The Predictive Validity of PSU-GET and Academic Success of PSU Graduate Students at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus, and the Problems Faced by Those Repeatedly Failing the Test

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ชื่อวิทยานิพนธ์	ความเที่ยงตรงเชิงพยากรณ์ของ PSU-GET และผลสัมฤทธิ์ทางการเรียน ของนักศึกษาระดับบัณฑิตศึกษา มหาวิทยาลัยสงขลานครินทร์ วิทยาเขตหาดใหญ่ และปัญหาของนักศึกษา ผู้ไม่ประสบความสำเร็จในการสอบ
ผู้เขียน	นางสาวอุรารัตน์ ณรงค์ราช
สาขาวิชา	ภาษาศาสตร์ประยุกต์
ปีการศึกษา	2550

บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อ(1) ศึกษาความเที่ยงตรงเชิงพยากรณ์ของแบบทดสอบภาษาอังกฤษ PSU-GET และผลสัมฤทธิ์ทางการเรียน (GPA) ของนักศึกษาระดับบัณฑิตศึกษา มหาวิทยาลัยสงขลานครินทร์วิทยาเขตหาดใหญ่ (2) สำรวจปัญหาที่ทำให้นักศึกษาเข้าสอบ PSU-GET มากกว่า 2 ครั้ง และ (3) สำรวจความคิดเห็นของอาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาที่มีต่อข้อสอบ PSU-GET

กลุ่มตัวอย่างในการศึกษาได้แก่ นักศึกษาระดับบัณฑิตศึกษา มหาวิทยาลัยสงขลานครินทร์ วิทยาเขตหาดใหญ่ ที่เข้าศึกษาในปีการศึกษา 2545 และ 2546 จำนวน 275 คน และ 692 คน ตามลำดับ ข้อมูลการวิจัย ประกอบด้วย ผลคะแนนสอบ PSU-GET และ เกรดเฉลี่ยของกลุ่มตัวอย่าง รวมถึงการใช้แบบสอบถามนักศึกษา แบบสอบถามอาจารย์ที่ปรึกษา และการสัมภาษณ์เป็นเครื่องมือในการเก็บข้อมูล

ผลการวิจัยสรุปได้ดังนี้

1. คะแนนจากแบบทดสอบ PSU-GET ชุดทดสอบความสามารถทางการอ่านและไวยากรณ์ สามารถพยากรณ์ผลสัมฤทธิ์ทางการเรียนของนักศึกษาระดับปริญญาโทที่เข้าศึกษาในปีการศึกษา 2545 และ 2546 จากทุกคณะได้อย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ ได้แก่ นักศึกษาในสาขาวิทยาศาสตร์สุขภาพปีการศึกษา 2545 (r = 0.543) ปีการศึกษา 2546 (r = 0.253) นักศึกษาในสาขาวิทยาศาสตร์และเทคโนโลยีปีการศึกษา 2545 (r = 0.286) ปีการศึกษา 2546 (r = 0.306) และนักศึกษาในสาขามนุษยศาสตร์และสังคมศาสตร์ปีการศึกษา 2545 (r = 0.310) ปีการศึกษา 2546 (r = 0.361) คะแนนจากแบบทดสอบ PSU-GET ชุดทดสอบความสามารถทางการอ่านและไวยากรณ์สามารถพยากรณ์ผลสัมฤทธิ์ทางการเรียนของนักศึกษาระดับปริญญาเอกที่เข้าศึกษาในปีการศึกษา 2545 และ 2546 ในสาขาวิทยาศาสตร์และเทคโนโลยีได้อย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ (2545: r = 0.595, 2546: r = 0.526) คะแนนจากแบบทดสอบ PSU-GET ชุดทดสอบความสามารถทางการฟัง สามารถ

พยากรณ์ผลสัมฤทธิ์ทางการเรียนของนักศึกษาระดับปริญญาเอกที่เข้าศึกษาในปีการศึกษา 2546 ในสาขาวิทยาศาสตร์สุขภาพได้อย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ ($r = 0.606$)

2. ข้อมูลจากแบบสอบถามนักศึกษาแสดงให้เห็นว่านักศึกษาส่วนใหญ่คิดว่าพื้นฐานทางด้านภาษาอังกฤษต่ำเป็นสาเหตุสำคัญที่สุดที่ทำให้สอบ PSU-GET มากกว่า 2 ครั้ง นอกจากนั้นนักศึกษายังเสนอแนวทางการแก้ปัญหาเพื่อสอบ PSU-GET ให้ผ่านตามเกณฑ์ ในแง่ ขั้นตอนในการจัดสอบ PSU-GET ตัวผู้เข้าสอบเอง ตัวแปรอื่น ๆ ที่เกี่ยวข้องกับข้อสอบ PSU-GET และเกณฑ์คะแนนผ่านของแบบทดสอบภาษาอังกฤษ PSU-GET

3. ข้อมูลจากแบบสอบถามอาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาแสดงให้เห็นว่าอาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาส่วนใหญ่เห็นด้วยกับการที่บัณฑิตวิทยาลัยกำหนดให้นักศึกษาระดับบัณฑิตศึกษาสอบ PSU-GET ผ่านเกณฑ์ที่กำหนดจึงจะจบการศึกษา เนื่องจากเชื่อว่าการมีความสามารถในการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษจะเป็นประโยชน์สำหรับนักศึกษาระดับบัณฑิตศึกษา นอกจากนั้นยังมีข้อเสนอแนะที่เกี่ยวข้องกับกระบวนการจัดการสอบ PSU-GET และ เนื้อหาของข้อสอบ เสนอต่อคณะต่าง ๆ ที่เปิดหลักสูตรระดับบัณฑิตศึกษา ต่อบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย และต่อภาควิชาภาษาและภาษาศาสตร์ คณะศิลปศาสตร์ ซึ่งเป็นผู้รับผิดชอบโดยตรงในการจัดสอบ PSU-GET

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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this study were (i) to investigate the predictive validity of the PSU-GET on the academic success of PSU graduate students, (ii) to identify the perceived problems encountered by those students who repeatedly fail to pass the PSU-GET, and (iii) to find out their advisors' opinions about the PSU-GET.

The subjects of the study were 275 and 692 PSU graduate students who commenced their study respectively in the 2002 and 2003 academic years at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus. The data collected included the PSU graduate students' PSU-GET scores and their overall or accumulative GPAs; other data relating to the participants, their advisors and their opinions were collected by means of two research instruments: a student questionnaire and an advisor questionnaire, and there was also a semi-structured interview.

The findings of this study are summarized as follows:

1. There were significant relationships between the reading and structure scores, and the overall or accumulative GPAs of the 2002 and 2003 master's students from every faculty : health sciences (2002: r = 0.543, 2003: r = 0.253), science and technology (2002: r = 0.286, 2003: r = 0.306), and humanities and social sciences (2002: r = 0.310, 2003: r = 0.361), while for doctoral students there was a significant relationship only for the faculties in science and technology group (2002: r = 0.595, 2003: r = 0.526). Moreover, only the relationship between the listening scores, and the overall or accumulative GPAs of the 2003 doctoral students studying in the health sciences group (r = 0.606) was found to be significant.

2. The information obtained from the student questionnaire showed that the learners' limited knowledge was rated as the highest among the problems causing the students to take the PSU-GET more than twice. The students' responses identified 4 solutions to the problems in order to pass the PSU-GET. The 4 ways ranked in order related to (i) the test-taking process, (ii) the test takers, (iii) other factors concerning the PSU-GET, and (iv) the PSU-GET criterion.

3. The data derived from the advisor questionnaire revealed that most advisors agreed that PSU graduate students should be required to reach the English criterion set before graduating because they believed that having English ability is very beneficial for graduate students. Furthermore, they directed suggestions relating to administration and content of the PSU-GET to the faculties administering the graduate programs, PSU Graduate School, and the Department of Languages and Linguistics, Faculty of Liberal Arts, which is directly responsible for the PSU-GET administration.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale of the study

Nowadays, English plays an important role in the world. For many people in developed and developing nations, it is desirable to have English language ability to live successfully in the age of globalization. Users and usage are the two main factors affecting the expansion of English language use (Charumanee, 2002).

In terms of users of English, the number is increasing. According to Crystal (2003), there are about 329 million people using English as the first language (e.g. in USA, UK, Ireland, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand) and around 422 million people using it as a second language (e.g. in Singapore, India, and Malaysia). In addition, the number of users using it as a foreign language (e.g. in China, Japan, Greece, and Thailand) is also rapidly increasing. According to conservative estimates, a further 100 million people use English fluently as a foreign language (Crystal, 1998). Because of its important role, there are over 50 million children studying English as a second language at primary level and over 80 million students studying it at secondary level. These figures show how important English is for countries using it as a second or foreign language.

In terms of usage, people all over the world use English as a medium of international communication. English is the main language of books, newspapers, airports and air-traffic control, international business, academic conferences, science, technology, medicine, diplomacy, sports, international competitions, pop music, and advertising (Edge, 1993; Crystal, 1998; Goodwyn & Benson, 2005). Over two-thirds of the world's scientists write in English (Crystal, 1998). Sixty percent of radio programs worldwide are broadcast in English, seventy percent of mail worldwide is written in English, and eighty percent of the information stored in computers is in English (Naisbitt, 1997; cited in Chamnankid, 2003).

As mentioned, both users and usage are rapidly increasing. Over one thousand million people in more than fifty countries use English as an official language. The use of English for international communication is increasing every year (Broughton, 1997). Moreover, it seems that English is the most widely learnt and used language in academic society (Charumanee, 2002).

In Thailand, English is used as a means of helping people to deal with the fast changing world. Furthermore, it is rapidly expanding in various fields, including academic society (Teo et al., 2004). In the 2001 curriculum prescribed for primary and secondary education, English was designated as a core subject at all levels. The English curriculum focuses on using the four skills effectively, understanding and knowing the differences between Thai culture and English culture, and utilizing English to gain information (Ministry of Education, 2001).

At the tertiary level, most universities in Thailand require graduate students to have global competence in using English in order that they can successfully pursue their studies. Thus, in many educational institutions, a certain level of English proficiency is required for all graduate students. Students therefore have to reach such a criterion level of English before admission to study at post-graduate level or before their graduation.

Thai tertiary institutions use two methods to measure the English proficiency of their graduate students: (1) the test results from standardized tests such as TOEFL, and IELTS; (2) the test results from an English proficiency test constructed by the university such as the Chulalongkorn University Test of English Proficiency (CU-TEP), and the Thammasat University Graduate English Test (TU-GET).

Under the first method, most institutions accept scores of standardized tests such as TOEFL (Paper Based) ranging from 500 to 550, and a range of 5.5 to 6.5 for IELTS. Nevertheless, those criteria depend on the field of study and the institution. For example, NIDA only accepts candidates with a TOEFL score of at least 550, or with an IELTS score of at least 6.5 for international programs (NIDA, 2007). Mahidol University requires its graduate students to have a TOEFL score of at least 500, or an IELTS score of at least 5.5 (Mahidol University, 2007).

As far as the second method is concerned, acceptable scores in the tests constructed by universities depend on each program and each university. For instance,

Chulalongkorn University has its own English proficiency test, the CU-TEP, to measure the English proficiency of candidates who are applying for graduate degree programs, and requires at least a CU-TEP score of 500 out of 1,000 for Doctoral Degree programs and at least a CU-TEP score of 400 for Master's Degree programs (Chulalongkorn University, 2007). At Thammasat University, the TU-GET, an advanced test of English language proficiency, is required for candidates for English programs such as the Master's program in English for Careers and the Master's program in Teaching English as a Foreign Language with a score of at least 550 out of 1,000 (Thammasat University, 2007a; Thammasat University, 2007b; Thammasat University, 2007c).

At Prince of Songkla University, the largest university in the south of Thailand, one of two types of test scores is required to have been achieved by graduate students, either a score from a standardized test (e.g. TOEFL or IELTS) or that from the Prince of Songkla University Graduate English Test (PSU-GET), a proficiency test developed by the university. For the standardized tests, the university requires a TOEFL (Paper Based) score of at least 450, a TOEFL (Computer Based) score of at least 133, or an IELTS score of at least 4.5 for master's students, whereas a TOEFL (Paper Based) score of at least 500, a TOEFL (Computer Based) score of at least 173, or an IELTS score of at least 5.5 were required for doctoral students and master's students studying in international programs. Further, the proficiency level on the PSU-GET depends on the field of study.

The PSU-GET was developed by the Department of Languages and Linguistics in 2002. The test relating to studying in PSU graduate programs has been used for two purposes: (1) as a pre-entry qualification, and (2) as a requirement for graduation. The PSU-GET consists of three parts: (1) reading and structure, (2) writing, and (3) listening. Master's students need to pass only the reading and structure part while doctoral students need to pass all three parts. The level of proficiency required depends on each faculty who specify their own pass mark for the test. For example, every program at Master's Degree level in the Faculty of Dentistry specifies that graduate students must get at least 65 percent from the reading and structure part while graduate students for Master's Degree programs in the Faculty of Engineering are required to get more than 50 percent from the reading and structure

part. Moreover, doctoral students and master's students studying in international programs are required to get at least 60 percent from all three parts. Graduate students who pass the required level of proficiency of PSU-GET are awarded 'S' (satisfactory) while those who fail get 'U' (unsatisfactory). The PSU-GET scores do not contribute to students' overall GPAs (Prince of Songkla University, 2007b; Prince of Songkla University, 2007c).

Since the launch of the PSU-GET, it has been discovered that some graduate students have problems passing the PSU-GET. Some of them take the test several times in order to reach the specified English proficiency level required by their specific field of study. This problem has resulted in some graduate students taking a relatively long time to graduate. Up to now, passing the PSU-GET has been a hinderance for a number of PSU graduate students when used as a requirement for graduation.

During the period of operation of the PSU-GET since 2002, there has been no research studying the problems or the opinions of the test-takers on the test. Nor has there been any study investigating the relationship between the graduate students' level of English proficiency measured by the PSU-GET and their academic performance measured by their overall Grade Point Average (GPA).

This study was the first one to investigate the relationship between an English proficiency test for graduate students in Thailand, the PSU-GET in particular, and the academic success (overall GPA) of graduate students, in this case, PSU graduate students. In addition, by means of a questionnaire, the proposed study looked into the problems perceived by those students who repeatedly fail to reach the proficiency level required by their specific field of study. Further, it sought their advisors' opinions on the PSU-GET by means of a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews with them. It is hoped that the results of the proposed study would be beneficial for those concerned, whether or not there exists a relationship between the students' English proficiency level and their academic success. In addition, the results from the study would be useful in seeking possible solutions to the perceived problems faced by graduate students in taking the PSU-GET.

1.2 Purposes of the study and research questions

This study aimed to investigate the relationships between PSU-GET scores and the overall or accumulative Grade Point Averages (GPAs) of PSU graduate students, and to identify the perceived problems encountered by PSU graduate students who repeatedly fail to pass the PSU-GET by addressing the following questions:

1. Can PSU-GET scores predict the academic success of PSU graduate students?
2. What are the perceived problems faced by PSU graduate students who repeatedly fail to pass the PSU-GET?
3. What are the opinions of the PSU graduate students' advisors on the PSU-GET?

1.3 Scope and limitations of the study

This study explored the predictive validity of the PSU-GET and the academic success of PSU graduate students who enrolled in the 2002 and 2003 academic years at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus. It also looked into the perceived problems faced by PSU graduate students who repeatedly fail to pass the PSU-GET.

1.4 Significance of the study

If the results of this study show there is a relationship between PSU-GET scores and overall GPAs, this will encourage PSU graduate students to develop their English ability to be more successful in their study. Even if no relationship is found to exist, students still need to realize that English proficiency is an essential factor in helping them deal with the fast changing world. Moreover, it is hoped that the study will shed light on the perceived problems faced by PSU graduate students and that the findings will lead to possible solutions.

1.5 Definition of terms

1. **Predictive validity** refers to the degree to which a test can predict candidates' future academic performance (Hughes, 1989).
2. **PSU-GET** refers to the English proficiency test administered by the Department of Languages and Linguistics, Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus.
3. **Academic success** refers to subjects' overall or accumulative Grade Point Average (GPA).
4. **PSU graduate students** refer to Thai PSU graduate students for Master's Degree and Doctoral Degree programs who commenced studying in the 2002 and 2003 academic years at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai campus.
5. **PSU graduate students who repeatedly fail** refers to PSU graduate students who commenced studying in the 2002 and 2003 academic years at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai campus and take the PSU-GET more than twice.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study investigated the predictive validity between the PSU-GET scores and the academic success (GPA) of PSU graduate students. This chapter covers a brief review of English proficiency level of Thai students; a theoretical framework on English language proficiency tests, predictive validity of English language tests, Prince of Songkla University Graduate English Test; and related studies. The details are presented as follows.

The global acceptance of English has been predicted for over 200 years. The English language is now used widely in the world. Additionally, the spread of English is inseparable from globalization (McArthur, 2001; Hüppauf, 2004; cited in Coleman, 2006). In comparison to other languages prescribed as a subject for study in Thailand, English is accepted in both academic and general society as an important language which is necessary for Thais (Coleman, 2006; Kullavanijaya et al., 2007). Because English has become more and more important in Thailand, the Ministry of Education (2001) prescribes English as a core subject for all primary and secondary schools. In addition, the Eighth National Education Plan (1997 – 2001) requires Thai graduate students to achieve a certain level of English proficiency. In the age of globalization, Thai graduates must possess global concepts in order to help Thailand compete economically with other countries. It seems that English is one of the tools used in this competition (Wiriyachitra, 2002). However, Thai graduates' English proficiency level is still far from satisfactory.

2.1 English proficiency level of Thai students

Although Thai graduates have learned English since primary school, most of them still have low English proficiency. Several studies show the low English proficiency of Thai students, and the causes of their low proficiency level. Loipha et al. (2002) investigated the employers' opinion about the competencies of library and

information science graduates at Khon Kaen University. Questionnaires were administered to 67 employers with a return rate of 67.19%. The finding indicated that the level of knowledge of foreign languages of the students was lower than the good level. Moreover, Suksri (2002) studied the teaching-learning process in library and information science at Master's Degree level provided in universities in Thailand and in foreign countries. The study found that English ability was lacking in graduate students and that this was a problem in the learning process of graduate students studying in library and information science.

Wiriyachitra (2002) studied the English proficiency level of Thai students when entering university. The findings of the study revealed that the English language skills of Thai students before entering university were below average. The range of English proficiency scores of students taking the English proficiency test of the Ministry of University Affairs to enter universities in 1999 was from 9-100 in October 1999. Bangkok students had the highest average test score at 41.39. The range in March was 2-100. Bangkok students, also, had the highest average scores at 43.79.

Prapphal et al. (2002) investigated the English proficiency of 9,154 Thai graduates from universities in Thailand. According to the study, their English proficiency is lower than the international standard required for further studies at graduate level abroad (at least a TOEFL score of 550). Moreover, the results of the study suggest that Thai graduates who want to further their studies both in the country and abroad need to urgently develop their English knowledge and skills in order to be able to catch up with their peers from neighboring countries and with the world community in general, for knowledge and information exchange.

Puengpipattrakul (2007) examined the English language proficiency of 80 fourth-year management sciences students at Prince of Songkla University measured using the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC). This study found that the average English proficiency of those PSU students could be classified as being at an intermediate proficiency level (462 out of the maximum TOEIC score of 990) with some consequent limitation on their career prospects for positions in the Thai workforce which require English. This level gives them only the opportunity to work in jobs such as hotel waiter, hotel room-service order taker, and bookkeeper which require minimum TOEIC scores of less than 462.

