

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents (1) a summary of the study, (2) a summary of the findings, (3) discussions of the findings, (4) conclusions, and (5) recommendations for further research.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted to investigate the attitudes of Mathayom 2 students at Datdaruni School of the compulsory Chinese course they had attended in Mathayom 1. The subjects in this study were 280 Mathayom 2 students at Datdaruni School. The subjects comprised Mathayom 2 students who took the elective Chinese course (90 students), and 190 students from 410 Mathayom 2 students who did not take the elective Chinese course in the academic year 2007. They were selected by using stratified random sampling. The research instrument of this study was a questionnaire to measure the attitudes of the respondents towards the compulsory Chinese course for Mathayom 1 in terms of appropriateness of course content, appropriateness of teaching materials and teaching aids, teaching style, and usefulness of the knowledge. The third part dealt with the students' problems of learning Chinese and suggestions on how to improve the compulsory Chinese course for Mathayom 1. The number of returned questionnaires was 277 or 98.93% out of 280 copies.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The results of the study indicated that the grade the respondents received from the compulsory Chinese course for Mathayom 1 ranged from 1.0 from 4.0, and one fourth of them received a grade of 4.0 from the course. The majority of the respondents had never attended a Chinese course anywhere before the compulsory Chinese course at Datdaruni School. When asked about their study plans at the high-school level, half of them planned to study in the Math-Science field. Most of the respondents did not have a plan to study in Chinese speaking countries – China, Taiwan, or Hong Kong. The majority of them had never read Chinese newspapers before attending the compulsory Chinese course in Mathayom 1. However, most of

the respondents had listened to Chinese songs and watched Chinese movies or dramas before attending the course. Half of the respondents had peers taking the elective Chinese course in Mathayom 2. However, more than half of them answered that their peer recommendations did not influence their decision to take the elective Chinese course. In addition, most of them stated that their parents or anyone else in their family could not speak Chinese and could not read Chinese newspapers. The majority of them did not speak Chinese with their parents or anyone else in their family.

The respondents were very satisfied with the course content. They strongly agreed that the course content was applicable to real life. The respondents were also very satisfied with the appropriateness of teaching materials and teaching aids. They highly agreed that the teaching materials were appropriate. With regard to teaching styles, the respondents were very satisfied with the course. They strongly agreed that the teacher was friendly, approachable, and helpful. The respondents were also very satisfied with the usefulness of the knowledge they gained from the course. They strongly agreed that it served as a good foundation for them to study Chinese further. In addition, the findings showed that overall the respondents were very satisfied with the compulsory Chinese course for Mathayom 1.

According to the findings concerning the problems of learning the compulsory Chinese course for Mathayom 1 derived from the survey, almost half of the students agreed that the audiovisuals for learning e.g. projector, VCD player, and video players were insufficient. It was also found that almost one-fifth of the students agreed that the teachers gave them too many assignments. Regarding the suggestions on how to improve the Compulsory Chinese course for Mathayom 1, the majority of the respondents agreed that the teacher should add more in-class activities e.g. games, songs, and Chinese fables. Some of them suggested that there should be a library containing only Chinese publications at the school, and some stated that in Chinese classes there should be a Thai teacher teaching together with a Chinese teacher for the whole academic year in order to help them communicate better and make the class more effective. Some of the respondents also suggested that Chinese should be compulsory for all year levels, and the teacher should make his or her class more interesting.

5.3 DISCUSSION

5.3.1 The findings showed that the grades that the respondents received from the compulsory Chinese course for Mathayom 1 were related to their decision to take the elective Chinese course in Mathayom 2, although only at a low level ($r = .21$). It could be seen that the grades that the respondents received from the compulsory Chinese course for Mathayom 1 influenced their decision to continue studying Chinese in Mathayom 2. Compared to those who obtained lower grades from the compulsory Chinese course for Mathayom 1, the respondents who received higher grades were more likely to take the elective Chinese course in Mathayom 2.

As peers taking the elective Chinese course in Mathayom 2 were also found to be moderately related to the respondents' decision to take the course ($r = .47$), the respondents who had friend(s) deciding to take the elective course in Mathayom 2 tended to take the course as their friends did, while those whose friend(s) did not take the elective Chinese course in Mathayom 2 were unlikely to take the course. It was also found that peer recommendations were slightly related to the respondents' decision to take the elective Chinese course in Mathayom 2 ($r = .19$), which meant that friends' recommendation influenced the respondents' decision to take the elective Chinese course in Mathayom 2, although at a lower level than friend(s) who decided to take the course. These results confirmed the finding of Walqui (2000) who stated that teenagers were likely to be influenced by their peers. The findings were also in line with the research conducted by Sung and Padilla (1998) which found that peer group pressure was one of the factors that were significantly important among younger learners.

