

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the two-year English courses provided for EFL students at a higher-vocational certificate college. This chapter describes the methods of the study which included participants, research instruments, data collection, and data analysis.

Participants

The study focused on three population groups. They were eight English teachers of the higher-vocational certificate level at Lampang College of Commerce and Technology, second-year students in the intensive English program at the same college, and the alumni of the same program who graduated in 2001 and 2002.

Teachers

The first group of the participants were eight English teachers in the higher-vocational certificate level. They were four male and four female teachers. The first two teachers were American male and both had been teaching English to EFL higher vocational certificate students at LCCT for one year. The first teacher (T-01) was 23 years old. He had a bachelor's degree in political science and philosophy.

The second one (T -02) was 26 years old with a bachelor's degree in theatre. He had taught English in Korea for one year. After he finished his contract in Korea, he applied to be an English teacher at this college.

The third participant (T-03) was a 31-year-old Thai woman who had been teaching English in this program for five years.

Participant Four (T-04) was 33-year-old Thai woman. Both Participant Three and Participant Four had a bachelor's degree in education.

The fifth teacher (T-05) was 29-year-old Thai woman with a bachelor's degree in tourism management. She had a three year teaching experience in this program.

Participant Six (T-06) was 31-year-old British with a bachelor's degree in philosophy. He has been teaching in the program for one year and a half.

The seventh participant (T-07) was a 32-year-old American man. He obtained a bachelor's degree in business administration. He had worked in Singapore for two years and had taught English in Lamphun for one year.

The last participant (T-08) was a 31-year-old woman from the Philippines, with a bachelor's degree in hotel and business administration. She had been teaching in the program for two years.

Students

The second group consisted of six second-year students in the Intensive English courses. These six participants were selected from a population of 65 students by random sampling. The random selection process followed the specific steps. The researcher started from defining six from 65 second-year students in the English program as the population. Next the researcher wrote each individual's name on a separate slip of paper and placed all the slips in a container. After that the researcher shook the container and

selected slips from the container until the desire number was selected.

Six students were all female and their age ranged between 18 and 20. Two of the six students (S-01 and S-06) studied accounting, and two others (S-02 and S-05) studied English for business language; one (S-03) studied tourism industry; and the last one (S-04) majored in computer studies.

Alumni

The last group of the participants was four alumni who participated in the LCCT intensive English courses who graduated in 2001 and 2002. They were selected to participate in this study. Of the four alumni, two (one male, one female) were randomly selected from the desired subgroup that graduated in 2001, and two (one male, one female) were randomly selected from the desire subgroup that graduated in 2002.

Of the 2001 alumni selected for this study, one of them (A-01), studied business language. After graduation, she obtained a job working for a foreign company in Lampang. The second alumnus (A-02), studied accounting. Instead of obtaining a job, he chose to continue his studies in a university in Chiang Mai.

The first 2002 alumni (A-03), who was male, studied Accounting while the other (A-04) who was female, majored in computer studies. Both of them chose to continue their studies in a university in Lampang.

Research Instruments

To collect the data for this study, the researcher employed interviews and documentary sources as the research instruments. The details of each instrument are discussed below.

Interviews

In this study, the interview was a tentative-semi-constructed type, aimed to investigate the participants' opinions towards the English courses. The questions had been adapted from Nunan's keys questions in program evaluation (1992) as discussed in Chapter 2. The adapted questions were divided into five categories. They were needs analysis, content, methodology, learners performance, and assessment and evaluation. In order to help students and alumni understand more about interview questions, the researcher also provided the Thai version of the interview

questions for students (see Appendix L) and for alumni (see Appendix M).

The researcher interviewed all participants in the three groups individually. The interview questions were divided into three sets corresponding to the three different groups of participants. The researcher interviewed the teachers by using the teacher interview questions, which consisted of 18 questions focusing on need analysis, content, methodology, learners, and assessment and evaluation (see Appendix C). The second group that the researcher interview was the students. The researcher used the student interview question, which consisted of 14 questions focusing on needs analysis, content, methodology, learners, and assessment and evaluation (see Appendix D). The last group of participants were alumni. They responded to 10 questions in the alumni interview form, which consisted of 10 questions focusing on needs analysis, content, methodology, and learners (see Appendix E).

The types of questions were both closed- and open-ended. They were carefully conducted and revised by the researcher and approved by a supervising professor before being given to the subjects. In addition, the researcher pilot-tested these questions with six students before being used.

Documentary Sources

The documents used in the data collection were English course syllabi, a summary of the seminar , 2003, and reports from the teachers.

The researcher contacted many offices in order to obtain those documents. For instance, the LCCT English Center provided English course syllabi, the seminar summary, and the teachers' reports.

English Course Syllabi

The English program provided four English core courses. The LCCT English Center adapted them from the English courses designed by the Ministry of Education in Bangkok. These courses were 1) English 1 (Course code: 01-320-101) (see Appendix F) , 2) English 2 (Course code: 01-320-102) see Appendix G, 3) Business English Conversation 1 (Course code: 05-081-103) (see Appendix H), and 4) Business English Conversation 2 (Course code: 05-081-104) (see Appendix I). The students enrolled in the intensive English courses had different English proficiency levels and backgrounds. The LCCT English Center used this information as a guideline for designing the English courses. The researcher used the above-

mentioned documents to investigate the students' opinions towards the English courses under the aspects of content and pre-specified objectives.

Seminar Summary

The LCCT International Education Center hosted a seminar for their colleagues on June 13-15, 2003 . The president of LCCT declared the LCCT statements of vision, mission, and its language policy. The administrators and teachers were able to discuss problems in the teaching and learning process and arrive at the solutions. Both groups expected that the results of the seminar would be implemented in the following academic year (see Appendix J). A summary of the seminar provided the data about the ways to improve the English courses from the language teachers' and administrators' points of view.

Teachers' Reports

At the end of each semester, the teachers had to write reports on the courses offered in the intensive English courses. The reports were about their suggestions on course contents, materials, and the students.

Data Collection

The interviews took place at the International Education Center Building in the college. The researcher conducted the three sets of interviews at the beginning of the first semester of the academic year 2004. The participants received a list of questions before the interview so that they could study those questions and ask if they did not understand some terms or the listed questions.

Before getting started with the interview, the researcher asked the participants for their permission to record the interview and also informed them that it would take about twenty minutes for each interview. After that the researcher explained the nature of the research and the purposes of the interview each participants.

For the six students, the researcher also explained to them that there was no right or wrong answer in the interview. Answering the questions did not affect any marks or grades in their English classes, so they felt more comfortable answering the questions. Moreover, some students and the four alumni also needed more clarification about some terms, for instance "needs survey", "pre-specified objectives", "learning strategies", and "self-assessment".

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, the researcher transcribed the tapes and sorted and categorized the data into five categories: needs analysis, content, methodology, learners' performance, and assessment and evaluation. These five categories were based on Nunan' key questions in program evaluation (see Table 1).

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter described the way the researcher studied the English courses evaluation. The researcher first described three groups of participants from the higher vocational certificate level at Lampang College of Commerce and Technology. They were eight English teachers, six second-year students, and four alumni from 2001 and 2002. Next, the researcher discussed the instruments for collecting data, interviews and documentary sources. Then, the researcher described the procedures for collecting data. Finally, the researcher discussed the analysis of the collected data, which were divided into five categories ; needs analysis, content, methodology, learners' performance, and assessment and evaluation.