The fact that Thai students have low English proficiency level is of great concern to those in the education system. Wiriyachitra (2002), for instance, notes that the level of English proficiency of Thais is low in comparison with many countries in Asia (e.g. Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore). Biyaem (cited in Wiriyachitra, 2002) indicates six causes of low proficiency in English speaking among learners in primary and secondary schools in Thailand. Those are (1) interference from the mother tongue (Thai) particularly in pronunciation, syntax, and idiomatic usage, (2) lack of opportunity to use English in their daily lives, (3) unchallenging English lessons, (4) being passive learners, (5) being too shy to speak English among classmates, and (6) not taking responsibility for their own learning.

Aksornjarung's (2002) study concluded that low achievement in English is due to the learner's poor foundation of English. It also concluded that the major factor affecting graduate students' lower-than-satisfactory achievement was the mismatch of the learners' limited knowledge and the input they encountered at the foundation level.

Teo et al.'s (2004) study suggested that low achievement in learning foreign languages derived from both internal and external factors. The internal factors were knowledge background, motivation, needs, attitude, and learning behavior. This study also noted the influence of external factors, namely, the curriculum, teachers, teaching, learning center, and environment.

Pinyosunun's (2006) study also investigated the causes of problems in using English encountered by 929 Thai MBA/MA students who had already passed the first semester of the first year in an international graduate program at 4 private universities in Thailand: Asian University (43), Assumption University (789), Schiller Stamford International University (21) and University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce (76). This study found that most graduate students did not use English in their classes but they mostly used Thai and did not like to practice listening skill in audio classes.

Wanida (cited in Pinyosunun, 2006, p.26) indicated that the problems of Thai students in learning English were found among those students lacking (1) English learning skills, (2) interest in learning English combined with a failure to realize the benefits of learning English, (3) an opportunity to use English in their daily life, (4) adequate English background, (5) courage to express their opinions or to answer the

teacher's questions in English, and (6) willingness to participate in activities aimed at teaching and learning English. The study suggested that not only did learners have an important role in improving their English proficiency, but also these factors played a role: the instructors, the course syllabus, being exposed to an environment around English language users and the chance of using the English language also play a role.

2.2 Theoretical framework

2.2.1 English language proficiency tests

A proficiency test is a test used to measure how suitable candidates are for performing a certain task or following a specific purpose (Heaton, 1997). Davies et al. (1999) suggest that a proficiency test can measure how much of a language someone has learned. In addition, McNamara (2000) notes that a proficiency test will look to the future situation of language use without any reference to the previous process of teaching.

Some proficiency tests such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) administered by Educational Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey, U.S.A., the First Certificate of English (FCE) administered by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, (UCLES) U.K., and the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) jointly managed by UCLES, the British Council, and the organization known as IDP Education Australia, are utilized all over the world (Prapphal, 1987; Pongsurapipat et. al., 2000; Dooey & Oliver, 2002).

In Thailand, there are several acceptable proficiency tests which have been developed to measure the English proficiency of graduate students such as the Chulalongkorn University Test of English Proficiency (CU-TEP) administered by Chulalongkorn University, the Thammasat University Graduate English Test (TU-GET) administered by Thammasat University, and the Prince of Songkla University Graduate English Test (PSU-GET) administered by Prince of Songkla University (Chulalongkorn University, 2007; Thammasat University, 2007, Prince of Songkla University, 2007c).

The various English proficiency tests developed by several universities in Thailand have the same main purpose, that is to assess the English proficiency level of their graduate students.

2.2.2 Predictive validity of English language tests

Predictive validity is defined by Hughes (1989) as the degree to which a test can predict candidates' future performance. Bachman (1997) notes that predictive validity determines how well test scores predict some future behavior. At the same time, Bachman (1997) indicates predictive validity as an important and justifiable use of language tests, and evidence to indicate a relationship between test performance and behavior in the future. According to Davies et al. (1999), predictive validity is measuring how well a test predicts performance on an external criterion. For example, a test of English for academic purposes is said to have high predictive validity if performance on the test correlates highly with performance (e.g. as measured by grades) on a subsequent academic course which is taught through the language under space test.

In sum, predictive validity refers to the relationship between test scores and later performance in an area of knowledge, skill or ability. It is usually reported in the form of a correlation coefficient with some measure of success in the field or subject of interest (Henning, 1987).

2.2.3 Prince of Songkla University Graduate English Test (PSU-GET)

Prince of Songkla University (PSU), which started its graduate school in 1979, formerly offered English courses for its graduate students to develop their English proficiency. However, because the number of PSU graduate students is constantly increasing, PSU changed its practice from the teaching of English to graduate students to the measurement of their proficiency. The PSU-GET was therefore developed in 2002 by the Department of Languages and Linguistics and is administered by them (Prince of Songkla University, 2007a).

According to the regulations of the Graduate School at Prince of Songkla University (2007b), PSU graduate students are required to achieve an acceptable score on an internationally recognised standardized test such as a score of at least 133 on the Computer Based TOEFL for master's students or a score of at least 5.5 on IELTS for doctoral and master's students studying in international programs. At the same time, the PSU-GET administered by the Department of Languages and Linguistics is another choice for PSU graduate students.

The PSU-GET, an English proficiency test consists of three parts: (1) reading and structure, (2) listening, and (3) writing. Every post-graduate studying for a Master's degree has to reach a criteria set depending on their specific field of study, in only the reading and structure part while those studying for a Doctoral degree are required to pass all three parts.

Concerning the PSU-GET criterion for the reading and structure section, the minimum score required for master's students is based on a division into four groups. The first group which consists of the Faculty of Economics, Management Sciences, and Natural Resources, requires a minimum reading and structure score of 45%. Secondly, master's students from the Faculty of Engineering, Environmental Management, and Nursing are required to get the score at least 50% and the minimum score for students from the Faculty of Agro-Industry, Pharmaceutical Sciences, and Science is 60%. Lastly, the Dentistry and Medicine faculties, specify a minimum score for their students of 65%. For all doctoral students, their minimum score required for all three parts of the test combined is 60%.

The PSU-GET is offered four times a year in the months of January, March, May, and October. The results are available on the university's website and the announced documents. The PSU-GET results are valid for two years (Prince of Songkla University, 2007c).

2.3 Related studies

Many studies, both in Thailand and in other countries, have investigated the predictive validity of tests based on future Grade Point Average (GPA) using different levels of students and different kinds of test such as language tests, aptitude tests and subject tests.

In Thailand, most studies have investigated the relationship between the test scores and the academic success of undergraduate students. Very few studies seem to have investigated the relationship between the test scores and the academic success of graduate students and searches revealed only one study.

Choochom and Sucaromana (1988) investigated the relationship between entrance examination scores for graduate programs and the academic achievement of the graduate students. The sample of the study was 311 first year students studying at the Master's Degree level at Srinakharinwirot University (Prasarnmitr) in the 1986 academic year. The students were divided into two categories: those with one major test, and those with two major tests. The results of the study were that there were significant positive correlations at the 0.05 level between the test scores from the two groups of graduate students and their first year academic achievement at the Master's Degree level.

There are a number of studies which have investigated the predictive validity of tests on academic success. For example, Sattasopon (1993) investigated the predictive validity of the College Entrance Examination Score based on the academic success of 107 students who passed the Srinakharinwirot University Entrance Examination in different majors in 1987 and finished studying in 1991. This study found that the entrance test score was not related to final Grade Point Average for science students whereas it was related to Grade Point Average for arts students at the .01 level of significance.

Pantusena et al. (1994) used the 1991 Direct Entrance Examination Test (DEET) as a predictor of the scholastic achievements of 976 first and second year students at Prince of Songkla University (PSU), Hat Yai and Pattani campuses. The independent variables of this study were the total test scores and subject test scores from the DEET, while the dependent variables were the students' GPAs of their first

and second semesters, and their cumulative GPAs. The findings were that the total test scores from the DEET could be used to predict the scholastic achievement of the students in both the first and second years in the Science, Nursing, Engineering and Islamic Studies faculties, and that the Chemistry, English I, English II, Social Studies I and Social Studies II subject tests in the 1991 DEET were significant predictors of scholastic achievement of the students' grades in those subjects alone.

Luecha (1994) studied the relationship between the entrance examination scores of undergraduate students at Srinakharinwirot University at Maha Sarakham campus and their subsequent academic achievement. The sample consisted of 958 Srinakharinwirot University undergraduate students in the 1992 academic year, 492 students entering through the Ministry of University Affairs entrance examinations and 466 through the Northeast Thailand student quota entrance examinations. The findings were that the entrance scores of the undergraduate students entering through the Ministry of University Affairs entrance examinations and their academic achievements were positively related at the 0.01 level of significance, and the first-year students entering through the Northeast Thailand students quota entrance examinations also had positive relationship at the 0.01 level of significance. However, for the second, third, and fourth-year students there was no significant relationship between their entrance scores and their academic achievement.

Urajananon (1997) studied the relationship between the entrance examination scores in general subjects, technical subjects, and special technical subjects, and the learning achievement of 303 diploma level students from the Business Administration Department of Rajamangala Institute of Technology, Northern Campus. The findings of the study were that (1) the correlation between general subjects and students' learning achievement was statistically significant at the 0.01 level, (2) the correlation between technical subjects and students' learning achievement was also statistically significant at the 0.01 level, and (3) the correlation between special technical subjects and students' learning achievement was statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Tutyadej (1998) studied the correlation between the mathematics entrance scores and the learning achievement of the first-year pre-engineering students. The sample group was composed of 218 first-year pre-engineering students from the 1995 academic year from the College of Industrial Technology. The results revealed a

moderate relationship between the mathematics entrance scores and the learning achievement in mathematics of the sample of students studying in the college in 1995 in the first and second semesters.

Laehheem (1999) investigated the relationship of the entrance examination scores and academic achievement of 108 second and third-year students at the Islamic Studies College, Prince of Songkla University in the 1998 academic year. The research findings were that (1) Physical Science, English and Thai subjects were significantly related to academic achievement for the first semester at the 0.05 level, (2) The English and Thai subjects were significantly related to academic achievement from the first and second semesters at the 0.05 level, and (3) The Arabic subject was significantly related to academic achievement in the first, second, and third semesters at the 0.05 level.

Panmee (2002) studied the predictive validity of school GPAs, university entrance scores, on the students' scholastic achievement in their freshman year. The study took first-year students embarking on four-year undergraduate programs at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai and Pattani campuses, in the 2000 academic year, as its subjects. All three variables: (1) the overall GPAs which students achieved in their upper-secondary level, (2) university entrance scores, and (3) overall GPAs which students achieved in their first year (first and second semesters of the 2000 academic year), were recorded and compared. The results indicated that, (1) the overall high school GPAs of most students had significant positive correlations with their scholastic achievement as measured by their overall GPAs in their first year, although this was not the case for students in the Faculties of Natural Resources, Nursing, Dentistry, Education, and the College of Islamic Studies, (2) the entrance scores of most students had significant positive correlations with their scholastic achievements except for those of students in the Faculties of Engineering, Medicine, Natural Resources, Pharmaceutical Sciences, and Dentistry, (3) the overall high school GPAs and entrance scores combined co-predicted the scholastic achievement as measured by overall GPA in the first year of students in most faculties but not those of students in the Faculty of Dentistry and the College of Islamic Studies.

Rungtongbaisuree et al. (2002) studied the relationship between the general subjects scores and the students' educational achievement. The 230 samples were

from the stratified random sampling of all students who were going to graduate in the 1999 academic year within the Center of Rajamangala Institute of Technology. The research finding showed positive relation at the middle level between the students' general subject scores and their educational achievement.

In other countries, there have been a number of studies which have investigated the relationship between test scores and the educational achievement of students studying at different levels.

Camp et al. (1988) studied the validity of the College Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST) for predicting the grade point average of 732 seniors and graduates enrolled between 1984 and 1987 at a regional university in Florida. The findings showed the moderate correlations between the CLAST (i.e., math: $r = 0.290$, reading: $r = 0.345$, writing: $r = 0.357$, and essay: $r = 0.333$) and the subjects' academic success as measured by their GPA.

Graham (1991) evaluated the predictive validity of the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT) on the graduate grade point average (GGPA) of 82 students earned in a Master of Business Administration (MBA) program. The results revealed a strong correlation between the GMAT score and GGPA.

Pearson (1993) examined the predictive validity of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores for 220 Hispanic students after four semesters at the University of Miami based on their Grade Point Average (GPA). This study showed that a given SAT score predicted a slightly higher GPA for the Hispanic students.

Tuten (1995) determined whether or not there was a difference in the academic reading success between those students not required to take the College Placement Examination and those students required to take the test. Data were collected from the freshmen class in fall, 1991, at Augusta. After the analysis of the data, it was concluded that students who met all entrance criteria earned higher grades in core courses requiring college-level reading skills than did the students who did not meet all entrance criteria.

Menendez (1996) assessed the importance of achievement tests as indicators of short (STP) and long term prediction (LTP). The predictor used were the scores from College Board tests. The sample of students was based on those admitted in 1989. The findings were that achievement tests were the best predictor in most

institutional units and fields of study. Achievement tests were more important for STP than the LTP. Prediction by major fields was also shown to be stronger than general prediction or prediction by institutional units. However, the differences were not always very large. In certain fields, LTP was stronger than STP.

House (1999) investigated the predictive relationship between the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores and grade performance in graduate chemistry courses of 145 graduate students in a chemistry program. It was found that higher GRE scores were significantly correlated with higher grades in those courses. Thus this study indicated that GRE scores significantly predict the graduate course performance of chemistry students.

Dooey and Oliver (2002) investigated the predictive validity of the IELTS test based on the future academic success of 65 first-year undergraduate students at Curtin University of Technology in Western Australia. The students were all non-native English speakers enrolling in the disciplines of business (30 students), science (21 students), and engineering (14 students) on the basis of their IELTS scores. The test scores and the average grades of the first two semesters were recorded and compared to establish if they were correlated. The findings show little evidence for the validity of IELTS as a predictor of academic success. This study suggests that overseas students who do not fully meet English criteria may well have the potential to succeed academically.

Feeley et al. (2005) investigated whether the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) which was used as a pre-qualification criterion for M.A. and Ph.D. students in Communication at the University at Buffalo from 1990 to 2001, was a predictor of graduate students' academic success. The findings were that the GRE is positively related to the earning of a degree for M.A. students whereas the GRE fails to predict Ph.D. success.

Burton and Wang (2005) evaluated whether or not the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) verbal and quantitative scores, and undergraduate grade point average can predict long-term success in Graduate School measured by cumulative graduate grade point average. The study covered seven graduate institutions and 21 graduate departments of biology, chemistry, education, English, and psychology. The

results indicated that GRE scores and undergraduate grade point average strongly predict accumulative graduate grade point average.

Sklar and Zwick (2005) examined how well the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores and high school grades predicted first-year college GPA (FGPA) and college graduation for four groups: Hispanic students whose first language was Spanish, and Hispanic, black, and white students whose first language was English. After analyses, the results showed that in three of the four groups, a high school GPA was a stronger predictor than an SAT score, while the SAT score was a stronger predictor only for Hispanic students whose first language was Spanish. Additionally, a high school GPA had a statistically significant relationship with graduating within a fixed interval years after college entry for white students whose first language was English whereas the SAT had a significant correlation for Hispanic and white students whose first language was English.

Sireci (2006) evaluated the predictive validity of the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) based on the first-year Grade Point Average (GPA) data from 11 graduate management schools. The results indicate that GMAT verbal and quantitative scores have substantial predictive validity, accounting for about 16% of the variance in graduate GPA, whereas the predictive utility of GMAT analytical writing scores was relatively low, accounting for only about 1% of the variation in graduate GPA.

Therefore it can be observed that previous studies both in Thailand and in other countries have found both positive and non-positive relationships for test scores when used as predictors of students' future academic success. The present study therefore investigated the relationships between the PSU-GET and the educational achievement of graduate students at Prince of Songkla University in order to shed more light on the predictive validity of a language proficiency test on academic success.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research methodology including the subjects of the study, the research instruments, the data collection procedure, a description of the respondents, and the data analysis procedure.

3.1 Subjects of the study

There were 757 and 831 PSU graduate students who commenced their study respectively in the 2002 and 2003 academic years at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus. It was appropriate to focus on those students in the 2007 academic year because, since they first enrolled in 2002 and 2003 up until now (2007), five or six years was a sufficiently long period for those subjects to have completed their studies under normal circumstances.

It should be noted that among these 757 and 831 PSU graduate students, there were only 275 and 692 graduate students whose overall or accumulative GPA and PSU-GET scores were available to establish the predictive validity of the PSU-GET scores on academic success. So these students were the subjects of this study.

Their academic success based on their overall or accumulative GPA and their PSU-GET scores were used to answer the first research question relating to the predictive validity of their PSU-GET scores with respect to their academic success. Among these subjects who used the PSU-GET as a requirement for graduation, there were 18 and 45 PSU graduate students as shown in Table 3.1 and Table 3.2 on the next page, from the 2002 and 2003 academic years respectively. These 63 students were asked to express their opinions and reflect on their problems with the PSU-GET and the information obtained was used to answer the second research question regarding the perceived problems faced by PSU graduate students.

Table 3.1: Subjects commencing their graduate programs in the 2002 academic year

Faculty	Master's degree		Doctoral degree		Total	
	No. of subjects	Repeatedly failing to pass the PSU-GET and having not yet graduated	No. of subjects	Repeatedly failing to pass the PSU-GET and having not yet graduated	No. of subjects	Repeatedly failing to pass the PSU-GET and having not yet graduated
Agro-Industry	6	0	9	1	15	1
Dentistry	1	0	0	0	1	0
Economics	11	3	0	0	11	3
Engineering	78	1	0	0	78	1
Environmental Management	26	0	0	0	26	0
Management Science	41	3	0	0	41	3
Medicine	1	0	2	0	3	0
Natural Resources	16	0	3	2	19	2
Nursing	34	1	8	0	42	1
Pharmaceutical Science	14	0	2	1	16	1
Science	22	2	1	4	23	6
Total	**250**	**10**	**25**	**8**	**275**	**18**

Table 3.1 shows that among 275 graduate students who commenced their graduate programs in the 2002 academic year, there were 10 master's students and 8 doctoral students who repeatedly fail to pass the PSU-GET and have not yet graduated at the time the research was being conducted (April, 2007).

Table 3.2: Subjects commencing their graduate programs in the 2003 academic year

Faculty	Master's degree		Doctoral degree		Total	
	No. of subjects	Repeatedly failing to pass the PSU-GET and having not yet graduated	No. of subjects	Repeatedly failing to pass the PSU-GET and having not yet graduated	No. of subjects	Repeatedly failing to pass the PSU-GET and having not yet graduated
Agro-Industry	23	1	4	1	27	2
Dentistry	12	2	0	0	12	2
Economics	35	0	0	0	35	0
Engineering	113	2	2	0	115	2
Environmental Management	32	0	0	0	32	0
Management Science	187	6	0	0	187	6
Medicine	10	1	6	0	16	1
Natural Resources	52	15	5	5	57	20
Nursing	91	0	5	2	96	2
Pharmaceutical Science	17	0	2	4	19	4
Science	89	0	7	6	96	6
Total	**661**	**27**	**31**	**18**	**692**	**45**

Table 3.2 shows that among 692 graduate students who commenced their graduate programs in the 2003 academic year, there were 27 master's students and 18 doctoral students who repeatedly fail to pass the PSU-GET and have not yet graduated at the time the research was being conducted (April, 2007).