From the findings presented in Table 3, Chapter Four, most of the respondents planned to study in the Math-Science field at the high-school level (54.9%), followed by those in the Math-English field (16.7%), the English-Social study field (9.1%), and the English-Japanese field (8.7%) respectively. Meanwhile, only 2.2% of them planned to study in the English-Chinese field at the high-school level. As most of the respondents planned to study in other fields at the high-school level, they did not see the importance of studying the Chinese language and were unlikely to take the elective Chinese course in Mathayom 2. In addition, it was also noticeable that Japanese was still more popular than Chinese as there were more respondents

planning to study Japanese than Chinese at the high-school level. The explanation was that the Chinese language had just gained in popularity and only now played an important role in the international context. Meanwhile, the Japanese language had played an important role in the business and economic sphere of Thailand for a long time.

5.3.2 The overall attitudes towards the compulsory Chinese course for Mathayom 1 presented in Table 12, Chapter Four showed that the respondents were very satisfied with the course in terms of appropriateness of course content, appropriateness of teaching materials and teaching aids, teaching style, and usefulness of the knowledge as indicated by the overall mean score 3.64. It could be implied that the respondents had positive **attitudes towards learning the language**, which include the students' evaluation of the course and the teacher (Lalonde and Gardner, as cited in Spolsky, 2000, p.156).

As the findings shown in Table 13, Chapter Four suggested, both the respondents who took the elective Chinese course in Mathayom 2 and those who did not were very satisfied with the compulsory Chinese course they had attended in Mathayom 1. Moreover, the respondents who did not take the elective Chinese course in Mathayom 2 reported a higher score (Mean = 3.70) than those who did (Mean = 3.53). Consequently, it could be inferred that the respondents' attitudes towards the compulsory Chinese course for Mathayom 1 did not influence their decision to take the elective Chinese course in Mathayom 2.

5.3.3 According to the respondents' suggestions on how to improve the compulsory Chinese course for Mathayom 1 presented in Table 17, Chapter Four, more than half of the respondents agreed that the teacher should add more in-class activities e.g. games, songs, and Chinese fables (65.7%). These results opposed the findings of the study of Alcorso and Kalantzis (as cited in Nunan, 1988, p. 130) that the majority of their surveyed students preferred grammar exercises as the most useful part of the lesson. Meanwhile, the minority of them valued drama, role-play, songs and language games.

About half of the respondents agreed that the teacher should put more emphasis on conversation and vocabulary (53.8%). Also, the findings showed that almost half of them pointed out that the Chinese culture should be included in the

content of the compulsory Chinese course for Mathayom 1 (46.6%). In addition, it was found that almost half of the respondents agreed that the teacher should put a greater emphasis on speaking than writing (43.3%). It could be seen that the respondents preferred that the teacher focus more on conversation and vocabulary than grammatical rules, which could be inferred that they would like the teacher to put a greater emphasis on speaking rather than writing and reading. These findings were also in line with **Communicative instruction environment** in the theory of Lightbown and Spada (1993) that the second language setting where the style of instruction places the emphasis on communication, conversation, and language use.

5.4 CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the study showed that grades that the respondents obtained from the compulsory Chinese course for Mathayom 1, peers taking the elective Chinese course in Mathayom 2, and peer recommendations influenced the respondents' decision to continue studying Chinese in Mathayom 2. Overall the respondents were very satisfied with the course in terms of appropriateness of course content, appropriateness of teaching materials and teaching aids, teaching style, and usefulness of the knowledge as it was shown that both the respondents who took the elective Chinese course in Mathayom 2 and those who did not were very satisfied with the compulsory Chinese course they had attended in Mathayom 1. Consequently, it could be inferred that the respondents' attitudes towards the compulsory Chinese course for Mathayom 1 did not influence their decision to take the elective Chinese course in Mathayom 2. With regard to the respondents' problems of learning Chinese and suggestions on how to improve the compulsory Chinese course for Mathayom 1, more than half of the respondents agreed that the teacher should add more in-class activities e.g. games, songs, and Chinese fables. Also, almost half of them preferred that the teacher focus more on conversation and vocabulary than grammatical rules. They would like the teacher to put a greater emphasis on speaking rather than writing and reading.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

5.5.1 Since this research surveyed only female students in a girls' school, further research should be extended to study male and female students in boys' schools and co-educational schools in which Chinese courses were provided, in order to investigate the students' opinions and find out if gender has any influence over their opinions towards the Chinese courses.

5.5.2 As the language courses that Datdaruni School offered to the language-field students were limited to only English, Japanese, and Chinese, further research should also study students in other schools which provide more choices for those who plan to study in the language field at the high-school level.

5.5.3 Datdaruni School should take the level of difficulty of the compulsory Chinese course for Mathayom 1 into consideration as the findings of the study showed that grades that the respondents received from the course were found to be related to their decision to take the elective Chinese course in Mathayom 2, and some of the respondents perceived that the Chinese language was too difficult to be compulsory for Mathayom 1.