

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Chapter 4 reports findings of the study based on the results obtained from the analysis of the returned questionnaires and the classroom observation field-notes. The main findings will be presented in the following aspects:

- 4.1 the degree of support for the curriculum statements
- 4.2 the extent of the perceived implementation of the curriculum
- 4.3 the relationship between the degree of support for the curriculum statements and the extent of the perceived implementation
- 4.4 the problems obstructing the implementation of the curriculum
- 4.5 summary of the findings

4.1 The Degree of Support for the Curriculum Statements

Research question 1: To what extent do English language teachers support the 2001 English curriculum statements?

In order to find out the extent to which the English teachers in Songkhla support the 2001 English curriculum statements, they were asked to respond on a five-point Likert scale from “1” (Strongly disagree) to “5” (Strongly agree) on questionnaire part 1, no. 1(items 1.1-1.7). Mean scores and standard deviations were calculated to indicate the degree of support for each of the curriculum statements.

Table 4.1 illustrates mean scores and standard deviations of the degree of support for the 2001 English curriculum statements by Matthayomsuksa 4 and Matthayomsuksa 5 English teachers in three educational regions. The rank orders of mean scores are also illustrated.

Table 4.1 English Teachers' Support for the 2001 English Curriculum Statements

No.	Curriculum Statements English instruction is a tool for...	Educational Region						Total (N = 140)	
		1 (N = 48)		2 (N = 62)		3 (N = 30)		\bar{X}	S.D
		\bar{X}	S.D	\bar{X}	S.D	\bar{X}	S.D		
1	listening, speaking, reading and writing, for exchanging data and information, for building personal relationships, and expressing feeling and opinions	R3.5		R3		R2		4.56	0.63
		4.65	0.53	4.45	0.72	4.63	0.56		
2	understanding the relationship between language and culture of the native speakers	R3.5		R4		R4		4.49	0.59
		4.65	0.48	4.39	0.66	4.43	0.57		
3	understanding the similarities and the differences between the native speakers and Thai in terms of language and culture	R5		R5		R5		4.40	0.66
		4.58	0.58	4.32	0.69	4.27	0.64		
4	seeking knowledge for other subjects from a variety of sources	R1.5		R1		R1		4.67	0.49
		4.67	0.52	4.66	0.48	4.70	0.47		
5	communication in various situations with other people in school, community and society	R6		R6		R6		3.98	0.97
		4.06	0.93	3.85	1.07	4.10	0.80		
6	learning, furthering study and career	R1.5		R2		R3		4.57	0.55
		4.67	0.52	4.50	0.57	4.57	0.57		
7	cooperation and harmony in school, community and society	R7		R7		R7		3.79	0.98
		3.79	0.94	3.65	1.09	4.07	0.74		
	Total	4.44	0.39	4.26	0.56	4.39	0.43	4.35	0.48

Note: R = Rank

According to the results in Table 4.1, the English teachers in Songkhla support the 2001 English curriculum statements at the levels of “agree” and “strongly agree” with the items means ranging from 3.79 to 4.67. The curriculum statements which English teachers strongly agree include the need to use English as a tool for seeking knowledge for other subjects; for learning, furthering study and career; and for the four language skills improvement; for understanding the relationship between language and culture of the native speakers; and for understanding the similarities and differences between Thai and the native speakers in terms of language and culture. In addition, the need to use English for communicating in various situations with other people; and for cooperating in school, community and society were rated at the “agree” level. (Mean = 3.98 and 3.79). Of all the statements, the need to use English as a tool for cooperation and harmony in school, community and society was rated at the lowest level (Mean = 3.79) while the need to use English as a tool for seeking knowledge from various sources was rated at the highest level (Mean = 4.67).

The rank orders of the statements further reveal the relative importance of the curriculum statements as supported by the respondents from each of the three educational regions. The Spearman’s rho correlation coefficient of the rank orders across three educational regions, as indicated in Table 4.2, shows that there is a strong correlation between educational region 1 and educational region 2 ($r = .98, p = .01$), between educational region 1 and educational region 3 ($r = .91, p = .01$), and between educational region 2 and educational region 3 ($r = .96, p = .01$). These results suggest that the respondents in the three educational regions strongly agree in their perceptions of the importance of the 2001 English curriculum statements.

Table 4.2 Correlation of English Teachers' Support for the 2001 English Curriculum Statements

Spearman's Rho Correlation Coefficient	Educational Region 1 (N = 48)	Educational Region 2 (N = 62)	Educational Region 3 (N = 30)
Educational Region 1 (N = 48)	1.00	0.98**	0.91**
Educational Region 2 (N = 62)		1.00	0.96**
Educational Region 3 (N = 30)			1.00

Spearman's Rho Correlation Coefficient

** . Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

To put it simply, it can be concluded that English teachers in Songkhla agree and support what has been specified in English curriculum statements. In addition, there is a strong correlation of the teachers' degree of support for the curriculum statements among the three educational regions. This means that they profess their support in the same order of importance regarding the total mean scores. (Numbers 4, 6, 1, 2, 3, 5 and 7 in order)

4.2 The Extent of the Perceived Implementation of the Curriculum

Research Question 2: What is the extent of implementation of the 2001 English curriculum in Matthayomsuksa 4 and Matthayomsuksa 5 as perceived by English teachers?