Moreover, 55 advisors from 10 faculties of the students who repeatedly fail to pass the PSU-GET and have not yet graduated were asked to express their opinions on the PSU-GET.

Table 3.3: Advisors of the 2002 and 2003 students who repeatedly fail to pass the PSU-GET and have not yet graduated

Faculty	Number of advisors		Total
	Master's students	Doctoral students	
Agro-Industry	1	2	3
Dentistry	2	0	2
Economics	4	0	4
Engineering	7	0	7
Environmental Management	0	0	0
Management Science	7	0	7
Medicine	1	0	1
Natural Resources	10	4	14
Nursing	1	2	3
Pharmaceutical Science	0	4	4
Science	1	9	10
Total	**34**	**21**	**55**

Table 3.3 shows that there were 34 and 21 advisors of master's and doctoral students who repeatedly fail to pass the PSU-GET and have not yet graduated at the time the research was being conducted (April, 2007).

3.2 Research instruments

Three instruments were used in this study: (1) a student questionnaire, (2) an advisor questionnaire, and (3) a semi-structured interview. They are described below.

3.2.1 Student questionnaire

The student questionnaire included both closed and open-ended questions. They were written in Thai to ensure that the intended meaning could be conveyed to the subjects.

The student questionnaire consisted of 3 main parts. Part 1 consisted of items asking for information about the general background of the students (Items 1-11). Part 2 included 6 items related to their perceived problems in taking the PSU-GET more than twice (Items 12-16) and the students were also asked to express their opinions about taking the PSU-GET (Item 17). Part 3 concerned the students' suggestions/ comments on the PSU-GET.

3.2.1.1 Construction of the questionnaire

Before constructing the student questionnaire, the investigator reviewed the related literature and studies to gather information about the problems of Thai graduate students' low levels of English proficiency. Moreover, the investigator informally interviewed four PSU graduate students who have taken the PSU-GET more than twice. They were asked to talk about their problems and express their opinions about the PSU-GET. Then, the information obtained from the literature review and the informal interviews was used as a basis for designing the student questionnaire items. The items written were checked by the advisory committee in order to ensure their content validity. Questions relating to the general background of the subjects were also added to the questionnaire to assist in interpreting and analyzing the perceived problems which caused PSU graduate students to repeatedly fail the PSU-GET.

3.2.1.2 The try-out of the questionnaire

The first draft of the student questionnaire was tried out with 30 PSU graduate students who took a PSU-GET preparation course offered by the Department of Languages and Linguistics. They were PSU graduate students who commenced studying during the 2002-2007 academic years, from Hat Yai and Pattani campuses, and had attempted the PSU-GET more than twice. The questionnaire was then improved and revised to obtain the final version which is shown in Appendix A.

3.2.2 The advisor questionnaire

The advisor questionnaire included both closed and open-ended questions. They were written in Thai to ensure that the intended meaning could be conveyed to the subjects.

The advisor questionnaire consisted of 3 main parts. Part 1 consisted of 3 items asking for information about the general background of the advisors (Items 1-3). Part 2 included their rating on their advisees' English proficiency. The advisors were asked to express their opinions according to the rating scale from 6 "highest" to 1 "lowest". Part 3 consisted of 2 items concerning suggestions/ comments on the PSU-GET (Items 1-2).

3.2.2.1 The construction of the questionnaire

Based on the information obtained from informal interviews with some graduate students and one experienced advisor, an advisor questionnaire was constructed and later checked by the advisory team in order to ensure their content validity.

3.2.2.2 The try-out of the questionnaire

The first draft of the advisor questionnaire was tried out with two advisors of PSU graduate students who commenced studying in the 2002 and 2003

academic years and repeatedly fail to pass the PSU-GET. The investigator then improved and revised the drafts to obtain the final version which is shown in Appendix B.

3.2.3 The semi-structured interview

In addition to using the advisor questionnaire, a semi-structured interview was conducted with 10 advisors from 10 faculties who agreed with requiring PSU graduate students to reach the PSU-GET criteria before graduation and 3 advisors from 2 faculties who disagreed in order to get in-depth information from them.

The investigator contacted these 13 advisors and asked them to participate in interviews both to supplement the information that they had given in their questionnaire and also to answer an additional question about whether their advisees were obliged to read English texts in the course of their studies. An appointment was arranged at their convenience. The interview was conducted in Thai to ease understanding and was recorded. The time spent on the interview with each advisor depended on the amount of data not provided in the questionnaire, but generally was between 5 and 10 minutes.

3.3 Data collection procedures

The data were collected between April and November 2007.

3.3.1 Collection of PSU graduate students' PSU-GET scores and academic record (overall or accumulative GPA)

The records of overall or accumulative GPAs and PSU-GET scores of 275 and 692 PSU graduate students who commenced their study in the 2002 and 2003 academic years were collected from the Registration Office and the Academic Service of the Faculty of Liberal Arts at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai campus to answer the first research question relating to the predictive validity of PSU-GET scores and the academic success of PSU graduate students.

3.3.2 Administering the questionnaires

The identity of 63 out of 1,588 PSU graduate students who repeatedly fail to pass the PSU-GET and have not yet graduated at the time of giving the information (October, 2007) and 55 advisors were established. The two questionnaires: the student questionnaire and the advisor questionnaire, were distributed. From these, 51 students and 35 advisors sent back the complete questionnaire to the investigator. The information obtained was analyzed in order to answer the second and third research questions regarding the perceived problems faced by PSU graduate students who repeatedly fail to pass the PSU-GET and the opinions of their advisors on the PSU-GET including their advisees' perceived level of language proficiency.

3.3.3 Description of the questionnaire respondents

The 51 out of 63 students who returned the questionnaires within the requested period of time, represented 81 percent of the target subjects and 35 out of 55 advisors representing 64 percent of the target numbers. The returned questionnaires can be categorized as follows.

1) Fifteen out of 18 questionnaires were returned from PSU graduate students who commenced studying in the 2002 academic year, representing 83 percent of the target subjects who repeatedly fail to pass the PSU-GET and have not yet graduated as shown in Table 3.4.
2) Thirty six out of 45 questionnaires were returned from PSU graduate students who commenced studying in the 2003 academic year, representing 80 percent of the target subjects who repeatedly fail to pass the PSU-GET and have not yet graduated as shown in Table 3.5.
3) Thirty-five out of 35 questionnaires were returned from advisors, representing 64 percent of the population of advisors of PSU graduate students who commenced studying in the 2002 and 2003 academic years and have not yet graduated. The distribution of the advisors with advisees in either the 2002 or 2003 academic years who returned their questionnaires is presented in Table 3.6.

Table 3.4: Distribution of student questionnaire: 2002 academic year

Faculty/ Program	Master's degree (2002)		Doctoral degree (2002)		Total	
	Target Students	Number returned	Target Students	Number returned	Target Students	Number returned
Agro-Industry	0	0	1	1	1	1
Dentistry	0	0	0	0	0	0
Economics	3	3	0	0	3	3
Engineering	1	1	0	0	1	1
Environmental Management	0	0	0	0	0	0
Management Science	3	1	0	0	3	1
Medicine	0	0	0	0	0	0
Natural Resources	0	0	2	2	2	2
Nursing	1	1	0	0	1	1
Pharmaceutical Science	0	0	1	1	1	1
Science	2	2	4	3	6	5
Total	**10**	**8**	**8**	**7**	**18**	**15**
Percent	**100.00**	**80.00**	**100.00**	**87.50**	**100.00**	**83.00**

Table 3.5: Distribution of student questionnaire: 2003 academic year

Faculty/ Program	Master's degree (2003)		Doctoral degree (2003)		Total	
	Target Students	Number returned	Target Students	Number returned	Target Students	Number returned
Agro-Industry	1	0	1	1	2	1
Dentistry	2	2	0	0	2	2
Economics	0	0	0	0	0	0
Engineering	2	2	0	0	2	2
Environmental Management	0	0	0	0	0	0
Management Science	6	4	0	0	6	4
Medicine	1	1	0	0	1	1
Natural Resources	15	14	5	4	20	18
Nursing	0	0	2	2	2	2
Pharmaceutical Science	0	0	4	1	4	1
Science	0	0	6	5	6	5
Total	**27**	**23**	**18**	**13**	**45**	**36**
Percent	**100.00**	**85.00**	**100.00**	**72.00**	**100.00**	**80.00**

Table 3.6: Number of responding advisors of PSU graduate students who repeatedly fail to pass the PSU-GET

Faculty/ Program	Master's degree		Doctoral degree		Total	
	Target Advisors	Number returned	Target Advisors	Number returned	Target Advisors	Number returned
Agro-Industry	1	0	2	1	3	1
Dentistry	2	1	0	0	2	1
Economics	4	4	0	0	4	4
Engineering	7	3	0	0	7	3
Environmental Management	0	0	0	0	0	0
Management Science	7	5	0	0	7	5
Medicine	1	1	0	0	1	1
Natural Resources	10	7	4	2	14	9
Nursing	1	1	2	1	3	2
Pharmaceutical Science	0	0	4	2	4	2
Science	1	1	9	6	10	7
Total	**34**	**23**	**21**	**12**	**55**	**35**
Percent	**100.00**	**68.00**	**100.00**	**57.00**	**100.00**	**64.00**

3.4 Data analysis procedure

To answer the three research questions, all data obtained were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The following statistical devices were employed in analyzing the data of the study.

Research question 1: Can PSU-GET scores predict academic success of PSU graduate students?

To answer the first research question, Pearson product-moment coefficients were used to examine the correlations between the PSU-GET scores of 275 and 692 graduate students in the 2002 and 2003 academic years, respectively and their overall or accumulative GPAs for the study.

Research question 2: What are the perceived problems faced by PSU graduate students who repeatedly fail to pass the PSU-GET?

To answer the second research question, the 51 subjects' responses of the student questionnaire were coded and the arithmetic means and standard deviations were calculated using the SPSS program.

Research question 3: What are the opinions of the students' advisors on the PSU-GET?

To answer the third research question, the responses of the 35 subjects to the advisor questionnaire were coded and the arithmetic means and standard deviations were calculated using the SPSS program. In addition, the contents of the interviews with 13 advisors were transcribed. Then, the information was analyzed and summarized into categories.

The findings from the analysis of overall or accumulative GPA and PSU-GET scores, the student questionnaire, and the advisor questionnaire are presented in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter reports the findings obtained from the analysis of the data collected in the study: (1) PSU graduate students' PSU-GET scores and academic success (overall or accumulative GPA), (2) data derived from the student questionnaire, (3) data derived from the advisor questionnaire, and (4) data derived from the semi-structured interviews. The main findings are presented under the following headings:

4.1 The predictive validity of PSU-GET scores

The variables involved in the calculation of the predictive validity of the PSU-GET are analyzed and presented as follows.

4.1.1 Students' performance on the PSU-GET

The PSU-GET scores of the 275 and 692 PSU graduate students from the 2002 and 2003 academic years are one of the variables of the predictive validity of PSU-GET scores and the academic success of PSU graduate students. The findings are shown as follows.

4.1.1.1 Performance on the PSU-GET: master's students

It is a requirement that Master's Degree students must pass the PSU-GET criterion set by their faculty before graduating. Different faculties specify different PSU-GET criteria for the reading and structure section of the PSU-GET as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: PSU-GET reading and structure scores: minimum score requirements

Group	Faculty	Minimum reading and structure score requirements (%)
1	- Dentistry - Medicine	65
2	- Agro-Industry - Pharmaceutical Sciences - Science	60
3	- Engineering - Environmental Management - Nursing	50
4	- Economics - Management Sciences - Natural Resources	45

Based on these reading and structure score criteria, the analysis of the PSU-GET reading and structure scores of the 250 and 661 master's students from 11 faculties in the 2002 and 2003 academic years are presented in table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Reading and structure scores combined of the 2002 and 2003 master's students

Faculty	2002 academic year					2003 academic year				
	N	Score range (%)	Mean score (%)	SD (%)	No. failed (%)	N	Score range (%)	Mean score (%)	SD (%)	No. failed (%)
Agro-Industry	6	47.00 - 63.00	54.45	6.12	4 (67%)	23	37.00 – 73.00	59.09	10.42	12 (52%)
Dentistry	1	70.00 - 70.00	70.00	-	-	12	61.81 – 87.00	74.79	7.29	1 (8%)
Economics	11	15.00 - 68.14	32.83	15.67	9 (82%)	35	16.67 – 65.00	36.91	12.83	23 (66%)
Engineering	78	26.67 - 73.00	49.43	11.52	33 (42%)	113	20.00 – 83.33	47.50	12.80	57 (50%)
Environmental Management	26	35.00 - 66.00	49.74	7.95	14 (54%)	32	28.33 – 68.33	48.23	9.65	17 (53%)
Management Sciences	41	20.00 - 56.67	36.64	9.53	32 (78%)	187	18.33 – 81.67	47.31	12.50	63 (34%)
Medicine	1	88.00 - 88.00	88.00	-	-	10	37.00 – 85.00	54.57	14.70	7 (70%)
Natural Resources	16	26.67 - 72.00	43.96	11.62	8 (50%)	52	18.33 – 68.00	41.80	11.37	32 (62%)
Nursing	34	25.00 - 63.00	45.83	8.30	20 (59%)	91	20.00 – 72.00	50.84	10.06	38 (42%)
Pharmaceutical Sciences	14	41.67 - 75.00	62.62	10.22	4 (29%)	17	31.67 – 80.00	60.16	13.87	7 (41%)
Science	22	28.00 - 68.00	51.62	11.14	16 (73%)	89	21.67 – 88.00	53.38	14.28	54 (61%)
Total	**250**	**15.00 - 88.00**	**47.08**	**12.71**	**140 (56%)**	**661**	**16.67 – 88.00**	**49.05**	**13.54**	**311 (47%)**

The figures in Table 4.2 show that the average PSU-GET reading and structure score of the 250 Master's Degree students from the 2002 academic year was 47.08% (SD = 12.71%) with a range of 15.00% to 88.00%, while that of the 661 Master's Degree students in the 2003 academic year was 49.05% (SD = 13.54%) with a range of 16.67% to 88.00%.

As mentioned above, the minimum reading and structure score requirements of the various faculties are different. Thus, the numbers of master's students who failed to pass the PSU-GET were calculated based on the criteria set by their respective faculties. In the 2002 academic year, 56% overall of master's students did not meet the minimum criterion specified by their faculties. It can be seen that students from the Faculty of Economics produced the highest proportion of students who did not pass the test (82%), whereas those from the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences presented the lowest percentage (29%).

In terms of the performance of the 2003 master's students as a whole, the figures show that 47 percent of the students scored lower than their faculty's criterion. When a comparison of results from each faculty was undertaken, it was established that the highest proportion of those who failed to achieve the minimum pass mark were from the Faculty of Medicine (70%), while the lowest proportion of students were from the Faculty of Dentistry (8%).

4.1.1.2 Performance on the PSU-GET: doctoral students

Every doctoral student is required to achieve a criterion score in both the reading and structure section of 60%. On this basis, the 2002 and 2003 doctoral students performed as shown below in table 4.3 in the reading and structure section.

Table 4.3: Reading and structure scores combined of the 2002 and 2003 doctoral students

Faculty	2002 academic year					2003 academic year				
	N	Score range (%)	Mean score (%)	SD (%)	No. failed (%)	N	Score range (%)	Mean score (%)	SD (%)	No. failed (%)
Agro-Industry	9	42.00 – 68.00	60.56	7.84	2 (22%)	4	60.00 – 80.00	65.50	9.71	-
Engineering	-	-	-	-	-	2	55.00 – 60.00	57.50	3.54	1 (50%)
Medicine	2	54.00 – 94.00	74.00	28.28	1 (50%)	6	60.00 – 78.33	68.50	6.57	-
Natural Resources	3	31.67 – 58.00	45.22	13.18	3 (100%)	5	50.00 – 65.00	57.40	6.23	2 (40%)
Nursing	8	63.00 – 80.00	73.38	5.76	-	5	46.67 – 78.00	63.26	11.50	1 (20%)
Pharmaceutical Sciences	2	62.00 – 68.33	65.17	4.48	-	2	60.00 – 65.00	62.50	3.54	-
Science	1	60.00 – 60.00	60.00	-	-	7	42.00 – 77.00	63.48	12.37	2 (29%)
Total	**25**	**31.67 – 94.00**	**64.24**	**12.87**	**6 (24%)**	**31**	**42.00 – 80.00**	**63.25**	**9.22**	**6 (19%)**

As can be seen from Table 4.3, the average reading and structure score of the doctoral students who commenced studying in the 2002 and 2003 academic years was respectively 64.24% (SD = 12.87%) with a range of 31.67% to 94.00%, and 63.25% (SD = 9.22%) with a range of 42.00% to 80.00%.

The analysis of the 2002 student's scores shows that the total number of students whose scores were below the minimum requirement was 24%. Based on an analysis of the information by faculty, it is notable that among the faculties, 100% of the students in the Faculty of Natural Resources failed to reach the criterion.

Separate analyses were also conducted of the 2003 students' scores and the overall number of doctoral students who did not reach the criterion of 60%. Among the faculties, it was found that 50% of the students from the Faculty of Engineering did not pass the PSU-GET, the highest percentage compared to those from other faculties.

All doctoral students are also required to take the writing and listening sections of the PSU-GET and to achieve a score of more than 60%. The students' performance is presented in Table 4.4 and Table 4.5.

Table 4.4: Writing scores of the 2002 and 2003 doctoral students

Faculty	2002 academic year					2003 academic year				
	N	Score range (%)	Mean score (%)	SD (%)	No. failed (%)	N	Score range (%)	Mean score (%)	SD (%)	No. failed (%)
Agro-Industry	9	46.00 – 68.00	59.33	7.03	2 (22%)	4	46.67 – 61.67	54.79	7.21	2 (50%)
Engineering	-	-	-	-	-	1	75.00 – 75.00	75.00	-	-
Medicine	2	60.83 – 76.67	68.75	11.20	-	6	38.00 – 68.33	58.78	10.63	1 (17%)
Natural Resources	3	10.00 – 60.00	43.33	28.87	1 (33%)	4	55.00 – 60.00	58.75	2.50	1 (25%)
Nursing	8	60.83 – 67.50	63.27	2.23	-	5	42.00 – 73.33	59.57	11.22	1 (20%)
Pharmaceutical Sciences	2	60.00 – 67.00	63.50	4.95	-	2	50.00 – 60.00	55.00	7.07	1 (50%)
Science	1	60.00 – 60.00	60.00	-	-	7	39.00 – 60.00	48.38	7.36	6 (86%)
Total	**25**	**10.00 – 76.67**	**59.79**	**11.81**	**3 (12%)**	**29**	**38.00 – 75.00**	**56.15**	**9.51**	**12 (41%)**

The data in Table 4.4 shows that the average writing score of the 25 and 29 doctoral students from the 2002 and 2003 academic year was respectively 59.79% (SD = 11.81%) with a range of 10.00% to 76.67%, and 56.15% (SD = 9.51%) with a range of 38.00% to 75.00%.

