

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the study and a discussion of the findings. In addition, it provides the study's conclusions and recommendations for further studies.

Summary of the Study

The purposes of this study were to investigate the Internet using behavior of Mathayom Suksa 5 students in Muang District, Nakhon Sawan Province and to study the relationship between the Internet using behavior and English proficiency of Mathayom Suksa 5 students in Muang district, Nakhon Sawan province. This study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. How did the students use the Internet?
2. Was there a relationship between the Internet use and the English proficiency?
3. Was there a relationship between the length of time of the Internet use and the English proficiency?

The subjects of this study were 316 Mathayom Suksa 5 students in the academic year 2006 in Muang district, Nakhon Sawan province. The instruments used to find answers to the research questions were a questionnaire and an English test. The data were analyzed using a computer program. The results of the data analysis were as follows:

1. Most of the students used the Internet on weekends and holidays, they most frequency used the Internet at the school computer laboratories, Internet Cafés, home, and friends' houses respectively. Additionally, the first three websites for which the students used the Internet were <http://www.google.com>, <http://www.sanook.com> and <http://www.hotmail.com> respectively.

2. There was a relationship between the students' Internet use and their English proficiency at the statistical significant level of 0.05.

3. There was a relationship between the lengths of time of the Internet use and the students' English proficiency at the statistical significant level of 0.05.

Discussion of the Findings

In the study there were three discussions of the findings according to the research questions in Chapter One. The findings were discussed and interpreted as follows:

Discussion of the Finding One

The finding one showed how the students used the Internet (Table 3-5). The fact indicated that all students used the Internet in their daily lives and studies. This finding showed that the Internet featured many useful websites and information which were convenient for the students to use. Therefore, most students used it as a tool in their studies. In addition, on the Internet, English is a universal language. When the students used the Internet, they were forced to learn English automatically. According to Kasper (n.d.) the Internet resources are available for students with a variety of authentic English language texts. The Internet can, therefore, help students in learning or practicing language skills. It opens doors to multicultural education, establishes real-world learning experiences, provides higher-order thinking skills, and increase motivation and writing skills (Barron and Evers, 1996).

Regarding the finding of the days of the Internet use, most of the students used the Internet on Saturday – Sunday and holidays. This showed that most students spent an average of two days a week on the Internet use. It could be assigned that students chose to sit in front of the computer to use the Internet at their leisure time. Using the Internet in their free time was beneficial for the students because the more they use the Internet, the more English skills they could acquire. Most of the websites on the Internet are in English; thus, the students could learn the language automatically.

As for the location of the Internet use for the students, almost all the students used the Internet at different places with the highest frequency at the schools computer laboratories, followed by Internet Cafés, home, friends' houses, parents' offices,

dormitory, and other places (post office, public library and Tambon Internet Center) respectively. This result was in accordance with Boonraksa's finding (2005). This research revealed that the students often used the Internet at the university computer laboratory, followed by at an Internet cafés. This indicated that the schools' computer laboratories offered convenient Internet services for the students. Besides, the services were free of charge and the students could use the Internet during their lunch time and after school. Therefore, almost all students chose to use the Internet at school at the highest frequency.

An Internet café came in second, followed by the Internet at home. It could be said that the students wanted to use the Internet at their convenient places. However, the students can search whatever websites they want to and in same place such as Internet cafés and private houses usage can not be monitored by the school and its teachers, it is important for both teachers and parents to act as educated guides for the students to use the Internet wisely. Both teachers and parents should suggest appropriate websites for the children to use. With directions and available tutorage, students can learn to take the most benefits out of the Internet. The suggestion here is that most school computer laboratories should promote students to use the Internet as a support on students' education, including the English language. In conclusion, the Internet is available all around us, and it is a good tool for students and teachers alike. English language practices and tests on the Internet offer many skills of studies in the English language: grammar, listening, speaking, writing and reading.

Regarding the students' resources in the Internet use, the finding in Table 5 indicated that the first three websites that the students knew and used the most were <http://www.google.com>, <http://www.sanook.com> and <http://www.hotmail.com> respectively. This might be explained by the fact that <http://www.google.com> was an extremely popular search engine that could provide a wealth of information quickly and could help search the information the students wanted easily. People could find millions of website through <http://www.google.com>. For <http://www.sanook.com>, it was also popular among Thai students probably because this website was written in Thai language and provided many services; for example, search engine, chat rooms, songs, music, games, entertainment news and etc. The <http://www.hotmail.com> was also in the top three websites that the students knew and used the most. This website

provided free e-mail and big space for email storage. Moreover, the e-mail services, it was provided fast and easy to use.

