

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION, IMPLEMENTATION, SUGGESTION AND FURTHER STUDIES

Chapter Five presents a summary of the study, the discussion and interpretation of the findings. Following this, the implications for designing the English course for M.B.A. students are explored, and recommendations for further studies are also made.

Summary of the Study

According to the researcher's interview in the Preliminary Study, English had been used for academic purposes among M.B.A. students at Naresuan University. In addition, these students had to study English for Business (205573) as foundation course work and Conversation and Discussion (205531) for non-credit course work. Despite this provision, these students still faced English language problems in academic studies. Up to the present time, there has been no comprehensive study of the academic English language needs, problems, and wants of M.B.A. students at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Naresuan University. Therefore, this study was conducted to provide a certain amount of information to help the planner involved to decide on effective English courses.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the needs of M.B.A. students for academic English and English language problems. It also sought to determine what these students' wants the English course were like. On the basis of the findings, suggestions were offered for the design of the English course for M.B.A. students at Naresuan University.

In this study questionnaires were distributed directly to eighty-one M.B.A. students at Naresuan University and the number returned was sixty or 74.07%. Seventeen questionnaires were sent to the lecturers and fifteen were sent back to the researcher (88.23%). The Data obtained were presented in tables with statistical procedure and explanation of the findings in Chapter Four.

Interpretation and Discussion of the Findings

This section presents needs in the four skills and a variety of academic English language activities as perceived by M.B.A. students and lecturers. It also discusses M.B.A. students' problems and wants for the English courses. Then the researcher sets these perceived factors in some orders of priority. That is, attention will be focussed on skills and activities in which there were extensive needs, high degree of problems and great wants. This information would provide some guidance as to which skills and activities should be emphasized in an English course. Data about these factors were analyzed separately among two groups of respondents.

Needs of English Language Skills and Activities

It is evident that according to this group of students, the need for reading skill was ranked the highest whereas the need for speaking was ranked the lowest (see Table 1.1). The general order was reading, listening, writing and speaking. That is to say, these students needed English mainly in reading for academic purposes in the M.B.A. program. This can be supported by the ranks of the first two activities involving the reading skills which were rated highest by these students, that is, reading textbooks written in English including technical terms in the field of Business Administration and reading textbooks written in English in other subjects (see Table 1.3). The reason may be that most course materials were in English so these activities were required for studying in the M.B.A. program.

The lecturers also supported the view that reading was the most needed skill for their students (see Table 1.2). They ranked reading activities, such as reading textbooks including technical terms in the field of Business Administration, reading textbooks in other subjects and reading academic journals/ research/ thesis abstracts written in English, as an extensive need (see Table 1.4). This suggested that English textbooks were used as their course materials and the last ranked involving reading activities, reading academic journals/ research/ thesis abstracts written in English seemed to be necessary for their students in the lecturers' opinions. Unlike their students the lecturers rated this reading activity at an extensive need in this case, the

lecturers should determine this need for their students because the students could not clearly express their need in some activities. As Richterich (1983: 3) points out, students generally have little or no knowledge of their future needs and teachers should determine needs for the students.

The investigations that reading was the most needed skill for graduate students and undergraduate students were conducted by many investigators both abroad and Thailand, for instance, Johns (1981), Pleansaisurb (1984), Chaikitkosi (1986), Sangnak (1993), Syananondh and Ingkhaninan (1993), Soranastaporn (1993), Suwattananand (1993), Bumroogthai (1996), Singto (1997) and Suwaroporn (1998).

A careful look at Table 1.1 indicated that the listening skill was of almost equal importance of reading skill in the opinions of M.B.A. students. They rated the listening skill as extensive need, but activities involving the listening skill were ranked as a moderate need.

It is also interesting to note that M.B.A. students rated searching for information in English via Internet as extensive need whereas their lecturers ranked this activity as very extensive need. To illustrate this point, English is an international language and is used all over the world in the age of globalization and in the business world. This activity is the easiest way to get information quickly so it seems to be the urgent need for M.B.A. students in studying in the M.B.A. program.

Additionally, the needs of writing and speaking skills and other activities were rated as moderate needs as perceived by the students and their lecturers. This may be because the M.B.A. program at Naresuan University is not taught as an English program. Hence, English is not a medium of instruction and the reading skill seems to be the most needed skill as can be seen that M.B.A. students used reading skills for their studies in the great extent. Besides this skill, other skills were not their urgently needed skills as perceived by the students and their lecturers.

Problems in English Language Skills and Activities

This study was designed to identify significant needs and set them in order of priority. Special importance was attached to skills or activities in which respondents reported not only extensive use but also substantial weakness in English. Therefore,

activities in which significant problems would be regarded as worth considering in course design.