As can be seen from the 2002 students' scores, it was found that 12% overall of the students could not reach the minimum requirement. In addition, separate analyses established that all of these students were from the Faculty of Natural Resources or the Faculty Agro-Industry from which respectively 33% and 22% of the students failed to reach the standard.

Analysis of the 2003 doctoral students' scores showed that there were students from every faculty except the Faculty of Engineering (from which there was only one student) who did not achieve the criterion specified. The rank order of six faculties by the number of students failing showed that the Faculty of Science had the highest number, with 86% of its students failing to meet the criterion score, and the Faculty of Medicine had the lowest at 17%.

Table 4.5: Listening scores of the 2002 and 2003 doctoral students

Faculty	2002 academic year					2003 academic year				
	N	Score range (%)	Mean score (%)	SD (%)	No. failed (%)	N	Score range (%)	Mean score (%)	SD (%)	No. failed (%)
Agro-Industry	9	24.00 – 96.67	60.44	18.65	2 (22%)	3	40.00 – 84.00	58.00	23.07	2 (67%)
Engineering	-	-	-	-	-	1	50.00 – 50.00	50.00	-	1 (100%)
Medicine	2	60.00 – 90.00	75.00	21.21	-	6	23.33 – 63.33	51.67	15.60	2 (33%)
Natural Resources	3	20.00 – 44.00	34.67	12.86	3 (100%)	4	40.00 – 64.00	48.50	11.36	3 (75%)
Nursing	8	60.00 – 76.00	66.50	6.02	-	5	60.00 – 73.33	64.93	4.98	-
Pharmaceutical Sciences	2	60.00 – 77.14	68.57	12.12	-	2	30.00 – 60.00	45.00	21.21	1 (50%)
Science	1	60.00 – 60.00	60.00	-	-	7	24.00 – 70.00	50.19	17.66	4 (57%)
Total	**25**	**20.00 – 96.67**	**61.09**	**16.83**	**5 (20%)**	**28**	**23.33 – 84.00**	**53.36**	**15.10**	**13 (46%)**

The average listening score of the 2002 and 2003 doctoral students presented in Table 4.5 was 61.09% (SD=16.83%) with a range of 20.00% to 96.67%, and 53.36% (SD=15.10%) with a range of 23.33% to 84.00%.

The overall number of 2002 doctoral students whose scores were lower than the criterion was 20%, all of whom were from the Faculty of Natural Resources and the Faculty of Agro-Industry from which respectively 100% and 22% failed to meet the specified score.

As a whole, 46% of the 2003 doctoral students failed to achieve the criterion score. Moreover, it should be noted that there were students from every faculty except the Faculty of Nursing who failed to reach the score required. The highest proportion of doctoral students failing the test were from the Faculty of Engineering (100%).

4.1.2 Students' academic success

The record of overall or accumulative GPAs obtained is the other variable relating to the predictive validity of PSU-GET scores and the academic success of PSU graduate students in the 2002 and 2003 academic years.

4.1.2.1 Academic success: master's students

Based on the information obtained from the PSU graduate school, the minimum GPA required for every Master's Degree student is 3.00. The information from the records of the 250 and 661 master's students is summarized in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Overall or accumulative GPAs of the 2002 and 2003 master's students

Faculty	2002 academic year					2003 academic year				
	N	Score range (%)	Mean score (%)	SD (%)	No. failed (%)	N	Score range (%)	Mean score (%)	SD (%)	No. failed (%)
Faculty of Agro-Industry	6	3.04 – 3.92	3.28	0.33	-	23	3.02 – 4.00	3.54	0.28	-
Faculty of Dentistry	1	3.54 – 3.54	3.54	-	-	12	2.70 – 3.74	3.40	0.26	1 (8%)
Faculty of Economics	11	3.01 – 3.84	3.35	0.22	-	35	3.00 – 3.95	3.39	0.26	-
Faculty of Engineering	78	2.33 – 4.00	3.53	0.29	1 (1%)	113	1.63 – 4.00	3.42	0.39	7 (6%)
Faculty of Environmental Management	26	1.00 – 3.94	3.36	0.52	1 (4%)	32	2.86 – 3.75	3.44	0.19	1 (3%)
Faculty of Management Sciences	41	3.12 – 3.87	3.44	0.19	-	187	2.53 – 3.92	3.45	0.21	2 (1%)
Faculty of Medicine	1	3.38 – 3.38	3.38	-	-	10	3.28 – 3.85	3.52	0.18	-
Faculty of Natural Resources	16	3.14 – 4.00	3.56	0.27	-	52	3.02 – 4.00	3.50	0.25	-
Faculty of Nursing	34	2.66 – 3.69	3.38	0.18	1 (3%)	91	0.63 – 3.75	3.45	0.33	1 (1%)
Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences	14	3.32 – 4.00	3.66	0.16	-	17	1.66 – 4.00	3.55	0.54	1 (6%)
Faculty of Science	22	2.44 – 3.90	3.31	0.34	2 (9%)	89	1.00 – 4.00	3.38	0.44	8 (9%)

Total	**250**	**1.00 – 4.00**	**3.45**	**0.30**	**5 (2%)**	**661**	**0.63 – 4.00**	**3.44**	**0.32**	**21 (3%)**

As can be seen from Table 4.6, the average overall or accumulative GPA of the Master's Degree students was 3.45 (SD = 0.30) with a range of 1.00 to 4.00 in the 2002 academic year. As a whole, only 2% of students achieved a GPA lower than 3.00. Based on the performance by faculty, it was found that the Faculty of Science showed the highest proportion (9%) of students who failed to reach the GPA criterion of 3.00.

With regard to the average overall or accumulative GPAs of the 2003 master's students, the figure was 3.44 (SD = 0.32) with a range of 0.63 to 4.00. The overall number of students who failed to pass the minimum GPA was 3%. In addition, it should be noted that the number of students failing to reach the minimum GPA from the Faculty of Science was again the highest (9%) the same figure as for the 2002 academic year.

4.1.2.2 Academic success: doctoral students

The GPA criterion for doctoral students specified by the PSU graduate school is also 3.00. The GPAs of the 25 and 31 doctoral students in the 2002 and 2003 academic years are presented in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Overall or accumulative GPAs of the 2002 and 2003 doctoral students

Faculty	2002 academic year				2003 academic year			
	N	Range	Mean	SD	N	Range	Mean	SD
Faculty of Agro-Industry	9	3.12 – 4.00	3.72	0.27	4	3.51 – 3.75	3.60	0.11
Faculty of Engineering	-	-	-	-	2	3.50 – 3.87	3.69	0.26
Faculty of Medicine	2	3.18 – 3.66	3.42	0.34	6	3.18 – 3.77	3.50	0.21
Faculty of Natural Resources	3	3.41 – 3.55	3.48	0.07	5	3.66 – 4.00	3.85	0.14

Faculty of Nursing	8	3.42 – 3.89	3.64	0.17	5	3.46 – 3.89	3.70	0.20
Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences	2	3.82 – 3.93	3.88	0.08	2	3.60 – 4.00	3.80	0.28
Faculty of Science	1	4.00 – 4.00	4.00	-	7	3.00 – 4.00	3.82	0.37
Total	**25**	**3.12 – 4.00**	**3.67**	**0.24**	**31**	**3.00 – 4.00**	**3.70**	**0.26**

Table 4.7 shows that the average overall or accumulative GPA of the doctoral students in the 2002 and 2003 academic years was 3.67 (SD = 0.24) with a range of 3.12 to 4.00, and 3.70 (SD = 0.26) with a range of 3.00 to 4.00. Therefore every doctoral student from the 2002 and 2003 academic years achieved a GPA higher than 3.00 as specified as a requirement for their graduation.

4.1.3 The correlations between PSU-GET scores and academic success of PSU graduate students

Research question 1: Can PSU-GET scores predict academic success of PSU graduate students?

To answer the first research question, the PSU-GET scores and the record of overall or accumulative GPAs of 275 and 692 PSU graduate students who commenced studying in the 2002 and 2003 academic years were analyzed to establish the predictive validity of their PSU-GET scores.

4.1.3.1 The correlations between PSU-GET scores and academic success: master's students

The relationships between the PSU-GET scores in the reading and structure section and the overall or accumulative GPAs of the 250 and 661 master's students in the 2002 and 2003 academic years are discussed according to Devore and Peck (cited in Srisai, 2004)'s criteria of interpretation as follows:

$0 \leq r < 0.5$ = Weak

$0.5 \leq r < 0.8$ = Moderate

$0.8 \leq r < 1.5$ = Strong

and the results are presented in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Correlations between reading and structure scores combined and overall or accumulative GPAs of the 2002 and 2003 master's students

Faculty/ Program	Correlations	
	2002 academic year	2003 academic year
Health Sciences (2002: N = 50, 2003: N = 130) Faculty of Dentistry Faculty of Medicine Faculty of Nursing Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences	0.543** (df = 48)	0.253** (df = 128)
Science and Technology (2002: N = 148, 2003: N = 309) Faculty of Agro-Industry Faculty of Engineering Faculty of Environmental Management Faculty of Natural Resources Faculty of Science	0.286** (df = 146)	0.306** (df = 307)
Humanities and Social Sciences (2002: N = 52, 2003: N = 222) Faculty of Economics Faculty of Management Sciences	0.310* (df = 50)	0.361** (df = 220)

* Significant at the 0.05 Level

** Significant at the 0.01 Level

In the 2002 academic year, the relationships between reading and structure scores combined and the overall GPA of students from the groups of health

sciences and science and technology were 0.543 and 0.286, significant at the 0.01 level. For students in the humanities and social sciences the correlation was 0.310, significant at the 0.05 level.

The figures of the 2003 master's students show that all correlations obtained from the three groups: (1) health sciences, (2) science and technology, and (3) humanities and social sciences, are at the 0.01 level of significance. They are 0.253, 0.306, and 0.361, respectively. Only the correlation for the health sciences group for the 2002 students reaches a moderate level (r = 0.543). All other correlations are at a weak level.

4.1.3.2 The correlations between PSU-GET scores and academic success: doctoral students

The correlations between the PSU-GET scores and the overall or accumulative GPAs of the 25 and 31 doctoral students in the 2002 and 2003 academic years are presented for the reading and structure section in Table 4.9. It should be noted that the unavailability of some doctoral students' scores in different parts of the PSU-GET has led to different number of doctoral students taking different parts of the test.

Table 4.9: Correlations between reading and structure scores combined and overall or accumulative GPAs of the 2002 and 2003 doctoral students

Faculty/ Program	Correlations	
	2002 academic year	2003 academic year
Health Sciences (2002: N = 12, 2003: N = 13) Faculty of Medicine Faculty of Nursing Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences	0.451^{NS} (df = 10)	0.309^{NS} (df = 11)
Science and Technology (2002: N = 13, 2003: N = 18) Faculty of Agro-Industry Faculty of Engineering	0.595* (df = 11)	0.526* (df = 16)

Faculty of Natural Resources Faculty of Science		

* Significant at the 0.05 Level

NS Non-significant

The information shows that the relationship between reading and structure scores combined and the GPAs of both the 2002 and 2003 students whose programs are in the science and technology group were moderate at 0.595 and 0.526 respectively, both figures being significant at the 0.05 level. For the health sciences group neither of the coefficients were significant and the correlations were relatively weak.

The correlations between the writing scores and overall or accumulative GPAs of the 25 and 29 doctoral students in the 2002 and 2003 academic years, are shown in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10: Correlations between writing scores and overall or accumulative GPAs of the 2002 and 2003 doctoral students

Faculty/ Program	**Correlations**	
	2002 academic year	**2003 academic year**
Health Sciences (2002: N = 12, 2003: N = 13) Faculty of Medicine Faculty of Nursing Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences	0.196^{NS} (df = 10)	0.543^{NS} (df = 11)
Science and Technology (2002: N = 13, 2003: N = 16) Faculty of Agro-Industry Faculty of Engineering Faculty of Natural Resources Faculty of Science	0.295^{NS} (df = 11)	0.229^{NS} (df = 14)

NS Non-significant

Although the correlation for the 2003 academic year was moderate at 0.543, none of the comparisons detailed in Table 4.10 produced significant

correlations between the scores in the PSU-GET writing section, and the overall or accumulative GPAs of the 2002 and 2003 doctoral students.

The correlations between the listening scores and the overall or accumulative GPAs of the 25 and 28 doctoral students in the 2002 and 2003 academic years are shown in table 4.11.

Table 4.11: Correlations between listening scores and overall or accumulative GPAs of the 2002 and 2003 doctoral students

Faculty/ Program	Correlations	
	2002 academic year	**2003 academic year**
Health Sciences (2002: N = 12, 2003: N = 13) Faculty of Medicine Faculty of Nursing Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences	0.290^{NS} (df = 10)	0.606* (df = 11)
Science and Technology (2002: N = 13, 2003: N = 15) Faculty of Agro-Industry Faculty of Engineering Faculty of Natural Resources Faculty of Science	0.551^{NS} (df = 11)	0.413^{NS} (df = 13)

* Significant at the 0.05 Level

^{NS} Non-significant

As shown in Table 4.11, there was a significant relationship at the 0.05 level found, with the correlation coefficient moderate at 0.606, for the 2003 doctoral students studying in the health sciences group, whereas no other significant

correlations were found to exist between PSU-GET listening section scores and overall or accumulative GPAs although a moderate correlation of 0.551 for the 2002 science and technology students was found.

4.1.4 Summary of findings from research question 1

In sum, the findings of the first research question indicate some relationships between PSU-GET scores and the overall or accumulative GPA of the 2002 and 2003 PSU graduate students. There were significant relationships between reading and structure scores, and the overall or accumulative GPA of the 2002 and 2003 master's students from all fields of study—the health sciences, science and technology, and humanities and social sciences groups—whereas the only significant relationships found for the 2002 and 2003 doctoral students was from the science and technology group. Based on the writing and listening sections of the PSU-GET taken by doctoral students only, none of the correlations between the PSU-GET writing scores and GPA or accumulative GPA of 2002 and 2003 doctoral students were significant while only one significant relationship between the PSU-GET listening scores and the overall or accumulative GPA of the 2003 doctoral students from the health sciences group was found.

4.2 The perceived problems faced by PSU graduate students who repeatedly fail to pass the PSU-GET

The information obtained from the student questionnaire, returned by 51 students from the 2002 and 2003 academic years, was categorized into 6 parts: (1) general background of the 2002 – 2003 PSU graduate students, (2) students' perceived English proficiency, (3) their opportunity to use English skills, (4) their

experience in taking the PSU-GET, (5) their comments on the difficulty of the PSU-GET, (6) perceived problems in taking the PSU-GET.

4.2.1 General background of the 2002 – 2003 PSU graduate students

The questionnaires from students who repeatedly fail to pass the PSU-GET were returned by 51 (44 master's students and 7 doctoral students) out of 63 graduate students studying in PSU graduate programs in the 2002 and 2003 academic years. The range of dates of graduation of these students at Bachelor Degree level was between 1978 and 2003 for the master's students and between 1991 and 2003 for the doctoral students.

In terms of the institutions at which students studied at Bachelor Degree level, three doctoral students graduated from Prince of Songkla University and the same number of students graduated from public universities: Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya, Kasetsart University and Maejo University, while another one graduated from Ramkhamhaeng University**.** As for the master's students, 33 out of 44 graduated from Prince of Songkla University.

The students' background based on their field of study while studying at Bachelor Degree level showed that 29 master's students had major fields of study in science and technology, 8 in humanities and social sciences, and 7 in health sciences. Moreover, 6 doctoral students had a major field of study in science and technology, with the remaining one studying in health sciences.

The higher proportion of master's (31 out of 44) and doctoral (5 out of 7) students commenced studying in the 2003 academic year. The details of the current situation (as of October, 2007) of both the 44 master's and 7 doctoral students who commenced studying in graduate programs in the 2002 and 2003 academic years are shown in table 4.12. However, since some respondents did not complete all the sections of the questionnaire, the data included in the table is based on the information provided by the respondents.

Table 4.12: Current situation of PSU master's and doctoral graduate students, still studying in October, 2007

Current situation	Master's student		Doctoral student	
	Passed the PSU-GET	**Not yet passed the PSU-GET**	**Passed the PSU-GET**	**Not yet passed the PSU-GET**
1. They are currently writing their thesis.	*27	*12	*2	*4
2. They have finished their course of study and thesis.	1	4		1
3. They are taking 890-901, *English for Graduate students*.		11		
4. They satisfied the English criterion by taking TOEFL or CU-TEP after taking the PSU-GET more than twice.	1 (CU-TEP)		1 (TOEFL)	

* Highest number of students

As can be seen from Table 4.12, among the master's and doctoral students who have not yet passed the PSU-GET criterion, the highest proportion of them (12 master's and 4 doctoral students) are currently engaged in writing their thesis. Eleven

master's students took 890-901, *English for Graduate students* to help them reach the English criterion, whereas none of the doctoral students who have still not reached the English criterion gave their solutions, indicating how they are dealing with the problem of not being able to reach the PSU-GET criterion.

4.2.2 Students' perceived English proficiency

An investigation was carried out to establish the perceived English proficiency of the post-graduate students while they were studying at Bachelor Degree level, and their perceived level of English proficiency at the time of giving the information (October, 2007). The data concerning students' perceived English proficiency while studying at Bachelor Degree level was analyzed based on the students' replies in the student questionnaire Part 1 (item 6) and categorized into 6 levels.

Table 4.13: English proficiency of PSU master's and doctoral graduate students, still studying in October, 2007 while studying at Bachelor Degree level

Description	Master's student		Doctoral student	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Level 1: Got 'F' in all English courses	2	4.55	-	-
Level 2: Got 'D' and 'F' in English courses	1	2.27	-	-
Level 3: Got 'D' in most English courses	1	2.27	-	-
Level 4: Got 'C' in most English courses	21*	47.73	4*	57.14
Level 5: Got 'A' and 'B' in English courses	16	36.36	2	28.57
Level 6: Got 'A' in all English courses	3	6.82	1	14.29
Total	**44**	**100.00**	**7**	**100.00**

* Highest number of students

As is apparent from Table 4.13, the largest proportion of master's (47.73%) and doctoral (57.14%) students got 'C' (level 4) in most English courses while studying at Bachelor Degree level.

The information obtained from Part 1 (item 8) of the student questionnaire regarding the students' perceived current English proficiency while studying in PSU graduate programs is shown in table 4.14.

Table 4.14: Perceived overall English proficiency of PSU master's and doctoral students at the time of giving the information (October, 2007)

Level	Master's student		Doctoral student	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Level 1: Poor	1	2.27	-	-
Level 2: Fairly poor	3	6.82	-	-
Level 3: Fair	12	27.27	1	14.29
Level 4: Moderate	16*	36.36	4*	57.14
Level 5: Good	11	25.00	2	28.57
Level 6: Very good	1	2.27	-	-
Total	**44**	**100.00**	**7**	**100.00**

* Highest number of students

As can be seen, most PSU master's (36.36%) and doctoral (57.14%) students perceived their English proficiency at the time of giving the information (October, 2007) at level 4 (moderate). One master's student recorded his level of proficiency at level 1 (poor) and another at level 6 (very good), whereas one doctoral student indicated level 3 (fair). The overall level of English proficiency perceived by master's and doctoral students who still have not reached the PSU-GET criterion was within a range of 1 (poor) to 4 (moderate) and 3 (fair) to 5 (good).