Regarding the experience in using the Internet services that the students knew but did not use, the first three websites were <http://www.student-weekly.com>, <http://www.diaryland.com/> and <http://www.storythai.com/home> respectively. It could be explained by the fact that <http://student-weekly.com> was an English online newspaper. Therefore, it might not be attractive enough for the students since they needed to talk on the web board in English. Furthermore, all the information on the web was in English and the language might be too difficult and contained too many slangs for the students to understand and make a discussion on. For <http://www.diaryland.com> and <http://www.storythai.com/home> the students did not use them as same as other websites possibly because Thai students, in general, rarely had the diary-writing habits. Furthermore, the websites was in English and it was more difficult for most Thai students to write in English than in Thai.

As for the websites that the students did not know, the first three websites were <http://www.english-zone.com>, <http://www.thaielearner.com> and <http://www.diaryland.com> respectively. From the finding, it could be understood that <http://english-zone.com> and <http://www.thaielearner.com> were academic websites. If the students were not interested in academic topics, they might never come across these two websites. Furthermore, since these two website were less attractive for most students, they did not use them and they did not recommend these websites to others. For <http://www.diaryland.com>, as mentioned in the website the students knew but did not use, most students rarely wrote a diary so they might not be interested in this website. Thus, as they thought this website was not interesting for them, they did not introduce this website to others.

Discussion of the Finding Two

This study was aimed to investigate the relationship between the students' Internet using behavior and their English proficiency. The finding showed that although there was a low correlation between the Internet using behavior and the English proficiency ($r = 0.154^{**}$), there was a positive statistically significant relationship at the level of 0.05 between the Internet behavior using and the English proficiency as the relationship between the sum of the Internet using behavior and

English proficiency was more than 0.05.

As can be seen from the finding in Table 7, regarding the purposes for the Internet use for studies, the first five for which the students in overall used the Internet for studies were for searching information to do homework and reports in other subjects, searching information to do English homework, communicating with friends about studying, studying CAI on the web and studying and practicing vocabulary on the web. It was noticed that the students thus could improve their English proficiency with the Internet use because, as mentioned earlier, the Internet information was mostly written in the English language. When the students used the Internet, they were forced automatically to learn English. Besides, the frequency of using the Internet of the students (very often, often, sometimes, rarely, and very rarely) might affect their English proficiency. According to Jinwuth's study (2001), the results were 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 be inferred that the students often used the Internet as an information resource for their studies because the Internet had a lot of information in almost every field of study. As mentioned before, the more the students used the Internet, the more they could develop or improve their English proficiency. Thus, the level of the Internet use of the students was an interesting factor that might have affected the relationship between the Internet use and the English proficiency.

As for the Internet use for non-academic purposes (Table 8), the first five purposes for which the students used the Internet were for enjoying entertainment, searching non-academic information, communicating via e-mail, communicating via chat rooms, and downloading files respectively. This meant that a large amount of the students' time allotment was given to entertaining themselves through the Internet. The students often used the Internet for communicating by e-mail which could help them become active communicators, albeit mostly in Thai. This could help preparing them for their social lives and studies. In Aungkanawin's study (2003), the finding showed that after learning to use the Internet, students gained more knowledge. They learned that their English improved. By exchanging news from the Internet, they increased their knowledge in current affairs, which was beneficial for their studies.

Regarding the Internet applications (Table 9), the first five Internet applications that the students in overall used were online entertainment, search engines, portal webs, chat rooms, and downloads respectively.

When the students' levels were examined, it was found that the high achievers used portal webs, search engines, e-mail, chat rooms, BBS, web boards, forums, blogs, weblogs, diary, downloads and online entertainment more than the intermediate and low achievers. This showed that the high achievers were familiar with navigating their ways through the Internet for requiring information and news. In addition, this showed the tendency to improve their English proficiency as many of the websites on the Internet were English-based. By monitoring and exchanging news, and discussing opinions on the Internet, the students increased their knowledge in current affairs, which was beneficial for their studies and their social lives because information on the Internet required understanding of the English language. Familiarity with English sentence structures, vocabulary, and expressions would benefit students as they could come to recognize vocabulary and its contexts within certain sentences and expressions.

However, it was surprising that the low achievers used e-learning more than the high achievers. This finding could possibly be explained that the high achievers rarely used e-learning because it offered the lessons that they had already known from classes or text books. The student used it for revising their lessons and some e-learning pages did not differ from the text books. Thus, it was better for the high achievers to use or study English from other applications to improve their learning. Contrarily, the low achievers used e-learning pages because they wanted to revise or gain more knowledge that they could not follow in class. However, the students who used the e-learning had to be highly motivated and responsible because they had to study and did all the assignments by themselves. Learners with low motivation or bad study habits might fall behind (Berman, 2006). Likewise, some low achievers did not choose the contents and tools that were appropriated to their interests, needs and skills because they lacked good guidance and advice. That was why using e-learning was rarely related to their study and their English achievement.

