

# **CHAPTER SIX**

## **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter presents the following topics: Summary, Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations.

### **6.1 SUMMARY**

This study investigated the use of English among other members of the Thai Academic Community of Dhurakij Pandit University's graduate business students. The total of 131 postgraduate students (MBA and DBA students) participated in the study by answering the seven-part questionnaire. Qualitative data were also derived from two roundtable seminars conducted in August 2009. The statistics utilized in analyzing the data were percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test One-way ANOVA, and Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient.

The five aims were 1) to investigate the characteristics of the postgraduate students' uses of English, 2) their perceived competency, 3) their perceived problems, 4) their perceived ability to cope with the problems, and 5) their perceived support received from the university. In particular, this research intends to find the complex relationship among their uses of English, their personal characteristics, their perceived English competence, and their perceived identity.

The key findings are summarized as follows:

1. Most of the student participants were female. Most were between 20-30 years old. Most of them did not have overseas training experience. In terms of their perceived English competency, most of them said their English competency was at the moderate level.

2. The majority of the respondents did not perceive themselves as Thai academics. Even though a low percentage did not think they were Thai academics, more than half of them regarded themselves as being part of the Thai academic community.
3. In general, the level of English use with other members of the Thai academic community was low. Their use of English was limited in domain and frequency. Most of them said they read to facilitate their graduate studies. It was not a surprise to find that they chose reading rather than writing or speaking as their greatest need. Data from the questionnaire were confirmed by the data from the roundtables.
4. The subjects said they had moderate level ( $\bar{X} = 3.29$ ) of language problems across the four macro-skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The result from the roundtables confirms this survey.
5. In terms of their perceived language coping ability, the means was 3.26 with SD of .60. Their language-coping ability was moderate. This research has found that gender.
6. Perceived support from the university, the mean was 3.87 (SD = .70). Their level of support was high. This study shows that male and female students' perception of English support was significantly different from each other. The mean of the support received from the university among male students was lower than that of the female. This may suggest that both sexes prefer different modes of English support. Female students seem to prefer more English support.
7. The relationship between gender and support received from the university was identified. The mean of the female participants was higher than that of the males. Other factors investigated (program of study, the number of years studying at the university, age level, and occupational background) were not significant in their uses of English.
8. Gender was found to be a factor that has salient potent to explain many facets of English use.

## 6.2 CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this research has confirmed a number of hypotheses regarding young Thai academics. English competency, as one might expect, is perceived as one of the qualifications that characterizes the Thai academia. Despite this acknowledgement, the participants have reported that their use of English was limited in domains and frequency. In general, members of the Thai academic community seldom interact with each other in English, which is not a

surprise. The students reported that their competency was moderate, and they encountered the moderate level of challenges and difficulties. Most of them perceived themselves as being part of the Thai academic community. In particular, it has found that the two factors, identity and gender, seem to matter the most in explaining the characteristics of English use among the Thai graduate students.

### 6.3 IMPLICATIONS

Several of the research findings have the following practical implications.

1. The study found the low level of English use among the student participants. Their use of English was limited to their graduate studies. The program providers/developers should structure the learning environment to be more conducive to language development by, for example, organizing English workshops.
2. The study found the relationship between the student participants' perceived identity and their use of English for graduate study. Even though most of them did not acknowledge themselves as members of the community, most, however, recognized that they were part of the community. Complex as it may be, 'academic identity' seems to play a crucial role in many aspects of learning, especially the education at the tertiary level. This may suggest that program providers look beyond conventional teaching such as teacher-centered conventional classroom teaching. This may require that the university to provide more opportunities for them to go overseas to enrich their educational experience.
3. Even though the perceived English support from the university is high ( $M = 3.8$ ), the study found that male and female student participants perceived English support from the institution differently. How male students seek English help and support from the institution may be different from how female students do. This study also found that male and female students perceived their English coping ability differently. Compared with the male students, females were less able to cope with English demands. As more adult males and females have opportunities to enhance their educational potential, program providers should recognize the different needs of the two genders; this may mean that their support structures will need to be adequate, flexible, and individualized in some cases.

4. Considering the actual need of the students to be competent in the reading skills (M= 2.58), many of them felt that their English was insufficient to handle the demands of English. The program providers should offer a series of workshops to function as an integrative support structure.
5. Results of the two round tables show that technical terms and business jargon matter in their graduate learning and their ability to function in the community. Special attention needs to be paid to the introduction of these aspects.

## 6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. This study only investigated 131 graduate students in one of the private universities in Thailand. Nine students joined the two roundtables. Thus, its generalizability is limited. Future studies should broaden the scope of the investigation. For example, a study should be conducted to compare the characteristics of English use between graduate students who need to prepare theses in English and those who have to do them in Thai.
2. This study revealed that perceived identity had the role in explaining reported language use and the level of language coping ability of the student participants. Further research should investigate the many facets of perceived identities and other variables, e.g. the relationship between identities and other variables such as attitudes and motivation.
3. The present study has reported that the level of English use of the student participants was at the low level. This seems to confirm the current state of English use among postgraduate students in Thailand. (A small percentage of them said they had overseas language training experience). The program providers should create conditions where they are required to use more English in their postgraduate study. The model to be avoided seems to be the one that isolates English from the rest of the curriculum. Many students explained that English is needed in all subjects. The support they need should be integrated.
4. Future research should investigate the effectiveness of English content-based curriculum, as it has the potential to respond many of the postgraduate students' needs, including the need to be competent in the jargon of the field.