In order to consider the skills separately, Part 1 (item 10) of the student questionnaire asked the students' to record their perceived proficiency in various English skills at the time of giving the information (October, 2007) using a 6-point rating scale ranging from 6 (most proficient) to 1 (least proficient) and the results were analyzed as to their means and standard deviations. The criteria for the interpretation of the rating scale of the mean scores were as follows:

Level 1: 1.00 – 1.50 = least proficient
Level 2: 1.51 – 2.50 = low proficiency
Level 3: 2.51 – 3.50 = fairly low proficiency
Level 4: 3.51 – 4.50 = moderately proficient
Level 5: 4.51 – 5.50 = highly proficient
Level 6: 5.51 – 6.00 = most proficient

Table 4.15: Perceived proficiency of English skills of PSU master's and doctoral students at the time of giving the information (October, 2007)

Skills	Master's student (N = 44)			Doctoral student (N = 7)		
	Mean	SD	Level	Mean	SD	Level
Listening	3.80	1.07	4	4.29	0.95	4
Speaking	3.48	1.21	3	4.29	0.76	4
Reading	4.32	0.98	4	4.00	1.15	4
Writing	3.59	1.13	4	4.00	0.82	4
Grammar	3.55	1.07	4	4.00	1.15	4

Vocabulary	3.89	0.99	4	4.00	0.82	4

As can be seen from Table 4.15, reading was the skill perceived to be at the highest proficiency (mean = 4.32, SD = 0.98) by master's students, whereas doctoral students perceived that listening (mean = 4.29, SD = 0.95) and speaking (mean = 4.29, SD = 0.76) were the two skills in which they had the highest proficiency. Based on the criteria above, it was found that every skill except speaking was perceived by the master's students to be moderately proficient (level 4) and all the skills were perceived to be at the moderately proficient level by the doctoral students.

4.2.3 Students' opportunity to use English skills

To gauge the students' opportunity to use their English skills in the previous five years, Part 1 (item 7) of the student questionnaire used a five-point rating scale ranging from 5 (always) to 1 (rarely) and the results were analyzed for their means and standard deviations which are shown in Table 4.16.

Table 4.16: Master's and doctoral students' opportunity to use their English skills in the previous five years

Skills	Master's student (N = 44)				Doctoral student (N = 7)			
	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Listening	1	5	2.97	1.17	2	5	3.57	1.13
Speaking	1	5	2.66	1.24	2	5	3.29	0.95
Reading	1	5	3.64	1.14	3	5	4.00	0.82
Writing	1	5	2.89	1.66	1	5	3.14	1.35

The analysis suggests that the skill most used for master's and doctoral students was reading (master's student: mean = 3.64, SD = 1.14, doctoral students: mean = 4.00, SD = 0.82). The skill least used for master's students was speaking (mean = 2.66, SD = 1.24) whereas the least used skill for doctoral students was writing (mean = 3.14, SD = 1.35).

Part 1 (item 9) of the student questionnaire investigated the students' opportunity to use their English skills while studying in their PSU graduate program using a five-point rating scale ranging from 5 (always) to 1 (rarely) and the results were analyzed for their means and standard deviations which are shown in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17: Master's and doctoral students' opportunity to use their English skills while studying in the PSU graduate program

Skills	Master's student (N = 44)				Doctoral student (N = 7)			
	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Listening	1	5	3.07	1.07	2	4	2.71	0.95
Speaking	1	5	2.64	1.26	2	4	2.71	0.76
Reading	2	5	4.14	0.85	4	5	4.71	0.49
Writing	1	5	3.27	1.06	1	4	2.86	1.07
Grammar	1	5	3.07	1.17	1	5	3.43	1.27
Vocabulary	2	5	3.50	0.90	1	4	3.43	1.13

The findings show that the skill most used for master's and doctoral students was reading (master's students: mean = 4.14, SD = 0.85, doctoral students: mean = 4.71, SD = 0.49). The skill least used for master's and doctoral students was speaking (master's students: mean = mean = 2.64, SD = 1.26, doctoral students: mean = 2.71, SD = 0.76).

4.2.4 Students' experience in taking the PSU-GET

The information from the student questionnaire Part 2 (item 12) concerns the students' experience in taking the three sections of the PSU-GET: (1) reading and structure, (2) writing, and (3) listening. The number of times of taking the PSU-GET by each student is presented in Table 4.18.

Table 4.18: Number of times of taking the PSU-GET among PSU master's and doctoral students

Master's student		**Doctoral student***					
Reading and structure		**Reading and structure**		**Writing**		**Listening**	
Number of times	**Number of students (%)**	**Number of times**	**Number of students (%)**	**Number of times**	**Number of students (%)**	**Number of times**	**Number of students (%)**
1	-	1	16 (80.00%)	1	4 (20.00%)	1	4 (20.00%)
2	6 (19.40%)	2	1 (5.00%)	2	5 (25.00%)	2	2 (10.00%)
3	8 (25.80%)	3	-	3	6 (30.00%)	3	1 (5.00%)
4	3 (9.70%)	4	3 (15.00%)	4	3 (15.00%)	4	2 (10.00%)
5	7 (22.60%)	5	-	5	1 (5.00%)	5	6 (30.00%)
6	4 (12.90%)	6	-	6	-	6	2 (10.00%)
7	2 (6.50%)	7	-	7	1 (5.00%)	7	2 (10.00%)
8	1 (3.20%)	8	-	8	-	8	1 (5.00%)

Total	**31**	**Total**	**20**	**Total**	**20**	**Total**	**20**

* Thirteen students studying in a master's and doctoral program at the same time

The figures above indicate the number of times of taking the PSU-GET among master's students (31 students) and doctoral students (20 students: 7 students studying solely in a doctoral program, 13 students studying in a master's and doctoral program at the same time) to range between one and eight. The highest frequency (8 times) arises in the reading and structure, and listening sections and 7 is the highest number of times which the writing section has been taken by a doctoral student.

It should be noted that a single master's student from the Faculty of Management Sciences is responsible for the highest number of times that both the reading and structure section have been taken. Based on background information established for this student, he has still not passed the PSU-GET (at the time of giving the information: October, 2007), in spite of finishing all other requirements before graduation.

Additionally, a doctoral student from the Faculty of Natural Resources has taken the longest time (7 times) for the writing section. It is interesting to note that his situation is the same as the situation of the master's student from the Faculty of Management Sciences, that is neither have passed the PSU-GET (at the time giving the information: October, 2007), in spite of finishing all other requirements before graduation.

However, one student who is studying in a Master's and doctoral program at the same time from the Faculty of Science, after having taken the listening section 8 times, was finally able to reach the criterion, and she is currently in the process of completing her thesis.

4.2.5 Students' comments on the difficulty of the PSU-GET

Part 2 (item 14) of the student questionnaire asked for the students' comments on the difficulty of the PSU-GET. To measure their opinions, the questionnaire used a five-point rating scale ranging from 5 (very difficult) to 1 (very easy) and the results were analyzed as to their means and standard deviations. The criteria for the

interpretation of the rating scale of the mean scores were: 1.00 – 1.50 (very easy), 1.51 – 2.50 (easy), 2.51 – 3.50 (moderately easy), 3.51 – 4.50 (difficult), and 4.51 – 5.00 (very difficult).

Among the doctoral students, listening was rated the most difficult skill (mean = 4.09, SD = 0.69), followed by writing (mean = 3.94, SD = 0.87), whereas reading and structure were rated by both the master's and doctoral students at 3.66 (SD = 0.77), indicating that this was perceived as the easiest section of all, yet a difficult level according to the criteria. However, after analysing the doctoral students' comments on the difficulty of the PSU-GET in each skill based on the rating scale, it was found that the mean of every skill is at level 4 (difficult).

In addition to investigating of students' perception of the difficulty of the PSU-GET, Part 2 (item 16) of the student questionnaire asked about the students' expectation of passing the three sections of the PSU-GET the next time they were due to take it (28 October, 2007). The analysis of the figures from this part of the investigation showed that 13 out of 20 students (65.00%) who were planning in the upcoming sit of the PSU-GET (the end of October, 2007) to take the listening and writing sections expected to pass them, and 34 out of 51 students (66.70%) expected to pass the reading and structure section.

It is notable that the expectation of passing the reading and structure section, which were perceived by both master's and doctoral students as being the easiest sections of the PSU-GET were effectively the same as the student's expectation of passing the listening and writing sections despite these sections having been rated as more difficult by the doctoral students and those students studying combined master's and doctoral programs.

In spite of repeatedly failing the PSU-GET, the details obtained from the student questionnaire part 2 (item 15) indicated that most students (70.60%) never take a PSU-GET preparation course while only 29.40% of all students have taken one.

4.2.6 Perceived problems in taking the PSU-GET

Research question 2: What are the perceived problems faced by PSU graduate students who repeatedly fail to pass

the PSU-GET?

4.2.6.1 Students' opinions on the PSU-GET

To answer research question 2, the student questionnaire Part 2 (item 13) asked the students to rank five problems they face in taking the PSU-GET. Those problems are summarized in Table 4.19a.

Table 4.19a: Students perceived problems in taking the PSU-GET

Perceived problems	Number of students (N = 51)	%
1. The learners' limited English knowledge	49	96.08
2. Limited time to review or practice English	45	88.24
3. A lack of resources	47	92.16
4. A lack of supporting students to use English skills from their curriculum	44	86.27
5. The test	44	86.27

It was found that the learners' limited knowledge had the highest number of endorsements (49 out of 51), followed by limited time to review or practice English (45), lack of resources such as books, test examples or VCD for improving English skills (47), lack of support for students to use English skills in their curriculum (44), and the test itself (44).

There were four added reasons put forward by five students. Those are (1) having too high a passing criterion, (2) too many sittings of the PSU-GET being offered each year by the university, (3) having no way to prepare before taking the PSU-GET, and (4) having no opportunity to practice using English skills.

The information obtained from the open-ended questions relating to the students' opinions on the PSU-GET showed that 8 out of 27 students were satisfied with the PSU-GET. Another 19 students expressed a number of different ideas relating to the test which are summarized in Table 4.19b.

Table 4.19b: Further problems and/ or suggestions relating to the PSU-GET

Test section	Problems identified and/or suggestions made	Number of students
Reading and structure	1. Content in the reading and structure section of the PSU-GET should come from various fields.	5
	2. Each text in the reading part should not be too long.	3
	3. The reading section should focus on understanding the main idea, rather than analysis of the texts.	2
	4. Passing the reading and structure section should be sufficient for a doctoral degree.	1
Writing	5. There is no clear criterion specified for rating scores.	1
Listening	6. The equipment used is not of good enough quality to allow the test takers to hear the listening clearly.	1
	7. It is difficult to develop listening skills.	1
General	8. Students would prefer to take an English test administered by their own programs (faculty).	3
	9. Studying past forms of the test with the answer key would help them to pass the test.	3
	10. The test is of different levels of difficulty on different occasions.	1
	11. Results of the test should be sent to candidates home address.	1

	12. The content of the test is different from what was taught in the preparatory course.	1
	13. The test should be offered every month.	1
	14. The test should be of higher quality and should be more reliable.	1

From the table, it can be seen that the most frequent issue of discontent related to test bias. After taking the test more than twice, three students felt that most technical terms in the PSU-GET test are biased towards test takers studying in humanities and social science programs and three students would prefer to take an English test administered by their own programs. Five respondents suggested that in the reading and structure section of the PSU-GET, the content should come from a variety of fields. Also, each text in the test should not be too long because a wrong interpretation in reading a long text might cause the students to lose marks. Instead of having only one or two long texts, they felt it would be preferable to have several short texts. Moreover, two students suggested that the test should focus on establishing that the candidates understood the main idea, rather than a detailed analysis of the texts. Interestingly, one doctoral student thought that passing the reading and structure section of the PSU-GET should be sufficient for his level.

Opinions expressed on the writing and listening sections by two students suggested a need for a clear criterion for rating scores and more efficient equipment for the listening test since one respondent felt that he could not hear the listenings clearly because of poor quality equipment.

In general, three students thought that studying past tests with the answer keys would help them to learn, improve, and prepare themselves before taking the PSU-GET. Additionally, after taking the PSU-GET preparation course, one student perceived that what he learnt from the course was different from what appeared in the test and one student who had taken the test several times perceived the level of difficulty of the test as being different on different occasions when he sat it. Other suggestions included sending results directly to candidates, offering sittings of the test every month instead of four times a year, while another perceived that too many sittings of the PSU-GET each year was a problem in taking the PSU-GET.

Finally there was a call for the PSU-GET to be of a higher standard and to be more reliable.

4.2.6.2 Suggested solutions to students' problems in passing the PSU-GET

The data from 30 students' responses to part 3 of the student questionnaire identified 4 areas in which solutions to problems in passing the PSU-GET were suggested. The four areas ranked in order relate to (1) the test-taking process (44% of 30 students), (2) the test takers (25%), (3) other factors concerning the PSU-GET (25%), and (4) the PSU-GET criterion (6%).

4.2.6.2.1 The test-taking process

Various suggestions were made regarding the process before taking the PSU-GET. One student suggested separating the PSU-GET preparation course into three sections corresponding to the test sections: reading and structure, writing, and listening which it was felt would help the students learn and improve their language skills effectively. Additionally, two students felt that being able to study among others who have language ability at the same level would help their development to proceed more quickly.

Three students opined that every graduate student should be made to take the Review of English Language Skills course before their first semester to make them familiar with English. If it were possible, one student would like to be trained specially either free of charge or at the cheapest price possible, before taking the test. However, one student suggested that various materials to support the students' English learning should be provided at their faculties.

Regarding the process after taking the PSU-GET, one student suggested that students who fail the test more than three times should be directed to

register for an English course. However, six students strongly felt that English should be specified as a core subject to reduce the time which graduate students take to pass the PSU-GET.

4.2.6.2.2 The test takers

To solve the problems of those students repeatedly failing the PSU-GET, a number of respondents regarded factors relating to the students themselves as important in helping them to reach the criterion. The opinions presented were as follows. According to ten respondents, students need to be disciplined in reviewing and practicing frequently, whereas another thought that the students should find their own techniques to help them understand and remember English words and grammar. In addition, they should learn by themselves how to eliminate incorrect or absurd choices when answering multiple choice items.

4.2.6.2.3 Other factors concerning the PSU-GET

With regard to the test, four students mentioned providing on-line English lessons or past versions of the PSU-GET to allow them to learn and practice autonomously, selling past tests with their answer keys, conducting the test separately based on the field of the test takers, and adding content useful in daily life to the test. Relating to the numbers of items in the test, two students suggested that the number of test items should be increased in the hope that the higher numbers of items could help them to get a higher score. Additionally, another student said that the application fee should be cheaper for those students who have taken the test more than five times.

4.2.6.2.4 The PSU-GET criterion

There were three opinions offered concerning the PSU-GET criterion. All of them stated that the criterion should be the same for the students studying in any faculty. It is not regarded as fair that some programs require a lower English criterion for their graduate students.

4.2.7 Summary of findings from research question 2

In brief, the findings on the second research question investigating the perceived problems faced by PSU graduate students who repeatedly fail to pass the PSU-GET show that 49 out of 51 respondents rated the learners' limited knowledge as the most serious problem. Moreover, although 8 out of 27 students were satisfied with the PSU-GET, other students offered their opinions on the PSU-GET in each section of the test. For example, 5 out of 11 students who gave suggestions relating to the reading and structure section of the PSU-GET thought that the content should come from various fields**.** As for the writing section, only one student identified that there was no clear criterion specified for rating scores. In addition, another student felt that the equipment used to hear the listening tests was not of good enough quality.

Furthermore, solutions to problems in passing the PSU-GET were suggested classifiable under 4 headings: (1) the test-taking process, (2) the test-takers, (3) other factors concerning the PSU-GET, and (4) the PSU-GET criterion.

4.3 The opinions of the PSU graduate students' advisors on the PSU-GET

Information was obtained from the advisor questionnaires, returned by 35 advisors from the following 10 faculties: Agro-Industry (1 advisor), Dentistry (1 advisor), Economics (4 advisors), Engineering (3 advisors), Management Science (5 advisors), Medicine (1 advisor), Natural Resources (9 advisors), Nursing (2 advisors), Pharmaceutical Science (2 advisors), and Science (7 advisors). The information included the advisors' evaluation of the English proficiency of their students, and the advisors' opinions on the PSU-GET.

4.3.1 Advisors' evaluation of the English proficiency of their students

Firstly, the questionnaire asked the advisors to evaluate the English proficiency of their students using a six-point rating scale ranging from 6 (most proficient) to 1 (least proficient) and the results were analyzed as to their means and standard deviations. The criteria for the interpretation of the rating scale of the mean scores were interpreted as follows:

Level 1: 1.00 – 1.50	=	least proficient
Level 2: 1.51 – 2.50	=	low proficiency
Level 3: 2.51 – 3.50	=	fairly low proficiency
Level 4: 3.51 – 4.50	=	moderately proficient
Level 5: 4.51 – 5.50	=	highly proficient
Level 6: 5.51 – 6.00	=	most proficient

The results of the advisors' evaluation of their advisees' English proficiency, 26 Master's and 7 doctoral students, are presented below.

Table 4.20: English proficiency of PSU master's and doctoral students evaluated by their advisors

Skills	Master's student (N = 26)			Doctoral student (N = 7)		
	Mean	SD	Level	Mean	SD	Level
Listening	3.92	1.20	4	3.57	1.27	4
Speaking	3.58	1.21	4	3.57	0.98	4
Reading	4.46	0.81	4	4.43	0.79	4
Writing	3.69	1.05	4	3.43	0.98	3
Grammar	3.69	0.97	4	3.29	1.11	3
Vocabulary	3.92	0.89	4	3.71	0.76	4

According to Table 4.20, reading was the skill rated the highest based on the average scores of the master's students. However, all skills were interpreted as being in level 4 (moderately proficient).

Also, the skill rated the highest based on the mean scores of the doctoral students was reading, followed by listening, speaking, and vocabulary, interpreted as being in level 4 (moderately proficient), with writing and grammar being interpreted for level 3 (fairly low proficiency).

The English proficiency of the master's and doctoral students under the supervision of the advisors who responded to the questionnaire as evaluated by those advisors, categorized by faculty are shown in Table 4.21.

Table 4.21: English proficiency of PSU master's and doctoral students evaluated by their advisors categorized by faculty

Faculty	No. of advisors	Mean					
		Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Grammar	Vocabulary
Agro-Industry	1	3.00	3.00	5.00	3.00	2.00	4.00
Dentistry	1	5.00**	5.00**	5.00	5.00**	5.00**	5.00**
Economics	4	5.00**	5.00**	5.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Engineering	3	4.67	4.00	5.33	4.67	4.33	5.00**
Management Sciences	5	3.67	3.00	4.00	3.67	3.33	3.00*
Medicine	1	1.00*	1.00*	3.00*	2.00*	2.00*	3.00*
Natural Resources	9	3.50	3.42	4.08	3.50	3.67	3.83
Nursing	2	4.00	3.00	4.00	2.00*	2.00*	3.00*
Pharmaceutical Sciences	2	4.67	4.67	5.67**	4.67	5.00**	5.00**
Science	7	4.00	3.57	4.43	3.29	3.14	3.43

* Lowest average score

** Highest average score

It is notable that the lowest assessment of advisee's English proficiency was given by one advisor from the Faculty of Medicine who rated his advisee for listening

and speaking at level 1 (least proficient), writing and grammar at level 2 (low proficiency), and reading and vocabulary at level 3 (fairly low proficiency), whereas one advisor from the Faculty of Dentistry evaluated his advisee as having the highest English proficiency for every skill except reading with the scores given by him all being at level 5 (highly proficient). It should also be remarked that reading was rated by the students' advisors as the skill at which their advisees were most proficient.

