

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes: (1) the populations and subjects, (2) instruments, (3) data collection, and (4) data analysis. Details are discussed as follows:

3.1 POPULATIONS AND SUBJECTS

For a reliability of 95% and the sampling error not more than +/-5%, the sample number was calculated from a total of 6 English teachers and 194 students. Therefore, the subjects should be 4 of the teachers and 129 M.6 students.

Learners

Due to practical limitations, the researcher used non-probability sample designs (Cohen & Manion, 1994) to select the population for this study. More specifically, "quota sampling," which is the non-probability equivalent of stratified sampling (C. Nachmias & D. Nachmias, 1981) was applied. Furthermore, in order to ensure representation of the sample group in relation to the population, the learners' level of study was used as an important criterion for sampling. Thus, M.6 students at the College of Dramatic Arts in the academic year 2006 were investigated. However, as it was nearly the end of school term, there were only 100 M.6 students (86 females and 14 males) in the sample. Their ages ranged from 17 to 20 years old.

Teachers

Along with the learners, the present study involved a small number of teachers who teach English at the College of Dramatic Arts. The convenience or availability sampling procedure (Cohen & Manion, 1994; Nachmias & Nachmias, 1981) was used for selecting the teachers. More than expected, this group of participants included 6 teachers experienced in teaching English courses. Their age was between 35 and 55 years old and their experience in teaching English at college level ranged between 15 and 19 years. All

the teachers were Thai. They taught English in a range of departments. All of them taught or used to teach the very students who participated in this study.

3.2 INSTRUMENTS

Based on my adviser's experience of working with English learners and the curriculum requirements in Thailand, two slightly different types of instruments were developed, modified and finalized for this study. One (Form I) is for the English teachers and the other (Form II) is for the learners. Both instruments included 25 questions with responses ranked on a four scale ranging from 1 (strongly dislike), 2 (dislike a little), 4 (like a little) to 5 (strongly like).

These 25 items dealt with learner's learning styles and preferences. They ranged across the general areas of listening, speaking, reading, writing, testing, and participation types (Appendix A-B). As such, these 25 items could act as a good reflection of what the research focuses on. The main difference between learners' and teachers' questionnaires was in the stem. In the learners' version the instrument asked about their learning styles and preferences, whereas in the teacher's version, it asked about teachers' perceptions of learners' preferences.

To ensure the appropriateness and comprehensibility of the questionnaire items, three instructors (Professor Billy Carlon, Thammasat University; Professor Usana Wongnarkpet, Human Resources Development Officer 8, Institute of Foreign Affairs; and Professor Oranut Tatti, an English teacher of the College of Dramatic Arts) were consulted. Also, to make sure that learners and teachers understand the items in the questionnaire, their native language (Thai) was used. The language equivalence and clarity was rechecked by two instructors (Professor Usana Wongnarkpet and Professor Oranut Tatti) who are keen on both English and Thai languages. As such, there is no question about the validity of the instruments.

Regarding the reliability, the instruments were pre-tested with 50 samples, both teachers and learners, and Cronbach's alpha method was applied. Based on the test, it was found that the reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) of instruments as shown below

were high enough (higher than 0.80) to enable the researcher to conduct statistical analysis of the entire questionnaire.

Table 1 Reliability Coefficient (α) of Both Instruments

| Instruments | No. of cases | No. of items | Reliability coefficient |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| Both questionnaires as a whole | 60 | 25 | 0.836 |
| Teachers' questionnaire | 16 | 25 | 0.801 |
| Learners' questionnaire | 44 | 25 | 0.849 |

3.3 DATA COLLECTION: THE PROCESS

3.3.1 Distribute the developed questionnaires, form I and form II to the teachers and learners respectively.

3.3.2 Collect the returned questionnaires.

3.3.3 Check their completion and cross-check some data to verify the information.

3.3.4 Sort the questionnaires according to groups of the subjects.

3.3.5 Assign codes to the data and type them in the computer.

3.3.6 Analyse all data.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

SPSS/PC version 10 was used to manipulate the data collected; and descriptive statistics (frequency) and independent sample t-test was used to describe the data and test the hypothesis.

In summary, this chapter has shown all essential components which include methods, design, instruments construction, reliability test, and the statistical tests in this study. In the next chapter, the results of the study will be presented.