According to Table 2.1, speaking was rated at a high degree of problem by students' self-perception in general situation, and other English language skills were rated at the medium degree of problem. But with regard to English language activities (see Table 2.2), the activities concerning speaking skills turned to be rated at the medium degree of problem. This controversy can be explain that, in terms of actual learning situations, these students normally did not use these activities frequently in their studies. The activities involving speaking skills were thus rated at the medium degree of problem. Moreover, the reason that the students had problems at the high degree of problem in the activities involving reading skills was because they usually spent more time and used these activities in most subjects during studying in the M.B.A. program. Therefore, English language activities involving reading skills appeared to be their problems and seemed to be necessary for them in studying in the M.B.A. program. This fact is confirmed by Albatch (1975 cited in Piereson and Friederichs 1981:34) that an ability to read English is essential for academic success in students' disciplines.

From Siriwong (1984) who conducted survey research on students' needs, it was found that the problem involving listening and speaking skills were the weakness problems of students. From this research findings it might be concluded that Thai students are less proficient in the aural-oral skills.

Priorities to be given to Skills and Activities According to Needs, Problems and Wants

In this section, significant needs identified by M.B.A. students and their lecturers and problems were discussed in connection with the wants identified by the students in order to set the priorities of skills and activities in the English courses.

The following are English language activities in which both a significant need (mean above 3.50) and a significant problem (mean above 3.50) clearly correspond to each other:

- a) Reading textbooks written in English including technical terms in the field of Business Administration
- b) Reading textbooks written in English in other subjects
- c) Reading academic journals/ research/ thesis abstracts written in English
- d) Searching for information in English via Internet

In order to set the priority, special concern should be given to skills and activities in which needs and problems clearly correspond to each other and respondents indicated as an extensive need and high degree of problem.

Base upon the findings (Table 3.2) the students wanted listening and speaking the most in the English courses. As can be seen in Table 2.2 they also ranked speaking skills the first as their serious problem. The studies conducted by many researchers such as Pleansaisurb (1984), Chiraphan (1987), Sinthuchai (1991) and Khematheeragul (1996) supported that listening and speaking skills are likely to be the most desired skills by students despite its limited extent of use.

In terms of wants, the students ranked reading the second skill to be emphasized in the English courses and writing the third (see Table 3.2), although these students realized that they needed reading skill the most. This may suggest that reading skills were most frequent and familiar to them and reading could be improved by students themselves. Therefore, in terms of wants reading skills might seem uninteresting to them and they will not take the English courses, which provide them principally with training in reading skills. As for listening and speaking skills, the students were offered the course of Conversation and Discussion (205531), which mainly focused on these two skills. It may be concluded that they wanted more opportunities to practice listening and speaking skills in the English course.

Implications for Course Design

Since the two courses of English offered in the M.B.A. program were not adequate for academic purposes, the students had great wants in taking more elective courses in English (see Table 3.1). Therefore, an English course outline for M.B.A. students should be suggested. The researcher will discuss the types of English in terms of skills, content, instructional mode and class size.

Skills

The English course should focus primarily on reading that is the skill greatly needed by the students. Their lecturers considered reading skill the most needed skill of the students. The reading activities which were used extensively were reading textbooks written in English including technical terms in the field of Business Administration, reading textbooks written in English in other subjects and reading academic journals/ research/ thesis abstracts written in English. Some techniques for improving reading skills of the students can be introduced in the English course that they wanted, for example, guessing the meaning of words from the context clues, reading for comprehension, etc. in order to minimize the unknown terms in the textbooks and some information obtain from Internet. However, listening and speaking skills should also be included in the English course. According to the students, they would like these two skills to be strongly emphasized. Moreover, all skills should be integrated in order to improve the students' proficiency in English and to minimize their problems in academic studies. The four skills can be taught together and should be related to the content of the English course.

Language Content

With regard to content, it can be inferred from Table 3.1 that the topics of the English course should be specific to the students' field of study, for example, business advertisements and news.

Instructional mode and Materials

A further suggestion from the students is that if possible, subject-specialists should provide their students with technical terms for better understanding. In addition, instructional language materials such as cassette tapes should be utilized.

Class size

The students recommended at least forty students per class in an English course. This is because a small class may create a better learning atmosphere and more effective participation in class activities, especially in speaking skill.

Recommendations for Further Studies

On the basis of this study, areas for further studies are suggested.

1. There should be a survey of needs of M.B.A. students in other institutes to see how similar their needs are and whether a common course can be used for students in the field of Business Administration.
2. A survey should be conducted to identify the occupational needs of M.B.A. students who have graduated from Naresuan University in order to ensure that the course will meet both immediate academic needs and future occupational needs.