Interestingly, it was found that reading, which was rated by the students' advisors as the skill at which their advisees were most proficient, was also the skill rated by the students to have been used most often in the previous five years.

Moreover, the relationships between the perceived proficiency of English skills of the students at the time of giving the information (October, 2007) and their English proficiency evaluated by their own advisors was investigated. It was found that from the 51 students and 35 advisors who returned the student and advisor questionnaires, 26 pairs of master's students and their advisors, and 2 pairs of doctoral students and their own advisors had both returned their respective questionnaires, and the results of the comparison of their responses are presented in Table 4.22.

Table 4.22: Correlations between perceived English proficiency by students and their English proficiency evaluated by their own advisors

Skills	Correlations	
	Master's student	**Doctoral student**
Listening	-0.093^{NS}	-1.000**
Speaking	0.044^{NS}	-
Reading	0.273^{NS}	-
Writing	-0.070^{NS}	-1.000**
Grammar	-0.138^{NS}	-1.000**
Vocabulary	0.241^{NS}	-1.000**

** Significant at .01 level

^{NS} Non-significant

Among the relationships between the perceived proficiency of the English skills of the master's students and their English proficiency evaluated by their advisors, none of the correlations were significant whereas all the correlations for the doctoral students for listening, writing, grammar, and vocabulary were perfectly negative (i.e. at -1.00) and significant at the .01 level. This indicated that in all cases if the students perceived that their proficiency in a skill was high, their advisors would evaluate the skill at low level, and if the students perceived that their proficiency was low, their advisors would evaluate the skill at a high level.

4.3.2 Advisors' opinions on the PSU-GET

Research question 3: What are the opinions of the students' advisors on the PSU-GET?

To answer the third research question, the opinions of 35 advisors were analyzed as to whether they agreed with requiring PSU graduate students to reach the PSU-GET criteria before graduation. The analysis of the responses was based on a five-point rating scale. The criteria for the interpretation of the mean scores were: 1.00 – 1.50 (strongly disagree), 1.51 – 2.50 (disagree), 2.51 – 3.50 (neutral), 3.51 – 4.50 (agree), and 4.51 – 5.00 (strongly agree).

The results of the analysis show that 13 out of 35 advisors strongly agreed with the requirement, followed by 19 advisors who agreed, with 2 advisors who disagreed, and 1 advisor who strongly disagreed. Accordingly, 32 of the advisors agreed with requiring PSU graduate students to reach the PSU-GET criteria before graduation, while only 3 advisors (one from the Faculty of Management Science and two from the Faculty of Natural Resources) disagreed.

4.3.2.1 Reasons for advisors opposing the use of the PSU-GET

Most advisors agreed that PSU graduate students should be required to reach the English criterion set before graduating because they believe that having

English ability is very beneficial for graduate students in terms of (1) studying in a graduate program, (2) working, and (3) using English in daily life.

As far as the need for English in graduate study is concerned, the advisors suggest that having English skills, reading skills in particular, can enhance the students' ability to study and to conduct research as it is easier to search for more information about the topic they are interested in. With English students can find information from various sources. Interestingly, one advisor from the Faculty of Science believes that someone who is good at English will also be good at every subject. Moreover, some advisors agreed that English is also important in career development. People who have English ability will have more opportunity of job promotion. Additionally, some advisors stated that having English ability will help students to learn what is around them effectively because most people in the world use English as a medium of international communication.

Only three advisors were against the use of the PSU-GET as a requirement for PSU graduate students before graduation. The first reason given against the use of the PSU-GET was that graduate students should be allowed to improve their English ability by themselves. It was noted that some of them are good in their own fields but weak in English skills. The second reason was that reaching the PSU-GET criterion caused anxiety in the students. It was similarly suggested that they can practice and improve their English ability from seminars or classes and reading literature for their theses. The third reason was that most of the content of the test is not relevant to the students' fields. After they graduated from their programs, some of them did not gain any benefit directly from using their English ability. One advisor also pointed out that requiring the students to pass the English criterion did not support their development in English.

4.3.2.2 Advisors' suggestions concerning the PSU-GET

In this section, the information from part 3 of the advisor questionnaire is presented, including the advisors' suggestions on the PSU-GET directed to the PSU Graduate School, and the Department of Languages and Linguistics. Moreover, data

obtained from interviews have been added regarding their opinions concerning PSU graduate students studying using English as a medium.

4.3.2.2.1 Suggestions to the PSU Graduate School

With regard to suggestions for the PSU Graduate School related to the PSU-GET, it was found that 4 out of 27 advisors were satisfied with the process and content of the PSU-GET. Twenty-three advisors gave comments relating to the process and content of the PSU-GET.

4.3.2.2.1.1 Process

One advisor suggested that the graduate school should inform all PSU staff including every PSU lecturer of details about the PSU-GET before announcing it to others outside the university.

Additionally, three advisors agreed that on the orientation day for PSU graduate students, it would be beneficial to spend time introducing the PSU-GET and explaining all the steps needed to be taken before the test, and also adding any more written information about the test to be given to students. It was also suggested that during the orientation, emphasis should be placed on how important English is at present and that this should also be included in every presentation. In the meantime, the graduate school should find other ways to support and make graduate students realize how important English is.

Additionally, two advisors suggested that the passing criteria and the English skills which the students must reach should be agreed by each faculty and be clearly announced to everyone. Another respondent asked that if possible, the test results should show the level of English attained instead of showing

only ‘S’ (satisfactory) or ‘U’ (unsatisfactory). Moreover, one respondent suggested that English courses should be administered by each program.

As for the application fee for taking the PSU-GET, one advisor thought it should be reduced from 200 to 100 baht for the graduate students who have repeatedly fail to pass the PSU-GET. Two advisors also suggested using the test as a requirement to screen candidates before their admission to study at graduate level. Lastly, requiring every graduate student to take an English course instead of letting them choose between taking the English test and taking the English for Graduate Students course was suggested by two advisors.

Opinions directed to the PSU graduate school offered in regard to the period during which the test criterion should be reached included the following ideas: Firstly, two advisors thought that students should pass the English criterion within their first semester or the first academic year. Another advisor suggested administering an English course in every semester to reinforce the need for students to improve their English ability. Another suggestion was that the university should concentrate on the process of how students can pass the PSU-GET criterion. Before taking the test, students should be trained in using their English skills, and there should be various activities to support the graduate students from every field in using their English skills such as administering international conferences.

4.3.2.2.1.2 Content of the PSU-GET

The information relating to the PSU-GET itself included an idea from one advisor that the test content should relate to various fields. Moreover, another advisor gave the opinion that the university should focus on what the test takers get from taking the PSU-GET, not focus on how much the university can get from operating the test.

4.3.2.2.2 Suggestions to the Department of Languages and Linguistics

Although 6 out of 31 advisors were satisfied with the administration of the PSU-GET, some of the suggestions from the others could be beneficial to make the test administration more effective.

Concerning the PSU-GET, a variety of ideas were put forward by the advisors and are summarized as follows. As to its content, one advisor asked the department to be careful about bias in the test because some parts of the test were too concerned with only certain fields. Another idea expressed was that the test should have the same degree of difficulty at every sitting.

Relating to the frequency of administering the test, if it is possible, the test should be held more frequently. One advisor pointed out an important point that a quality test is more valuable than the money received from the students.

Relating to the system for supporting the test, establishing a 'Language Institute' to administer the PSU-GET and developing it to be equivalent to taking the TOEFL or IELTS is an interesting idea from one advisor from the Faculty of Science. Also, another advisor thought that it would be more convenient if test takers could register online. Comparing the PSU-GET results with other standardized tests is an idea put forward by three advisors. They would like to see comparisons between PSU-GET scores and TOEFL or IELTS scores announced formally to make the PSU-GET have more credibility than at present.

Eleven opinions were put forward relating to public relations, which are summarized below. It was suggested that publishing examples of the PSU-GET based on past forms of test or information about the test could help test takers prepare themselves before taking the test. Different ways to publish the past forms of test might be used such as through the Internet, attaching information to application documents, sending hard copies to every advisor, and it was also suggested that creating an English package online to encourage test takers to improve their English ability would be a useful step.

Concerning *the English for Graduate Students course*, it was suggested that there should be an English course on which master's students can register and be evaluated on, being graded as 'S' or 'U' at the end of he semester instead of taking the PSU-GET to reach the English criterion. The course could be

administered by the Department of Languages and Linguistics and should particularly focus on reading skills which are very important for studying at graduate level. Another advisor advocated having course content which is relevant to what the students need to use. For example, every graduate student must write an abstract for their study. So teaching them how to write an actual abstract would be a valuable lesson for them. Some vocabulary used very often in their fields or daily life should be added to the lessons. Another opinion from one advisor was that if the lecturers from the *English for Graduate Students* course taught the students to read what they were interested in, they would pay more attention to learning and improving their reading skills.

As for the degree of English ability required for reaching the criterion after taking the *English for Graduate Students* course, one opinion expressed was that the students should have enough English ability to reach the criterion because it had been found that some students who took the course, passed the English criterion without having sufficient English ability. Another one mentioned that the fee of 4,500 baht for the *English for Graduate Students* course was too expensive for the students.

4.3.2.3 Advisors' opinions concerning the need for PSU graduate students to use English while studying

To investigate advisors' opinions concerning how often PSU graduate students need to use English while studying, 10 advisors who agreed with requiring PSU graduate students to pass the PSU-GET criterion before their graduation and 3 who disagreed were asked to participate in semi-structured interviews. The 10 advisors agreeing with the requirement represented 10 different faculties, namely the faculties of Agro-Industry, Dentistry, Economics, Engineering, Management Science, Medicine, Natural Resources, Nursing, Pharmaceutical Science, and Science. The 3 advisors disagreeing represented the faculties of Management Sciences and Natural Resources.

Based on the results of the interviews, although the advisors held different opinions in agreeing and disagreeing with PSU graduate students being

required to reach the PSU-GET criterion, they agreed that all graduate students need to have reading ability because it can enhance their studying, in seminar classes in particular, or their ability to conduct research in the future. Moreover, having the ability to read and edit their abstracts by themselves before sending it to their advisors can decrease the time taken by students before graduating. Interestingly, although every graduate program (except English language based programs) is taught in Thai such as those from the Faculty of Science, all materials are in English. Thus, one advisor from the Faculty of Science believes that, if the students are weak in reading, they also have problems in their studying.

With regard to writing, rated by the doctoral students as the second most used skill in graduate programs, one advisor offered the opinion that the person who is able to write the best abstract is the owner of the study because he or she knows all the details of the study well. For example, three advisors found that they could not efficiently edit their advisees' abstracts because the meaning after editing was different from their advisees' ideas.

As for listening and speaking in English, all except two advisors from the Faculty of Nursing and Pharmaceutical Sciences thought that it was difficult to require graduate students to use these two skills. Normally, except for those students studying in English language based programs, most graduate students are poor in listening and speaking because they cannot use English in daily life. Their opportunity to use either skill is very limited. Nevertheless, their programs tried to administer special courses in English for them such as asking the graduate students to join seminars presented by foreign instructors or exchange with students from other countries. All except two advisors from the Faculty of Nursing and Pharmaceutical Sciences suggested that if it were possible, the PSU graduate school and every graduate program should coordinate to administer several short courses which use English as the means of communication for graduate students. Lastly, all advisors asked to participate in the interviews agreed that the environment and facilities for practicing English are very important.

Possible solutions were offered as follows: first, all lecturers should present information stressing how important English is for operating in the fast

changing world in the classroom. Moreover, the Department of Languages and Linguistics should coordinate with every faculty to establish their own small English corner to encourage their graduate students to practice English effectively.

4.3.3 Summary of findings for research question 3

In summary, the findings as to the third research question demonstrate that 32 out of 35 of the students' advisors agreed with requiring PSU graduate students to reach the PSU-GET criteria before graduation, while only 3 disagreed. Among 27 advisors giving opinions to the PSU Graduate School, 4 out of them were satisfied with the process and content of the PSU-GET, whereas the other 23 advisors gave suggestions relating to the process and the test itself.

Additionally, among 31 advisors giving suggestions to the Department of Languages and Linguistics, 6 of them were satisfied with the PSU-GET administration, while the other 25 advisors gave suggestions about making the test administration more effective.

Interestingly, it should be noted that although there were groups of advisors who agreed and disagreed with requiring PSU graduate students to pass the English criterion before graduation, all of them agreed that all graduate students need to have reading ability to enhance their studying.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarizes the main findings of the study. It also includes discussion of the findings, the implications to be drawn from the study, and recommendations for further studies. These are presented in the following sections.

5.1 Summary of the main findings
5.2 Discussion of the main findings
5.3 Implications of the study
5.4 Recommendations for further studies

5.1 Summary of the main findings

The findings of this study are summarized as follows.

5.1.1 The predictive validity of PSU-GET scores

The record of PSU-GET scores and the overall or accumulative GPAs of 250 master's students and 25 doctoral students, and 661 master's students and 31 doctoral PSU graduate students from 11 faculties who commenced studying in the 2002 and 2003 academic years were used to answer the first research question relating to *the predictive validity of PSU-GET scores and academic success (overall or accumulative GPA) of PSU graduate students*. The findings were divided into 3 sections: reading and structure (taken by every graduate student), and writing and listening (taken only by doctoral students).

There were significant relationships between the reading and structure scores, and the overall or accumulative GPA of the 2002 and 2003 master's students from every faculty: health sciences (2002: r = 0.543, 2003: r = 0.253), science and technology (2002: r = 0.286, 2003: r = 0.306), and humanities and social sciences (2002: r = 0.310, 2003: r = 0.361), while for doctoral students there was a significant

relationship only for the faculties in science and technology group (2002: r = 0.595, 2003: r = 0.526).

There were no significant relationships between writing scores and the overall or accumulative GPA of the 2002 and 2003 doctoral students. Moreover, only the relationship between the listening scores, and the overall or accumulative GPA of the 2003 doctoral students studying in the health sciences group (r = 0.606) was found to be significant.

5.1.2 The perceived problems faced by PSU graduate students who repeatedly fail to pass the PSU-GET and their opinions on the PSU-GET

Among 1,588 PSU graduate students of 2002 – 2003 academic years, there were 63 students who repeatedly fail to pass the PSU-GET, and have not yet graduated. The information obtained from the student questionnaire, returned by 44 master's students and 7 doctoral students from 10 faculties was used to answer the second research question relating to *the perceived problems faced by PSU graduate students who repeatedly fail to pass the PSU-GET.*

It was found that the learners' limited knowledge was rated highest among the problems identified by the respondents. This is consistent with the analysis of English proficiency of the respondents which showed that 21 and 4 of the master's and doctoral students got 'C' (fair) in most English courses while studying at Bachelor Degree level.

According to the students' opinions on the use of the PSU-GET, 8 out of 27 students simply stated that they were satisfied with the test and did not express any comments, whereas some of the other comments from the other 19 students are presented as follows.

Five students suggested that the subject matter of the texts used in the reading and structure section of the PSU-GET should be drawn from various fields. One student noted that there was no clear criterion specified for rating the writing scores. Another thought that the equipment used in the listening test was not of good enough quality to allow the test takers to hear the listening texts clearly. Moreover, one

student observed that the test was of different levels of difficulty on different occasions and another expressed the view that the test should be of higher quality and should be more reliable.

Thirty students suggested solutions to passing the PSU-GET in four areas: (i) the test-taking process, (ii) the test takers, (iii) other factors concerning the PSU-GET, and (iv) the PSU-GET criterion.

Under the first heading, the suggestions relating to the test-taking process were divided into the process before and after taking the PSU-GET. Before taking the test, two students suggested providing the students with the opportunity to study among others who have language ability at the same level. Three students thought that the students should take the review of English Language Skills course before the first semester. Another expressed the view that the students should take the PSU-GET after a specified period of independent learning in the PSU self-access learning center. In addition, six students strongly felt that English should be specified as a core subject to reduce the time which graduate students take to pass the PSU-GET.

Secondly, opinions relating to the test takers were also voiced as being an important factor, and that they should help themselves reach the PSU-GET criterion. Ten students thought that they needed to be disciplined in reviewing and practicing frequently, whereas another thought that the students should find their own techniques to help them understand and remember English words and grammar.

Thirdly, other factors concerning the PSU-GET were raised. Four students would like to see on-line English lessons provided or past versions of the PSU-GET, sold with their answer keys, and it was also suggested that the tests should be conducted separately based on the field of the test takers, and that content should be added which is useful in daily life to the students. Two students thought that increasing the numbers of items in the test would be very helpful for them. Moreover, one student suggested reducing the application fee for students who have taken the test more than five times.

Lastly, three respondents stated that the criterion should be the same for the students studying in every PSU graduate program.

5.1.3 The opinions of the PSU graduate students' advisors on the PSU-GET

The information obtained from the 35 advisors of those students who repeatedly fail to pass the PSU-GET, and have not yet graduated was used to answer the third research question relating to *their opinions relating to the PSU-GET.*

Although the advisors held different opinions either agreeing or disagreeing with PSU graduate students being required to reach the PSU-GET criterion, they agreed that all graduate students need to have reading ability in English. As for the advisors who agreed with the requirement, they believed that having English ability is very beneficial for graduate students in terms of (i) studying in a graduate program, (ii) working, and (iii) using English in daily life.

The advisors made suggestions relating to the PSU-GET directed to both the PSU Graduate School, and the Department of Languages and Linguistics. With regard to the suggestions for the PSU Graduate School, 4 out of 27 advisors were satisfied with the PSU-GET, whereas another 23 advisors made comments relating to the process and content of the PSU-GET.

In relation to the process, one advisor suggested that the PSU Graduate School should disseminate information about the PSU-GET in various ways to make the requirements clear to everyone. Additionally, 3 advisors thought that there should be information given about the PSU-GET on the orientation day for PSU graduate students. Two advisors expressed views about the passing criterion suggesting that each faculty which administered graduate programs should consider and specify the criterion for passing themselves. They also added that an English course for PSU graduate students should be administered by each program. Furthermore, one advisor thought that the application fee for taking the test should be reduced. Another two advisors suggested that the test should be used as a requirement to screen candidates before their admission to study at graduate level. One advisor felt that the PSU-GET content should be a mixture of various English proficiency tests such as TOEFL and IELTS.

In terms of comments about the administration of the PSU-GET by the Department of Languages and Linguistics, it was found that 6 out of 31 advisors were

satisfied, while the other 25 advisors made suggestions relating to (i) the PSU-GET's content, (ii) the frequency of administering the test, (iii) the system for supporting the test, (iv) public relations, (v) the *English for Graduate Students* course and the level of English ability required for reaching the criterion after taking the course.

Concerning the PSU-GET's content, the advisors' opinions are similar to those of the students'. One advisor asked the department to be careful about bias in the test. Another advisor would like to see the same level of difficulty at every sitting of the test. Relating to the frequency of administering the test, one advisor wanted to see the test held more frequently. As for the system for supporting the test, one advisor would like to have a Language Institute to administer and develop the PSU-GET directly to make it equivalent to taking the TOEFL or IELTS. Moreover, 11 advisors thought that there should be different ways to publish examples of the PSU-GET based on past forms of the test. Creating an English package online to encourage test takers to improve their English ability was also suggested as a possibility. Concerning the *English for Graduate Students* course, one advisor noted that the students should not pass the English criterion automatically after finishing the course. Moreover, they felt that the course should focus on reading skill which is very important for studying at graduate level. Lastly, one advisor expressed the view that after taking the *English for Graduate Students* course, the students should have enough English ability to reach the criterion like others who reached the criterion by taking the PSU-GET.

