

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHOD

This study is a survey research on university students' motivation which dealt with a rather big population. In this chapter, the methodology employed is discussed in detail. The procedure of carrying out this study can be divided into five steps: selecting the sample, developing research instrument, conducting pilot test, collecting data, and analyzing the data.

#### Subjects

The population of this study was 897 students who enrolled in a general English course in the second semester of the academic year 2004 at a university in the north of Thailand. Since all of the students had already been grouped by class sections, it was appropriate to use cluster sampling technique to select the sample (Gay, 1990). The population of this study was 897, so the sample size of this study was 30%. This number was suggested by Baker (1999) and Leedy and Omrod (2001) that

the suitable sample size for the population under 1,000 is 30%.

In this English course, there were all together 35 sections with an average number of 25 students per section. The number of sections needed for the study was selected by dividing the desired sample size (269) by the average number of students in each section (25). Thus, the number of sections needed was  $269 \div 25 = 10.76$  (11). To ensure that all sections have equal chance of being selected, the researcher chose every third section as samples. To illustrate, the sections chosen were sections 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 24, 27, 30, and 33.

The total number of subjects were 275. The female students comprised 66.5% of the sample, and male students comprised 33.5% of the sample (see Table 2). Their ages ranged from 18 years old to more than 20 years old, that is, 12.7% were 18 years old, 47.6% were 19 years old, 19.6% were 20 years old, and 20.0% were over 20 years old. These students first studied English at different ages. As a result, there were varied numbers of years they had spent studying English. The largest number of the students (39.3%) had been studying English for eight years. The next largest number of the students (38.2%) had been studying English for 15 years, and 16.7% of the students had been studying English for 12 years. The

least number of students (0.7%) had been studying English for 6 years. However, there were 5.1% of the students who failed to provide this information. Among all of the 275 students, 6.9% had been to English-speaking countries before the current study took place, whereas 93.1% had never been to any English-speaking countries.

### Questionnaire Design

The researcher had found many interesting questionnaires, but the one that was chosen for the current study was created by Noels, Pelletier, Clement, and Vallerand (2000). It was chosen because it has been used in many motivation studies, especially the ones that their results are being compared with those of the current study.

This questionnaire was a questionnaire with 21 items designed to assess the student's amotivation or the lack of motivation, different types of the student's motivational regulation, and intrinsic motivaion. These questionnaire items were categorized into three main groups. The first group was the first three items assessing the subjects' amotivation. The second group contains nine items assessing the subjects' three types of motivational regulation: external regulation,

Table 2

## Demographic characteristics of the subjects

Characteristic	Number	Percent
Gender		
Male	92	33.5%
Female	183	66.5%
Age		
18 years	35	12.7%
19 years	131	47.6%
20 years	54	19.6%
more than 20 years	55	20.0%
Number of years that the subject had learned English		
6 years	2	0.7%
8 years	108	39.3%
12 years	46	16.7%
15 years	105	38.2%
unspecified	14	5.1%
Visiting English-speaking countries		
Yes	19	6.9%
No	256	93.1%

introjected regulation, and identified regulation. This group was divided into three subcategories according to the three types of motivational regulation with three questionnaire items for each subcategory. The last group contains nine questionnaire items assessing the subjects' intrinsic motivation. This group was classified into three subgroups: knowledge, accomplishment, and stimulation. Each subgroup contains three questionnaire items assessing the subjects' different types of intrinsic motivation.

Since this questionnaire was designed for Anglophone students studying French as a second language in Canada, one item in the questionnaire was not suitable for Thai setting. That item asked if it was true that the student's reason for studying French was "To show myself that I am a good citizen because I can speak a second language" (Noels, Pelletier, Clement, & Vallerand, 2000, p.84). This item did not fit the Thai setting because English is not a second language of Thailand. Knowing English has nothing to do with being a good citizen; therefore, it was deleted from this study.

Besides the items taken from Noels, Pelletier, Clement, and Vallerand's questionnaire (2000), the researcher had added six other items that were necessary for Thai settings. The first one was "Because it

(English) is a compulsory course." Since English is a compulsory subject in Thailand, studying English is an obligation for them. If they had any other choices, they might not choose to study English. This item was added for the subjects to show that they were studying English because they were required to.

The second item, "In order to study abroad after I graduate from the college.", was added because a lot of Thai students believe that being a graduate from universities in foreign countries, such as the United States, England, and Australia, was more prestigious than being a graduate from Thai universities. They also believe that it would help them find a better job easily. These students may study English for this reason.

The third was "In order to travel abroad." Some students may want to travel abroad for different reasons. For example, some of them may want to gain pleasure, whereas others may want to broaden their worldview. It was also possible that the reason why they wanted to travel abroad was to brag to their friends that they had already been abroad. No matter what the reason was, they believed that they needed to know English in order to do so. For this reason, this item was added to the questionnaire.

