# Chapter 5

# Conclusions and Discussions

The objectives of this study were to explore the English Vocabulary Skill and investigate the factors affecting English Vocabulary Skill of undergraduate students at Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus. The sampled subjects comprised 785 undergraduate students from the faculties of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, Science and Technology, Communication Science, Fine and Applied Arts and the College of Islamic Studies, enrolled in the second semester of the 2005 academic year at Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus. The data were collected using the English Vocabulary Skill Test and the university MIS database. The data of this study included one continuous outcome (English Vocabulary Skill) and nine determinants (gender, religion, degree duration, seniority level, faculty of study, major field of study, high school type, home province and time taken to complete the test) to be investigated. Preliminary analysis involved examining the frequency distributions of the independent variables and assessing their univariate association with the outcome using one-way analysis of variance. Then, multiple regression was used to investigate the relation between the independent variables and the English Vocabulary Skill outcome.

## 5.1 Conclusions

This study showed that there were associations between the students' seniority level, faculty and major field of study ($p$-value < 0.0001) and their English Vocabulary Skill Test score. The first-year (average scores 5.9) and third-year students (average scores

6.2) performed better than the other students in the English Vocabulary Skill Test, the students from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (average scores 6.4) did better than the other students and the students majoring in languages (average scores 6.3) got higher scores than the other students. When we separated the major field of study by the faculty, it indicated that the students majoring in any language in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (average scores 7.5) averaged better than others students on the English Vocabulary Skill Test. As for the majoring in languages, the students majoring in English (average scores 8.2) did certainly best of all. In addition, the time taken to complete the English Vocabulary Skill Test was not related to the score achieved.

Moreover, multiple regression analysis of the result showed that the three predictors contained the seniority level, faculty of study and major field of study were statistically significant associated with the students' English Vocabulary Skill Test score. However, there was no relation to gender, religion, degree duration, high school type, home province and time taken to complete the test.

## 5.2 Discussions

This study examined the English Vocabulary Skill and factors affecting the English Vocabulary Skill of undergraduate students at Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus.

This study revealed that many undergraduate students at Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus had limited vocabulary knowledge, particularly those majoring in communication science, Islamic studies, and social sciences. This result supported the report of Wutthiwai et al (2003) that the students thought the most difficult part of

32

learning English was vocabulary. Likewise, the study of Zhiying (2007) presented that Prince of Songkla University students utilized fewer active recall and free active written vocabulary knowledge than South China Agricultural University students. In addition, Ward (2000) reported that the students at Suranaree University of Technology knew only slightly less than half of the 2,000 necessary words.

Furthermore, several studies suggested that poor English vocabulary among students was due to their lack of reading practice. Kaewklom (2002) found that the frequency of the English reading of the first year English major students was at the moderate level in both academic and non-academic material and the problem areas in reading English included the knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. This result was similar to the study of Chaisuriya (2006). It showed that the main problem in English reading was the limited vocabulary. Besides, Ransdell (2004) found that the best predictors of reading comprehension skill were grammar awareness, and vocabulary.

Moreover, the report of Suknantapong et al (2002) presented that the Humanities and Social Sciences students performed poorly in reading ability and their poorest skill was inference and determining context clues.

In addition, to identify the factors affecting the students' English Vocabulary Skill, this study indicated that the three predictors of the students' English Vocabulary Skill were seniority level, faculty and major field of study. It was possible that the first-year students who just attended the English course did better in the test, for the third-year students, they probably prepared for their job training. The students from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences got the highest score, in contrast with the report of Prapphal and Ophanon-Amata (2002) stated that the graduates in the areas of science

got higher scores than those in the areas of humanities and social sciences. Undoubtedly, the students majoring in languages got the highest score among all students.

## 5.3 Recommendation and future research

There were some limitations in this study. First, the sampled subjects may not represent all undergraduate students at Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus because of the sampling technique. If additional research is done in this area, should be used the stratified random sampling method to get a sample.

Then, for a questionnaire using as a simple and quick instrument that could be used in the classroom without unduly disrupting the teaching process, but was unable to find one despite extensive literature search, it was developed by choosing 10 common English words gathered from the widely-used English textbooks at high schools in Thailand and introductory Statistics text at Macquarie University in Australia. These ten words were all words with meanings that would be understood by any reasonably fluent university student in an English-speaking western country, but not necessarily by a Thai student. So, this test needs extensive further testing and development before it can be recommended unreservedly to a wider audience. Its validity might be expected to depend largely on the choice of words and their distracters. It will probably be necessary to customize the instrument for particular groups of students, and to develop various levels of difficulty so that a student who satisfactorily completes the test can proceed to a higher level.

In addition, to get the more accurate result, controlling the time taken to complete the test is suggested.