5.2 Discussion of the main findings

5.2.1 The predictive validity of PSU-GET scores

The results obtained from the students' PSU-GET scores and their academic success showed that (i) there were moderately significant relationships between the reading and structure scores and the overall or academic success of the 2002 and 2003 master's students from the health sciences, science and technology, and humanities and social sciences groups, (ii) there were significant relationships between the reading and structure scores and the overall or academic success of the 2002 and 2003

doctoral students from the science and technology group, (iii) there was a significant correlation between the listening section scores, and the overall or accumulative GPAs of the 2003 doctoral students from the health sciences group. These results are discussed below.

The first findings suggest that in order to be successful in graduate study, master's students may need to use reading skills and their knowledge of English structure very often while studying such as in using these skills to obtain more information from various sources, or in preparing before giving presentations, or while researching. The findings concerning the opportunity to use English skills while studying in the PSU graduate program and the skill most used for master's students in the previous 5 years can support this point well because reading skill was rated the most frequently used skill for the both situations.

Similarly, the second finding also shows reading and structure of the PSU-GET as a moderately accurate predictor of academic success of the doctoral students from the science and technology group. The data obtained from the doctoral students studying in the science and technology group of faculties showed that reading was the skill they used most while studying in graduate program and also in the previous 5 years.

Thirdly, the finding that listening scores were related to academic success of the 2003 doctoral students from the health sciences group only, suggests that the PSU-GET listening section scores are not a consistent predictor because no significant correlations were found from the other groups. Based on the information obtained from the only doctoral student studying in the health sciences group, listening was the second most frequently used skill after reading while studying in his graduate program, whereas listening was rated as the least frequently used skill by doctoral students from other groups. Moreover, in the previous 5 years, the same doctoral student used every language skill including listening equally frequently, whereas reading was used most, followed by listening by doctoral students from other groups. It is not surprising to find the significant relationships for the health sciences group because the Faculty of Medicine and Nursing teach their students in English, while the students studying in the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences need to use English skills while studying with foreign lecturers and in seminar courses. The nonsignificant

relationship between listening scores and academic success of doctoral students in other groups imply that doctoral students from other groups may use listening while studying, but listening was not used frequently enough to establish the significant correlations between listening scores and academic success.

Finally for the writing section, no significant correlations were found between the scores of the doctoral students and their overall or accumulative GPA and thus no predictive relationship appears to exist. This finding was supported by the results relating to the students' opportunity to use their English skills while studying in the PSU graduate program. The information showed that writing was rated as less frequently used than reading and listening by most students. Also, most of them agreed that writing was the skill least used in the previous 5 years. This implies that academic success in doctoral programs is more related to other factors than English writing competency.

The findings of significant relationships between the PSU-GET scores from both the reading and structure, and listening sections, and the academic success of the 2002 and 2003 PSU graduate students are similar to those of previous studies by Choochom and Sucaromana (1988), Graham (1991), House (1999), Feeley et al. (2005), Burton and Wang (2005), and Sireci (2006) which also studied if test scores could be used to predict the academic success of graduate students.

In Thailand, very few studies have investigated the relationship between the scores of tests and the academic success of graduate students. One which did was that by Choochom and Sucaromana (1988). They investigated the relationships between entrance examination scores for studying in graduate programs and the academic achievement of graduate students. The candidates were divided into two categories: those with one major test, and those with two major tests. The results of the study were that there were significant positive correlations between the test scores from the graduate students with two major tests, and their first year academic achievement at Master's Degree level, whereas no relationship was found from the test scores of the graduate students with only one major test.

In other countries, some studies have investigated the relationships between test scores and the educational achievement of graduate students; the findings are presented as follows: Graham (1991) evaluated the predictive validity of the Graduate

Management Admissions Test (GMAT) on the graduate grade point average (GGPA) of graduate students in a Master of Business Administration (MBA) program. The results revealed a strong correlation between the GMAT score and GGPA.

House (1999) investigated the predictive relationship between Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores and grade performance in graduate chemistry courses. It was found that the GRE scores significantly predicted the graduate course performance of chemistry students.

Feeley et al. (2005) investigated whether the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) was a predictor of graduate students' academic success. The findings were that the GRE is positively related to the earning of a degree for M.A. students.

Burton and Wang (2005) evaluated whether the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) verbal and quantitative scores can predict long-term success in Graduate School or not. The result indicated that GRE scores strongly predicted accumulative graduate grade point average.

Sireci (2006) evaluated the predictive validity of the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) and the first-year Grade Point Average (GPA) data from 11 graduate management schools. The results indicated that GMAT verbal (questions relating to problem solving and data sufficiency) and quantitative (questions relating to reading comprehension, sentence correction and critical reasoning) scores have substantial predictive validity, accounting for about 16% of the variance in graduate GPA, whereas the predictive utility of GMAT analytical writing scores was relatively low, accounting for only about 1% of the variation in graduate GPA.

These results are all generally in line with the findings of this study, and it is particularly notable that this study found that the PSU-GET writing score was not significantly related to the academic success of doctoral students, a similar finding to that of Sireci (2006).

5.2.2 The perceived problems faced by PSU graduate students who repeatedly fail to pass the PSU-GET

5.2.2.1 Background of the students

Analysis of data from the questionnaires returned by 44 master's and 7 doctoral students who repeatedly fail to pass the PSU-GET suggests many interesting findings. While studying at Bachelor Degree level, most master's and doctoral students got 'C' (fair) in most English courses. Their perceived overall English proficiency was moderate at the time of giving the information (October, 2007). Moreover, the master's students perceived that they have fairly low proficiency and competence in speaking, whereas their other skills (listening, reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary) were perceived to be at a moderately proficient and competent level. The doctoral students perceived every skill to be at the moderately proficient and competent level. Currently, most of master's and doctoral students (90.91% and 85.71%) were writing their theses.

In terms of the number of times of taking the PSU-GET among the master's and doctoral students, the master's students took an average of 4.48 times to pass the reading section of the PSU-GET, whereas each doctoral student sat the reading section an average of 1.5 times. Analysis of this frequency data suggests that reading was more difficult for a master's student than for a doctoral student. The data obtained from the Academic Service, Faculty of Liberal of Arts, Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus, which runs the PSU-GET could supports this suggestion well. The report showed that from March, 2003 to October, 2007, the percentage of master's students who were able to reach the reading and structure section criterion was within a range of 5.42% to 22.29%, whereas the percentage of doctoral students who could reach the criterion was within a range of 7.50% to 58.06%, and 100% of doctoral students managed to reach the criterion when sitting the test on 25 January, 2004 (Academic Service, 2007).

It is worth commenting that the information derived from the questionnaire concerning the perceived difficulty of the PSU-GET by doctoral students showed that listening was the most difficult skill and reading was the easiest.

5.2.2.2 The problems faced by the students in passing the PSU-GET

Students perceived their limited knowledge as being the most serious problem causing them to fail the PSU-GET while studying in graduate programs. Based on this information, it seems that the students may not have sufficient English ability while studying in graduate programs because the information from the questionnaire showed that the largest proportion of master's and doctoral students got 'C' (fair) in most English courses while studying at Bachelor Degree level. Having fair English ability may not be sufficient for studying in a doctoral program and meeting the English criterion set by the faculty concerned. Additionally, the nature of English courses at Bachelor's Degree level may be different from those at graduate level.

This finding is similar to that by Aksornjarung (2002) who also studied the obstacles or difficulties in learning English faced by non-major and non-minor English graduate students using 147 first year graduates as participants in the research. The finding showed that the major factor affecting graduate students' lower-than-satisfactory achievement was the mismatch of the learners' limited knowledge and the input they encountered at that level.

The discussion relating to other problems raised by graduate students such as the content of the PSU-GET, there being no clear criterion for the writing section, the equipment used for listening section being deficient, and many others are presented below.

Data based on interviews with staffs of the Department of Languages and Linguistics responsible for the construction of the PSU-GET revealed that every effort has been made to ensure the quality of the test construction process. All staff of the department have been involved in the test construction under the supervision of senior staffs with more than 20 years of teaching experience. The content of the test is varied and covers many fields including science and technology, sports, education, psychology, health sciences, language, and politics, to avoid test bias. The test format of reading and structure section, and listening section are multiple choice to ensure scoring reliability. The criteria for marking the writing section is similar to that of

TOEFL writing. For each administration of the test, there is a team to monitor the test difficulty of each sitting. After each administration of the PSU-GET, test analysis and item analysis are conducted to improve the test for next administration. In terms of listening test, the quality of listening equipment is checked before administering the test.

5.2.2.3 Students' suggestions about their problems in passing the PSU-GET

Ten students thought that they themselves were an important factor and should help themselves to reach the criterion. Four students suggested providing online English lessons or past versions of the PSU-GET. Additionally, 3 students stated that the PSU-GET criterion should be the same for the students from every faculty. One student would like the Department of Languages and Linguistics to separate the PSU-GET preparation course into 3 sections: reading and structure, writing, and listening to help the students learn and improve their language skills effectively.

It is noted that a few students attended the PSU-GET preparation course because among the 51 respondents who repeatedly fail to pass the PSU-GET, 70.60% of them had never taken a PSU-GET preparation course. This seems to support the suggestion that the students think that they themselves are an important factor in passing the PSU-GET. Perhaps providing textbooks or materials to support the students' independent learning as well as on-line English lessons are possible ways to help the students reach the PSU-GET criterion.

With regard to comments on the PSU-GET preparation course, currently the course consists of three skills run separately at different times, i.e. PSU-GET preparation for reading and structure, PSU-GET preparation for listening and writing. Students can choose to attend the skills they need improvement in.

5.2.3 The opinions of the PSU graduate students' advisors on the PSU-GET

As presented earlier, 32 advisors agreed with requiring PSU graduate students to reach the PSU-GET criteria before graduation, whereas three advisors disagreed with the requirement.

The reasons given by the advisors who agreed are similar to those reported in Wiriyachitra's (2002) study which indicated that Thai graduates need to possess a global outlook in order to help Thailand compete economically with other countries.

It is notable that the 6 advisees of the 3 advisors who disagreed, took the PSU-GET on the highest number of occasions i.e. 2 master's students from the Faculty of Management Sciences took the reading and structure section 3 and 8 times respectively, 3 master's students from the Faculty of Natural Resources took the reading and structure section 5, 6, and 7 times, and one doctoral student from the Faculty of Natural Resources took the listening section 5 times.

Thirty-five advisors were asked to rate the English proficiency of their advisees. It was found that reading was rated as the skill with the highest proficiency among master's and doctoral students. In addition, reading was rated as the most important skill for students while studying in graduate programs. The advisors all agreed that every graduate student needed to have reading ability in English which would be beneficial in their studying. Students need to use reading in preparing themselves for seminar classes or international conferences, and searching for information used in their research.

The findings in the study of Prapphal (2002) and Teo et al. (2004) also support this opinion. Prapphal's study showed that master's and doctoral students need to read texts and materials in English for researching. This view is similar to that of Teo et al. (2004) who investigated the situation and problems concerning foreign language education at the tertiary level in southern Thailand. The study revealed that English language teachers thought that reading should be the first skill upon which master's students should focus because among the four 4 language skills, reading was that most frequently used for searching for information in Thailand.

5.2.3.1 Advisors' suggestions to the PSU Graduate School

Four out of 27 advisors were satisfied with the PSU-GET and made no suggestions, while the other 23 advisors offered suggestions about the process and the content of the PSU-GET to the Graduate School.

One advisor proposed disseminating more information about the PSU-GET to make all the requirements clear. Three advisors suggested giving out information about the test on the orientation day. One advisor asked for a reduction in the application fee from 200 to 100 baht for the graduate students who have repeatedly failed to pass the PSU-GET.

5.2.3.2 Advisors' suggestions to the Department of Languages and Linguistics

Six out of 31 advisors were satisfied with the administration of the PSU-GET by the Department of Languages and Linguistics without making comments, while some ideas from the other 25 advisors are discussed below.

Three advisors suggested that there should be a comparison between PSU-GET scores and other standardized tests scores such as the scores of TOEFL or IELTS because they agreed that this may be a way to make the PSU-GET more reliable and have more credibility. This idea has already been developed by Chulalongkorn University. The Chulalongkorn University Test of English Proficiency (CU-TEP) is the only proficiency test which equates its scores with the scores of TOEFL ands IELTS. According to the respective websites, the score comparability is as follows.

Table 5.1: CU-TEP scores compared with TOEFL and IELTS scores

TOEFL CBT	TOEFL Paper	IELTS	CU-TEP
173	500	5	60
213	550	6	75
250	600	7	90
300	677	9	120

(Source: TOEFLTHAILAND, 2008)

In fact, the Department of Languages and Linguistics has a plan to equate the PSU-GET scores with TOEFL and IELTS scores, and this will be done in the near future.

5.3 Implications of the study

The findings of this study may provide some useful information for PSU graduate students, PSU graduate programs, the Department of Languages and Linguistics, and the PSU Graduate School. This section suggests the following implications:

5.3.1 This current study revealed moderately significant relationships between the PSU-GET scores (reading and structure section) of the 2002 and 2003 master's students from every faculty and their overall or accumulative GPA. This suggests that master's students with higher reading and structure scores tend to get a higher overall or accumulative GPA from their graduate programs. Thus, the faculties which administer master's programs should support their students in various ways to improve their English reading and structure skills to assist them to maximize their educational achievement.

5.3.2 This study found only slight evidence of a predictive relationship between the PSU-GET (reading and structure sections) result of 2002 and 2003 doctoral students from the group of science and technology. This suggests that for

studying in doctoral programs, having high reading and structure ability may enhance the academic success of students. Thus, the faculties which administer doctoral programs in other groups should support their students' use and development of English reading and structure ability to promote academic success.

5.3.3 As no significant correlations between the scores in the PSU-GET writing section, and the academic success of the doctoral students was found, this would suggest that writing may not be as important a factor as reading and listening to promote students' educational achievement. Probably, the small number of doctoral students influenced on the correlations found. This finding came as a surprise since some doctoral programs are international programs; yet no significant relationships seem to exist, suggesting that writing is not an important factor in predicting the performance of students in doctoral courses.

5.3.4 A significant relationship between the listening scores of the PSU-GET and the academic success of the 2003 doctoral students studying in the health sciences group was found, though only at a moderate level. The implication of this relationship is that doctoral programs in health sciences may require students to use listening in a variety of activities while studying. Currently, other doctoral programs in other groups may not have a high requirement for using English listening skills, offering a possible explanation as to why no significant relationship between the listening scores, and the overall or accumulative GPA was found to be significant.

5.3.5 The information about the problems perceived by students who repeatedly fail to pass the PSU-GET and have not yet graduated may suggest that faculties who administer post-graduate programs may need to consider and find all measures to help such students pass the English criteria.

5.3.6 The suggestions about the PSU-GET directed to the Department of Languages and Linguistics related to several different areas. For instance it was suggested that the preparation course should be split into 3 sections, reading and structure, writing, and listening, this despite the fact that the course has been separated

for several years There were also comments about a bias towards test takers studying in humanities and social sciences programs in spite of there being a clear process for creating the test to avoid such biases. These suggestions show that many students still do not have clear information about the test and take the test without knowing about it well. Thus, the department should disseminate information about the PSU-GET by using various methods to make everyone clear before taking the test.

5.3.7 Based on the suggestions concerning the PSU-GET to the Graduate School, perhaps the Graduate School should seek possible solutions to the problem of students who cannot meet the English criterion and are therefore unable to graduate within the period required, such as using the PSU-GET as a screening device for candidates, specifying that students who are unable to pass the PSU-GET must take the Review of Language Skills course before their first semester or meet the English criterion by the end of their first semester as suggested by some students. Moreover, it is important that the Graduate School should give correct and clear details about the PSU-GET to new graduate students as well as to advisors since some of the suggestions made in the questionnaire responses suggest that there is currently a good deal of misunderstanding about the content of the test as well as its administration.

5.4 Recommendations for further studies

Based on the findings of this study, some recommendations for further studies are made.

5.4.1 This study used the PSU-GET scores as the predictor of academic success of PSU graduate students. Further studies could investigate whether bachelor's degree students' GPAs show any predictive relationship with the academic success of the students.

5.4.2 The students' attitudes towards the English language and their learning strategy while studying in graduate programs could be established to see if their

attitudes and learning strategies have an important role in meeting the PSU-GET criterion or not.

5.4.3 The study showed that very few graduate students took the PSU-GET preparation course. Thus, future studies should investigate whether the course can help students to meet the English criterion or not including finding the need analysis of academic tasks used by graduate students to develop the PSU-GET preparation course to support them meet the PSU-GET criterion.

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APPENDIX A

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE (ENGLISH)

A Questionnaire of Investigation Opinions of Graduate Students on the PSU-GET at Prince of Songkla University

Introduction

My name is Urarat Narongraj, a master's student studying Applied Linguistics, and researching in the topic of *"The predictive validity of the PSU-GET and academic success of PSU graduate students at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus, and the problems faced by those repeatedly failing the test"*. This questionnaire is being used to investigate the graduate students' opinions on the PSU-GET.

Please respond to all items with facts about yourself. The information obtained from your responses will be kept confidential and used only in this study. Therefore, your responses will not affect you or your faculty.

Urarat Narongraj
089-6464614

This questionnaire is divided into 3 parts:

Part 1: Information concerning the general background of students

Part 2: Information concerning students' opinions on the PSU-GET

Part 3: Suggestions/ comments about how to reach the PSU-GET criterion

Student Questionnaire

Prince of Songkla University Graduate English Test (PSU-GET)

This questionnaire aims to investigate graduate students' opinions on the PSU-GET. Your name and responses will be kept confidential and used only in this study.

Instructions: Please tick (✔) in the columns that represent facts about you and fill in the blanks as appropriate.