The fourth item was "Because I like my English teacher." Students' motivation can be affected by their attitude toward the teacher (Gardner, 1985). There are many factors from both teachers and students that can affect students' attitude toward teacher. These factors can be students' past experiences, students' expectations of teachers, teachers' personality, and the interaction between teachers and students. In Thailand, young students were taught that teachers were like their second parents because they were the ones with whom students spent most of their time while they were not at home. Moreover, teachers were responsible for bringing them up and taught them not only knowledge but also morality. Students who found that teachers were really like their second parents would have a very positive attitude toward teachers, whereas those who found that teachers were like their enemies would have a very negative attitude toward teachers. Yet, some students may not feel good or bad about teachers which means they have a neutral attitude toward teachers. This item showed the relationship between students' attitude toward teachers and their motivation to learn English.

The fifth was "In order to gain acceptance from teachers and friends." As social beings, students might expect acceptance from their teachers and their friends

one way or another. Since English was a prestigious language to many Thai people, some students might think that their fluency in English might bring them acceptance from people around them. As a result, they took studying English as a means to fulfil their desire.

The last one was "In order to live in an English speaking country." Some students might believe that they would live more happily in an English speaking country for several reasons. For example, the culture of that country might suit them better than Thai culture, so they would feel more comfortable living there. Another example is that, they could find a better job with higher salary there, and they would be more contented in that country.

The final version of this questionnaire had 26 items, which were categorized into three main groups (see Appendix A). The first group was items 1-4 that assessed students' amotivation. The second group was items 5-16 which could be divided into three subgroups. The first subgroup was items 5-11. These items assessed the subjects' external regulation. The second subgroup was items 12-13. These two questionnaire items assessed the subjects' introjected regulation. The last subgroup in this subcategory was items 14-16, which assessed the subjects' identified regulation. The last main group



contains ten questionnaire items which could be categorized into three subgroups. These three subgroups were items 17-19, 20-22, and 23-26, which assessed students' three different areas of intrinsic motivation: knowledge, accomplishment, and stimulation respectively.

#### Pilot Test

Before implemented, the questionnaire was translated into Thai to make it easier for the participants to read and to ensure that they would understand every questionnaire item. Then it was administered to six first-year university students who did not participate in the current study to see whether there were any problems in the questionnaire. Three of the students were male and another three were female. When they finished filling out the questionnaire, the researcher asked whether they understood everything that was in the questionnaire or not. They said that all questions were clear; they could perfectly understand every question. However, one student said that he was not sure what the "Uncertain" column meant. Therefore, the researcher added a percentage in each column in the questionnaire to clarify the different degrees of agreement each column represented.

## Data Collection

In order to collect the data for this study, first, the researcher sent a letter to the head of the English Department to ask for a permission to collect data. Then the researcher contacted the course coordinator to get the information about the class time and the lecturer who was responsible for each section. After that, the researcher made an appointment for collecting data with every lecturer. At the appointed time, the researcher met the subjects in their class to explain the reason for data collection, and told them that their identity would remain anonymous and their answers would not affect their course grades. Then the researcher gave out the Thai version of the questionnaire and described how to fill it out. After the researcher finished explaining everything, the subjects started to fill out the questionnaire. Some of them finished filling out the question in five minutes, but some of them took longer time than others did. Averagely, the whole procedure took about ten minutes.

## Data Analysis

After all the questionnaires were collected, the data were analyzed by using SPSS program. First, each participant's personal information was entered into the computer. Then the participant's response for each item was coded and keyed into the computer. The coding was done by assigning a value to the participant's response using the following scales: strongly agree, 5; agree, 4; uncertain, 3; disagree, 2; strongly disagree, 1 (see Table 3).

Table 3

Scales of participants' responses

Scale	Participant's response
5	strongly agree
4	agree
3	uncertain
2	disagree
1	strongly disagree

After all the data was entered into the computer, the subjects' demographic data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, and mean. Next, factor analysis was applied in order to classify the students' reasons for studying English according to self-determination

theory. After that, each factor was labeled with a type or subtype of motivation. Finally, the items that belong to the same factor were grouped together, and the mean scores of the participants' responses to the items were interpreted. In order to interpret the mean scores, the class interval has to be calculated by using the following formula.

$$\text{Class interval} = \frac{(\text{upper bound} - \text{lower bound})}{\text{number of class intervals}}$$

The class interval obtained from the calculation was 0.8, so the range of mean scores and their interpretation were as the followings: highest, 4.21 - 5.00; high, 3.41 - 4.20; moderate, 2.61 - 3.40; low, 1.81 - 2.60; lowest, 1.00 - 1.80 (see Table 4).

Table 4

Interpretation of mean scores

Range of Mean Score	Degree of Motivation
4.21 - 5.00	Highest
3.41 - 4.20	High
2.61 - 3.40	Moderate
1.81 - 2.60	Low
1.00 - 1.80	Lowest

According to Table 2, there were big differences in the number of years the participants had been exposed to English. The table showed that 39.3% of the participants had 8 years of experience in studying English whereas 38.2% of the participants had 15 years of English learning experience. These two groups comprised almost 80% of the participant body, and the gap between these two groups' length of exposure to English was almost double (8 and 15 years). It would be interesting to see how the differences in length of English studying experience can affect the participants' English language learning motivation, so the researcher use the SPSS program to analyze the correlation between the number of years that the participants had learned English and the participants responses to the questionnaire items.

The results of the analysis will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.