Discussion of the Finding Three

In this part of the survey, the study was aimed to investigate the relationship between the students' length of time of the Internet use and their English proficiency. According to the findings (Table 10), there was positive statistically significant relationship between the length of time of the Internet use and the students' English proficiency although there was a low correlation ($r = 0.156^{**}$). It could be discussed as follows:

As can be seen from Table 11 showing the hours of the Internet use per week, the students in overall spent an average of 1-5 hours on the Internet per week, followed by 6-10 hours/week, less than 1 hour/week, more than 15 hours/week and 11-15 hours/week respectively.

From the finding, when of all the students' levels were examined, it was found that the percentage of the number of high achievers who had used the Internet for 6-10 hour per week was 39.1%, while the percentage of the intermediate achievers and low achievers was only 11% and 19.3% respectively. It could be see that the more the students spent their time on the Internet use, the more opportunities they had to encounter authentic materials and to practice and improve their English learning. Therefore, when the students were on the Internet, they were forced automatically to learn English (Maley, 2000). Consequently, their English improved, resulting in their higher language proficiency.

Recommendations

From this study, some interesting points and aspects about appropriate and healthy Internet use were derived; thus, the following recommendations are given:

Recommendations for the Academic Aspect

As can be seen from the findings of the study, it can be said that the Internet has brought new dimensions and opportunities to students in many aspects of communication, classroom interactions and authentic materials. Furthermore, the Internet has given a chance for students to improve their discourse, grammar, vocabulary and language skills in a real and natural environment. Thus, the Internet use has been proven useful for the students' English studies. It is recommended that high-school students be encouraged to spend time on the Internet, which is a rich and

modern resource of information and able to assist students in their English learning (Sperling, 1998, p. 2). Students should be enforced and guided in their Internet use in order to enhance their learning, as well as to establish risk free environments for the Internet use. Furthermore, high-school students should be able to access the English language information on any subjects and learn through the Internet. They should be encouraged to connect with English-speaking people who can help improving their English communication, and share interests. Students can do this via e-mails, blogs, web boards, forums and other Internet applications. They can link up with friends, exercises and even language tutors on the Internet. The World Wide Web is the dynamic classroom and learning community. With these advantages, high-school students must be Internet-educated in order to best gain profits from all the sources and resources offered. As almost all of the students used the Internet on campus at school computer laboratories, teachers and educators have to be aware of risks the Internet could pose on young adults, thus, supervision and right suggestions are necessary. A list of guidance can be drawn up to limit the risks and expand their updated learning environment. This could warn high-school students and teachers to be aware of the risks of the Internet. Teachers and parents should suggest to them some examples of appropriate web sites, such as, online dictionaries to look up words instantly and the Internet picture dictionaries for better understanding of vocabulary. There are websites where high-school students can log on and practice their skills in trials and series, so they can review their weaknesses and set their goals within their current ability or potential.

In conclusion, at present the Internet plays an important role in the daily life of people in all aspects such as educational, business, economic and social sectors. As the result presented in this paper showed that even though there was a low correlation between the Internet using behavior and the English proficiency as well as the length of time of the Internet use and the English proficiency, there was a positively significant relationship between the Internet using behavior and the English proficiency. The Internet is a useful tool that can be used for teaching and learning materials in ESL/EFL classrooms. There are many activities on the Internet that can be used to practice language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Teachers should encourage high-school students to use the Internet during their school hours



when they can be supervised. For example, teachers of computer classes could teach high-school students in the computer class how to use the Internet properly, and suggest interesting and educating websites for the students. The teachers may assign Internet-based homework, where the students can find information and answer questions through the Internet. It is quite clear that the Internet use is a good way to help students in learning and improving their language learning.

Recommendations for Further Studies

First, this study surveyed only the relationship between high-school students' Internet use and their English proficiency in an urban area (Muang district, Nakhon Sawan province). Therefore, it is suggested to make a study to find the relationship between the students' Internet use and their English proficiency in a rural area.

Second, other variables besides day, place, purpose and gender of the high-school students may have effects on the relationship between the students' Internet use and the English proficiency and, therefore, may also be worth studying.

Third, it may be interesting to conduct a comparative study between the high-school students' Internet use in rural schools and their counterparts in urban schools.

Finally, studies about the relationships between high-school students' Internet use and their achievement in other subjects are also recommended.