Part 1 General background

1. Name (Mr./ Mrs./ Miss)_____Surname_____

2. Telephone number_____ (optional)

3. Education

Degree	Year	Institution	Program
Master's degree			
Higher than Master's degree			
Bachelor's degree			

4. Now you are studying at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus in

Level of study
- ❍ Master's degree level (regular)
- ❍ Master's degree level (non-regular)
- ❍ Doctoral degree level
- ❍ Other_____

Faculty of
- ❍ Environmental Management
- ❍ Management Sciences
- ❍ Natural Resources
- ❍ Science
- ❍ Dentistry
- ❍ Engineering
- ❍ Nursing
- ❍ Economics
- ❍ Medicine
- ❍ Agro-Industry
- ❍ Pharmaceutical Sciences
- ❍ Other _____

Program _____

5. Academic year first registered _____

6. Your perceived level of English proficiency while you were studying at Bachelor degree level

- ❍ Level 1: I got 'F' in all English courses
- ❍ Level 2: I got 'D' and 'F' in English courses
- ❍ Level 3: I got 'D' in most English courses
- ❍ Level 4: I got 'C' in most English courses
- ❍ Level 5: I got 'A' and 'B' in English courses
- ❍ Level 6: I got 'A' in all English courses

7. The opportunity you have had to use your English skills in the last 5 years (You can tick (✔) more than once)

Skills	**Opportunity**				
	Always	**Often**	**Occasionally**	**Sometimes**	**Rarely**
Listening					
Speaking					
Reading					
Writing					

8. Your perceived current level of English proficiency while studying in PSU graduate programs

❍ Very good ❍ Good ❍ Moderate ❍ Fair ❍ Fairly poor ❍ Poor

9. The opportunity you have had to use your English skills while studying in the PSU graduate program

Skills	**Level**					**Purposes**
	Very high	**High**	**Moderate**	**Low**	**Very low**	
Listening						
Speaking						
Reading						
Writing						
Grammar						
Vocabulary						

10. Your perceived level of proficiency in different English skills at present

Skills	**Level**					
	Most proficient and competent	**Highly proficient and competent**	**Moderately proficient and competent**	**Fairly low proficiency and competence**	**Low proficiency and competence**	**Least proficient and competent**
Listening						
Speaking						
Reading						
Writing						
Grammar						
Vocabulary						

11. Your current situation (You can tick (✔) more than one)

- ❍ You are studying some courses in your program
- ❍ You are currently writing their thesis.
- ❍ You have finished your course of study.
- ❍ You taken the PSU-GET more than twice
- ❍ You have still not passed the PSU-GET
- ❍ You are taking 890-901, *English for Graduate students* because_____
- ❍ Other _____

Part 2: Opinions on the PSU-GET

12. Have you ever taken the PSU-GET?

Reading and structure section

- ❍ No
- ❍ Yes _____ times ❍ Passed ❍ Failed

Writing section

❍ No

❍ Yes _____ times ❍ Passed ❍ Failed

Listening section

❍ No

❍ Yes _____ times ❍ Passed ❍ Failed

13. The problems you perceive as making test takers repeatedly fail the PSU-GET are (Please rank using 1 = the most important problem, 2 = the next most important problem, etc.)

Problems	**Order**
The learners have limited knowledge.	
The learners have limited time to review or practice English	
The learners lack resources to improve their English ability.	
The learners' curriculums do not encourage them to use English skills.	
The test is too difficult.	
Other _____	

14. Your comments on the difficulty of the PSU-GET

Skills	**Level of difficulty**				
	Very difficult	**Difficult**	**Moderately easy**	**Easy**	**Very easy**
Reading and structure					
Writing					
Listening					

15. Have you ever taken a *'PSU-GET preparation* course'

❍ Never

❍ Yes _____ times

16. Will you take the PSU-GET the next time it is held (28 October, 2007)? If yes, do you think you will pass it?

❍ Yes

❍ Reading and structure	❍ Pass	❍ Fail	❍ Not sure
❍ Writing	❍ Pass	❍ Fail	❍ Not sure
❍ Listening	❍ Pass	❍ Fail	❍ Not sure

❍ Not sure

17. Comments/ suggestions on the PSU-GET

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Part 3: Comments/ suggestions about solutions to the problem of reaching the PSU-GET criterion

--Thank you for your cooperation—

APPENDIX A
STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE (THAI)

แบบสอบถามเพื่อศึกษาความคิดเห็นของนักศึกษาระดับบัณฑิตศึกษาต่อการสอบ PSU-GET มหาวิทยาลัยสงขลานครินทร์

คำชี้แจง

ด้วยดิฉัน นางสาวอุรารัตน์ ณรงค์ราช นักศึกษาปริญญาโท สาขาภาษาศาสตร์ประยุกต์ กำลังทำวิทยานิพนธ์ เรื่อง ความเที่ยงตรงเชิงพยากรณ์ของข้อสอบ PSU-GET และผลสัมฤทธิ์ทางการเรียน (GPA) ของนักศึกษาระดับบัณฑิตศึกษา มหาวิทยาลัยสงขลานครินทร์ วิทยาเขตหาดใหญ่ และปัญหาของนักศึกษาผู้สอบ PSU-GET มากกว่าสองครั้ง (The predictive validity of PSU-GET and academic success of PSU graduate students at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus, and the problems faced by those repeatedly failing the test) โดยจะใช้แบบสอบถามนี้เพื่อศึกษาเกี่ยวกับความคิดเห็นของนักศึกษาระดับบัณฑิตศึกษาของมหาวิทยาลัยสงขลานครินทร์ ต่อการสอบ PSU-GET

ข้อมูลที่นักศึกษาให้จะไม่มีผลต่อผู้ตอบแบบสอบถามแต่ประการใด และผู้วิจัยจะเก็บรักษาข้อมูลตลอดจนชื่อผู้ให้ข้อมูลไว้เป็นความลับ จึงขอความกรุณาตอบแบบสอบถามนี้ตามความเป็นจริงและตรงกับความคิดเห็นของท่านมากที่สุด

การศึกษาวิจัยครั้งนี้ จะสำเร็จได้ด้วยความอนุเคราะห์จากท่าน ผู้วิจัยจึงใคร่ขอขอบคุณมา ณ โอกาสนี้

(นางสาวอุรารัตน์ ณรงค์ราช)

089-6464614

แบบสอบถามนี้แบ่งออกเป็น 3 ตอน คือ

ตอนที่ 1 ข้อมูลนักศึกษา

ตอนที่ 2 ความคิดเห็นต่อการสอบ PSU-GET

ตอนที่ 3 ความคิดเห็นและข้อเสนอแนะสำหรับการแก้ปัญหาในการสอบ PSU-GET ให้ผ่านตามเกณฑ์

แบบสอบถาม

Prince of Songkla University Graduate English Test (PSU-GET)

แบบสอบถามนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาความคิดเห็นของนักศึกษาระดับบัณฑิตศึกษาต่อการสอบ PSU-GET ชื่อและข้อมูลที่ได้รับจากนักศึกษาจะถูกเก็บเป็นความลับและใช้เพื่อประโยชน์ต่อการวิจัยเท่านั้น

<u>คำสั่ง</u> ทำเครื่องหมาย (✔) ลงในวงกลม (❍) และหรือเขียนคำตอบลงในช่องว่างที่กำหนด

ตอนที่ 1: ข้อมูลนักศึกษา

1. ชื่อ (นาย/ นาง/ นางสาว) _____นามสกุล _____

2. หมายเลขโทรศัพท์ที่ติดต่อได้ _____ (ตามความสมัครใจ)

3. ประวัติการศึกษา

วุฒิการศึกษา	ปีที่จบการศึกษา	สถานศึกษา	สาขาที่เรียน
ปริญญาโท			
สูงกว่าปริญญาตรี			
ปริญญาตรี			

4. **<u>ขณะนี้</u>**ท่านกำลังศึกษาในมหาวิทยาลัยสงขลานครินทร์ วิทยาเขตหาดใหญ่

ระดับ
- ❍ ปริญญาโทภาคปกติ
- ❍ ปริญญาโทภาคสมทบ
- ❍ ปริญญาเอก
- ❍ อื่น ๆ _____

คณะ
- ❍ คณะการจัดการสิ่งแวดล้อม
- ❍ คณะวิทยาการจัดการ
- ❍ คณะทรัพยากรธรรมชาติ
- ❍ คณะวิทยาศาสตร์
- ❍ คณะทันตแพทยศาสตร์
- ❍ คณะวิศวกรรมศาสตร์
- ❍ คณะพยาบาลศาสตร์
- ❍ คณะเศรษฐศาสตร์
- ❍ คณะแพทยศาสตร์
- ❍ คณะอุตสาหกรรมเกษตร
- ❍ คณะเภสัชศาสตร์
- ❍ อื่น ๆ _____

สาขา _____

5. ปีการศึกษาที่เข้าเรียน _____

6. ขณะที่ท่านศึกษาอยู่ระดับปริญญาตรี ความสามารถในหมวดวิชาภาษาอังกฤษของท่านโดยเฉลี่ยอยู่ระดับใด

❍ ดีมาก (ได้ A ทุกวิชา) ❍ ค่อนข้างอ่อน (ได้ D เป็นส่วนใหญ่)

❍ ดี (ได้ A และ B) ❍ อ่อน (ได้ D และ F)

❍ ปานกลาง (ได้ C เป็นส่วนใหญ่) ❍ อ่อนมาก (ตกทุกวิชา)

7. ช่วง 5 ปีที่ผ่านมา **<u>ท่านมีโอกาสใช้</u>**ทักษะภาษาอังกฤษใดบ้าง **(ตอบได้มากกว่า 1 ข้อ)**

ทักษะ	**โอกาสในการใช้**				
	มากที่สุด	**มาก**	**ปานกลาง**	**น้อย**	**น้อยที่สุด/ แทบจะไม่ได้ใช้เลย**
การฟัง					
การพูด					
การอ่าน					
การเขียน					

8. หากให้ท่านประเมินความสามารถด้านภาษาอังกฤษโดยรวมของท่านในปัจจุบัน ท่านคิดว่าท่านมีความสามารถในระดับใด

❍ ดีมาก ❍ ดี ❍ ปานกลาง ❍ ค่อนข้างอ่อน ❍ อ่อน ❍ อ่อนมาก

9. ขณะที่ท่านกำลังศึกษาในระดับบัณฑิตศึกษา ทักษะภาษาอังกฤษใดที่ท่านใช้ประโยชน์เพื่อการศึกษาในหลักสูตรของท่าน (ไม่นับรวมเพื่อการสอบ PSU-GET)

ทักษะ	ระดับที่ใช้					วัตถุประสงค์ในการใช้
	มากที่สุด	มาก	ปานกลาง	น้อย	น้อยที่สุด/แทบจะไม่ได้ใช้เลย	
การฟัง						
การพูด						
การอ่าน						
การเขียน						
ไวยากรณ์						
คำศัพท์						

10. ให้ท่านประเมินความสามารถภาษาอังกฤษ**<u>ในปัจจุบัน</u>**ตามทักษะต่อไปนี้

ทักษะ	ระดับความสามารถ					
	ดีมาก	ดี	ปานกลาง	ค่อนข้างอ่อน	อ่อน	อ่อนมาก
การฟัง						
การพูด						
การอ่าน						
การเขียน						
ไวยากรณ์						
คำศัพท์						

11. สถานภาพปัจจุบัน **(ตอบได้มากกว่า 1 ข้อ)**

- ❍ กำลังเรียนบางรายวิชาของหลักสูตร
- ❍ กำลังทำวิทยานิพนธ์
- ❍ จบหลักสูตรและทำวิทยานิพนธ์เสร็จแล้ว
- ❍ สอบผ่าน PSU-GET แล้วโดยสอบมากกว่า 2 ครั้ง
- ❍ ยังสอบไม่ผ่าน PSU-GET (ณ เวลาที่ให้ข้อมูล)
- ❍ เรียนวิชา 890-901 ภาษาอังกฤษสำหรับบัณฑิตศึกษา (หลักสูตรพิเศษ) เพราะ_____
- ❍ อื่น ๆ _____

ตอนที่ 2: ความคิดเห็นต่อการสอบ PSU-GET

12. ท่านมีประสบการณ์ในการสอบทักษะเหล่านี้ใน PSU-GET หรือไม่

ทักษะ Reading and structure

- ❍ ยังไม่เคยสอบ
- ❍ เคยสอบ _____ ครั้ง ❍ ผ่านแล้ว ❍ ยังไม่ผ่าน

ทักษะ Writing

- ❍ ยังไม่เคยสอบ
- ❍ เคยสอบ _____ ครั้ง ❍ ผ่านแล้ว ❍ ยังไม่ผ่าน

ทักษะ Listening

- ❍ ยังไม่เคยสอบ
- ❍ เคยสอบ _____ ครั้ง ❍ ผ่านแล้ว ❍ ยังไม่ผ่าน

13. สิ่งใดที่ท่านคิดว่าเป็นสาเหตุที่ทำให้ท่านสอบ PSU-GET ไม่ผ่าน **(โปรดเรียงลำดับสาเหตุโดยใช้ 1 = สาเหตุที่สำคัญที่สุด, 2 = สาเหตุที่สำคัญรองลงมา, ...)**

สาเหตุ	**ลำดับที่**
พื้นฐานทางด้านภาษาอังกฤษต่ำ	
เวลาในการทบทวนภาษาอังกฤษไม่เพียงพอ	
ขาดแหล่งพัฒนาทักษะภาษาอังกฤษ	
หลักสูตรที่เรียนไม่สนับสนุนการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษ	
ข้อสอบยากเกินไป	
อื่น ๆ _____	

14. ข้อสอบ PSU-GET ทักษะใดที่ท่านคิดว่ายากที่สุด

ทักษะ	**ระดับความยากของข้อสอบ**				
	มากที่สุด	**มาก**	**ปานกลาง**	**น้อย**	**น้อยที่สุด**
Reading and structure					
Writing					
Listening					

15. ท่านเคยเรียนหลักสูตรเตรียมสอบ PSU-GET หรือไม่

❍ ไม่เคย

❍ เคย _____ ครั้ง

16. ท่านจะเข้าสอบ PSU-GET ครั้งต่อไป **(วันที่ 28 ตุลาคม 2550)** หรือไม่ ถ้าเข้าสอบท่านคิดว่าท่านจะสอบ ผ่านหรือไม่

❍ สอบ

- ❍ ทักษะ Reading and structure ❍ ผ่าน ❍ ไม่ผ่าน ❍ ไม่แน่ใจว่าจะสอบผ่าน
- ❍ ทักษะ Writing ❍ ผ่าน ❍ ไม่ผ่าน ❍ ไม่แน่ใจว่าจะสอบผ่าน
- ❍ ทักษะ Listening ❍ ผ่าน ❍ ไม่ผ่าน ❍ ไม่แน่ใจว่าจะสอบผ่าน

❍ ไม่สอบ

❍ ไม่แน่ใจว่าจะสอบหรือไม่

17. ท่านมีความคิดเห็นและข้อเสนอแนะอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับข้อสอบ PSU-GET

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ตอนที่ 3: ความคิดเห็นและข้อเสนอแนะสำหรับการแก้ปัญหาของท่านในการสอบ PSU-GET ให้ผ่านตามเกณฑ์

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--ขอขอบคุณในความร่วมมือ--

APPENDIX B
ADVISOR QUESTIONNAIRE (ENGLISH)

Advisor Questionnaire

Opinions on the PSU-GET for Graduate Students at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus, and the Problems faced by Those Repeatedly Failing the Test

Part 1: General background

1. Name ……

2. Position …….....…….……..….

3. Your advisee's name..……

Part 2: Opinion on your advisee's English proficiency

1. What is the level of your advisee's English proficiency?

Skill	Level of English proficiency of ……..						
	Most proficient and competent	Highly proficient and competent	Moderately proficient and competent	Fairly low proficiency and competence	Low proficiency and competence	Least proficient and competent	No data/ cannot evaluate
Listening							
Speaking							
Reading							
Writing							
Grammar							
Vocabulary							

Part 3: Suggestions/ comments on the PSU-GET

1. Do you agree with requiring PSU graduate students to reach the PSU-GET criteria before graduation?

❍ Strongly agree ❍ Agree ❍ Moderately agree ❍ Disagree ❍ Strongly disagree

I agree because ……...……..

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I disagree because……

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2. Suggestions to the Department of Languages and Linguistics concerning the PSU-GET and the administration of the test

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Thank you very much

Urarat Narongraj

M.A. in Applied Linguistics

Department of Languages and Linguistics,

Faculty of Liberal Arts, Prince of Songkla Uiversity,

Hat Yai Campus.

APPENDIX B

ADVISOR QUESTIONNAIRE (THAI)

แบบสอบถามอาจารย์ที่ปรึกษา

เรื่อง

ความคิดเห็นเกี่ยวกับการสอบ PSU-GET ของนักศึกษาระดับบัณฑิตศึกษา

มหาวิทยาลัยสงขลานครินทร์

วิทยาเขตหาดใหญ่ และปัญหาที่ทำให้นักศึกษาต้องสอบ PSU-GET 2 ครั้งขึ้นไป

ตอนที่ 1: สถานภาพส่วนตัวของผู้ตอบ

1. ชื่อ.....

2. ตำแหน่ง…….....…

3. ชื่อนักศึกษาในที่ปรึกษาของท่าน ……

ตอนที่ 2: ความคิดเห็นต่อความสามารถภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษาในที่ปรึกษาของท่าน

1. ท่านประเมินว่านักศึกษาในที่ปรึกษาของท่านมีความสามารถภาษาอังกฤษในทักษะดังต่อไปนี้อยู่ในระดับใด

ทักษะ	ระดับความสามารถของ ……..						
	ดีมาก	ดี	ปานกลาง	ค่อนข้างอ่อน	อ่อน	อ่อนมาก	ไม่มีข้อมูล/ไม่สามารถประเมินได้
การฟัง							
การพูด							
การอ่าน							
การเขียน							
ไวยากรณ์							
คำศัพท์							

ตอนที่ 3: ความคิดเห็นและข้อเสนอแนะต่อการสอบ PSU-GET และข้อสอบ PSU-GET

1. ท่านเห็นด้วยหรือไม่กับการที่บัณฑิตวิทยาลัยกำหนดให้นักศึกษาระดับบัณฑิตศึกษาต้องผ่านเกณฑ์คะแนน ข้อสอบ PSU-GET จึงจะจบการศึกษา

❍ เห็นด้วยเป็นอย่างยิ่ง ❍ เห็นด้วย ❍ เฉย ๆ ❍ ไม่เห็นด้วย ❍ ไม่เห็นด้วยเป็นอย่างยิ่ง

ถ้าเห็นด้วย เพราะ...……

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ถ้าไม่เห็นด้วย เพราะ.....……

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ข้อเสนอแนะสำหรับบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย……

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2. ท่านมีความคิดเห็นและข้อเสนอแนะอย่างไร<u>ต่อภาควิชาภาษาและภาษาศาสตร์</u> ที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการสอบ PSU-GET และข้อสอบ PSU-GET

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ขอขอบคุณอย่างยิ่ง

นางสาวอุรารัตน์ ณรงค์ราช

นักศึกษาปริญญาโท สาขาภาษาศาสตร์ประยุกต์ คณะศิลปศาสตร์

มหาวิทยาลัยสงขลานครินทร์ วิทยาเขตหาดใหญ่

APPENDIX C
MAJOR CHANGE IN THE QUESTIONNAIRES

Major change in Questionnaires

The information from student questionnaire

Before	After
Part 1	**Part 1**
---	6. Your perceived level of English proficiency while you were studying at Bachelor degree level
8. Your purpose in taking the PSU-GET	--(removed)--
---	7. The opportunity you have had to use your English skills in the last 5 years
---	8. Your perceived current level of English proficiency while studying in PSU graduate programs
---	9. The opportunity you have had to use your English skills while studying in the PSU graduate program
---	10. Your perceived level of proficiency in different English skills at present
Part 3	**Part 3**
Comments/ suggestions on the PSU-GET	Comments/ suggestions about solutions to the problem of reaching the PSU-GET criterion

The information from advisor questionnaire

Before	After
Part 3 1. Do you agree with requiring PSU graduate students to reach the PSU-GET criteria before graduation? I agree because……. I disagree because…… Suggestions…….	**Part 3** 1. Do you agree with requiring PSU graduate students to reach the PSU-GET criteria before graduation? I agree because……. I disagree because…… Suggestions to the PSU graduate School……..

VITAE

Name Miss Urarat Narongraj

Student ID 4911120025

Educational Attainment

Degree	Name of Institute	Year of Graduation
Bachelor of Arts (English)	Prince of Songkla University	2000