

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

#### Summary of the Study

English is taught nationwide in Thailand. Nonetheless, although most students in Thailand have had years of learning English as a foreign language, many of them still cannot communicate in English. The root of the problem lies in the teacher-centered education and the lack of stimulating English environment. One way to improve the situation is to establish English immersion programs with emphasis on the application of the learner-centered cooperative learning strategies.

The objective of this research was to investigate the effectiveness of using cooperative learning team strategies in an English immersion program with Thai high school students who were non-native speakers of English. It was hypothesized that students in an English immersion program where cooperative learning was used would demonstrate particularly better proficiency in English than students taught using the traditional teacher-centered approach.

The research was carried out with two groups of Thai high school students enrolled in the intensive English summer program at the Asian University of Science and Technology in Pattaya, Chon Buri, Thailand in March-May of the year 2001 consisting of sixty hours of EFL instruction. The English language level of the students in the beginning of the study was elementary. Most of the students were college-bound. The students came from upper-middle class families, and there were male and female students in both groups. Each group was comprised of sixteen students.

The measurement instruments used in this study were pretest and posttest. The pretest was administered to both the control and experimental groups before the beginning of the term, and then the posttest was administered to both at the end of the term. The posttest results were compared with the pretest results. The results differed in favor of the experimental group, which thereby supported the hypothesis, showing that the students taught using cooperative learning in the English environment were more successful than the students taught using the traditional teacher-centered approach.

## **Discussion of Results**

The comparison of the results of the posttest from both the control and the experimental group shows that it is in fact possible for students to learn more when they are taught using cooperative learning strategies. The effectiveness of cooperative learning in Thailand is manifested.

The overall success of the experimental group is due to the choice of instructional approach, i.e., the results show that the control group that was taught using the traditional teacher-centered instruction was not as successful as the experimental group that was taught using the learner-centered cooperative learning instruction.

The findings of this study go in line with what has been done in other countries (Jacobs, Lee, and Ball, 1995; Christison, 1990; Kagan, 2000; Slavin, 1983; Met, 1993; Soifer, 2000; Gumz, 2000) while the present study contributes to our understanding of the effectiveness of using cooperative learning with English immersion in Thailand.

## **Implications and Recommendations**

Because there has not been much research done in immersion and particularly in cooperative learning in Thailand, this study can serve as a contribution to further investigation into the effectiveness of using cooperative learning and English immersion in this country.

The results of this study will be applicable to most schools in Thailand though exceptions are possible. However, the purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of using cooperative learning in English immersion programs in Thailand in general terms using the summer intensive program at the AsianUST as a sample, suggesting themes for future research in Thailand.

This means that for administrative and executive decisions bound to establishment of English immersion programs with emphasis on cooperative learning to be made in order to improve the situation, more research should be done in the full variety of educational contexts in Thailand, e.g., in private and public education sectors, particularly in public elementary, secondary, high, and vocational schools, as well as universities. Such research will surely be beneficial to Thai students wishing to master the English language.