunities to use the internet very often, they had more opportunities to use it to develop or support their studying. According to Table 12, the students had rarely used the Internet. Therefore, level of using the Internet of the students was an interesting factor that might affect the relationship between Internet usage and English reading achievement of subject students.

Discussion of Finding Two

According to the finding in Table 12, overall students had rarely used the Internet (6 - 10 hours / weeks). When all student levels were examined, it was found that excellent students had often used the Internet, while good students had rarely used the Internet and fair student had sometimes used the Internet. It was therefore noticed that the students who had often used the Internet would have opportunities to get higher achievement in their studying. As mentioned above, excellent students used the Internet at their home as the second place while good students and fair students used the Internet at Internet café as the second place. This can explain why excellent students had often used the Internet.

It was noticed that the proportion of each student level that was not equal affecting the overall of the finding. Since the number of good students was larger than the number of excellent students and fair students, the overall of finding two was the students had rarely used the Internet.

Discussion of Finding Three

The study aimed to find the students' purposes for Internet usage. Two main purposes were identified: Internet usage in studying and Internet usage besides studying.

With regard to Internet usage in studying, the finding in Table 13 revealed that the students mostly used the Internet for searching information. Jinwuth (2001) also found that for studying, the high achieving students often used the Internet to search information for preparing their reports and assignments. From the finding, it could indicate that the students mostly used the Internet as an information resource for their studying because the Internet had a lot of information in many topics such as language news, health, sciences, history, sports, finance, or politics. For searching information from the Internet, the students could also get information that they wanted quickly and easily. The Internet can be available 24 hours a day and it is free of charge. Moreover, the Internet also provides a wealth of information, namely: facts, news, pictures, or songs. The students seem to search information by using the Internet in stead of going to the library.

With regard to Internet usage besides studying, the finding (Table 14) revealed that the first purpose that the students mostly used was for practicing supplement reading skill. It was noticed that using the Internet can encourage students to have opportunities to improve their reading. Since most of the contents on the Internet are in English, when the students use the Internet, the first skill that they have opportunity to use or practice is the reading skill. The last purpose for Internet usage besides studying is practicing supplement speaking skill which may be because there are less sources for practicing speaking on the Internet compared with reading, writing, and listening skills.

Discussion of Finding Four

According to the finding in Table 15, of all the services on the Internet that the students preferred was the World Wild Web and the last service that the students chose was Newsgroup. This result was in accordance with Tussaporn's finding (1999). Her research revealed that the service on the Internet that samples used the most was the World Wide Web (WWW). They mostly used the WWW for entertainment and improving reading and writing skills in English. From the finding above, it can be understood that the students preferred to use the WWW because there were many interesting activities in WWW, such as searching information, listening to radio broadcast, playing games,

reading online – newspapers, or doing English exercises or tests. Moreover, since the activities in the WWW were colorful, animated, and interactive, the students preferred to use the WWW more than other services.

With regard to the way to use the services on the Internet, the WWW was popular because it was very easy to use, while other services were more complex and difficult to use. The students did not need to study about the way to use the WWW. On the other hand, for Newsgroup, the students least preferred it, possibly because they did not know how to use it and the activities in Newsgroup were not colorful and attractive as the WWW.

Recommendations

From this study, some interesting points were found and the following recommendations are made:

Recommendations for ESL/EFL Teachers

On the basis of this study, all students had used the Internet and they agreed that using the Internet was useful. As shown in Table 7, most students (58.5%) had never been trained in Internet usage. It was, therefore, recommended that all students should be given Internet training in order that they would get more benefits and use it effectively.

According to the discussion of finding one, since the contents of activities that students used or read on the Internet did not relate to their studying, using the Internet of students did not relate to reading achievement. Therefore, more tasks requiring information and knowledge from the Internet should be assigned to students by teachers of English to encourage the students to use the Internet in more beneficial ways.

Moreover, since most students did not know or use websites listed in the part 4 of the questionnaire, it is recommended that teachers of English should give guidelines or advice about using the Internet and also suggest to their students various interesting web sites or services on the Internet so they chose suitable websites or services related to their studying.

There are many activities on the Internet that can be used to practice language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Therefore, it is quite clear that using the Internet is a good way to help ESL students to practice their language skills. In addition, English teachers can use the Internet as a resource for teaching reading. For example, the students may be assigned to search news on a specific topic on the online – newspaper and then report the news in class. This is a simple way to use the Internet to practice reading skill along with writing and speaking skills.

With regard to the purposes for Internet usage: in studying and besides studying the Internet is a favorite source for students to search information and practice reading skills, teachers should find suitable way to apply the Internet in teaching reading in order for students to gain a higher achievement in reading.

It is, therefore, suggested that using the Internet as a resource in studying or teaching should be relevant to the class objectives, with a good planning, preparation and cooperation of the teachers and the students.

Recommendation for Further Study

First, the current study surveyed only the relationship between Internet usage and English reading achievement. Therefore, it is suggested that a study on the effect of using the Internet and not using the Internet on English reading achievement should be conducted in order to be able to compare the benefits in English reading that students get from using the Internet and not using the Internet.

Second, this study was carried out to find the relationship between Internet usage and English reading achievement while there are other important skills in English (listening, speaking, and writing). Hence, it is recommended that research on the relationship between Internet usage and achievement in other skills in English should be done.

Third, comparative study on reading strategies used in reading printed materials and online materials should be also done as a further study.

Finally, it is suggested that a further study should also include a study of students' learning strategies. As a result, it will be useful for colleges/universities to design instruction and syllabus effectively.