Answers to this research question were derived from quantitative data analyses, which were based on the data from the questionnaire part 1, no. 2 (items 2.1-2.7) and part 2 (items 1-15). The respondents were asked to rate the degree at which the curriculum statements were reflected in practice.

To see the degree of teachers' perception of the implementation of the curriculum, those items were calculated to find out mean scores and standard

deviations. Table 4.3 shows mean scores, standard deviations and rank orders of teachers' perception of the implementation of the 2001 English curriculum.

Table 4.3 English Teachers' Perception of the Implementation of the Curriculum

No.	Curriculum Implementation Students are given practice to...	Educational Region						Total (N = 140)	
		1 (N = 48)		2 (N = 62)		3 (N = 30)		\bar{X}	S.D
		\bar{X}	S.D	\bar{X}	S.D	\bar{X}	S.D		
1	use English for listening, speaking, reading and writing, for exchanging data and information, for building personal relationships, and expressing feeling and opinions	R3		R5		R3		3.56	0.98
		3.83	0.93	3.35	1.04	3.57	0.86		
2	understand the relationship between language and culture of the native speakers	R5		R2.5		R4.5		3.54	1.05
		3.77	1.08	3.44	1.07	3.40	0.93		
3	understand the similarities and the differences between the native speakers and Thai in terms of language and culture	R4		R4		R4.5		3.54	1.03
		3.79	1.01	3.40	1.05	3.40	0.97		
4	use English to seek knowledge for other subjects from a variety of sources	R2		R2.5		R2		3.65	0.97
		3.94	0.86	3.44	0.99	3.63	0.99		
5	use English to communicate in various situations with other people in school, community and society	R6		R6		R6		3.36	1.02
		3.71	0.89	3.13	1.05	3.27	1.01		
6	use English as a tool for learning, furthering study and career	R1		R1		R1		3.82	0.89
		4.10	0.75	3.61	0.99	3.80	0.81		
7	use English as a tool for cooperation and harmony in school, community and society	R7		R7		R7		3.11	1.00
		3.39	0.89	2.89	1.04	3.10	0.99		
	Total	3.79	0.71	3.32	0.86	3.39	0.72	3.51	0.82

Note: R = Rank

With respect to the data in Table 4.3, English teachers in Songkhla perceived the curriculum implementation either at a high degree (mean ranging from 3.41 to 4.20) or a moderate degree (mean ranging from 2.61 to 3.40). As shown in Table 4.3, two out of seven items were rated at moderate level with item means ranging from 3.11 to 3.36. The curriculum statements that were not fully reflected in practice were related to the use of English for communication in various situations, and for cooperation and harmony with other people in school, community and society.

However, five statements were reflected in practice as they were rated at high level with means ranging from 3.54 to 3.82. The English teachers in Songkhla perceived that students were prepared to use English as a tool for learning, furthering study and career; for seeking new knowledge for other subjects from a variety of sources; for developing language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing); for understanding the relationship between language and culture of the native speakers; and for understanding the similarities and differences between the native speakers and Thais in terms of language and culture.

To find out the correlation of teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the English curriculum, Spearman's rho correlation coefficient was utilized. Table 4.4 reports the correlation of the perceptions of curriculum implementation. There is a strong correlation between educational region 1 and educational region 2 ($r = .81$, $p = .05$), educational region 1 and educational region 3 ($r = .99$, $p = .01$), and educational region 2 and educational region 3 ($r = .85$, $p = .05$). These results show that teachers agree in their perceptions of the relative degree of curriculum implementation. In brief, it can be said that the English teachers perceive the curriculum implementation at the same degree and in the same rank orders.

Table 4.4 Correlation of English Teachers' Perception of the Implementation of the Curriculum

Spearman's Rho Correlation Coefficient	Educational Region 1 (N = 48)	Educational Region 2 (N = 62)	Educational Region 3 (N = 30)
Educational Region 1 (N = 48)	1.00	0.81*	0.99**
Educational Region 2 (N = 62)		1.00	0.85*
Educational Region 3 (N = 30)			1.00

Spearman's Rho Correlation Coefficient

** . Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

The results demonstrated in Table 4.3 were based on the 7 curriculum statements (in the questionnaire part 1, no. 2 (items 2.1-2.7). The results, then reveal the global view of the teachers' perceived implementation. To further examine the situation, the English teachers were asked to respond to items related to teaching methodology and activities they used in classroom (questionnaire part 2, items 1-15). These 15 items were based on the 8 standards and the 28 benchmarks mentioned earlier. The mean scores of each item of each educational region were computed. A one-way analysis of variance was employed to test significant differences among the mean scores of each item of the teachers in three educational regions. The results of the implementation of the 2001 English curriculum in full details are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Analysis of Variance of the Teachers' Perception of the Implementation of the Curriculum

No.	Curriculum Implementation	Education Region						F	Sig.
		1 (N = 48)		2 (N = 62)		3 (N = 30)			
	\bar{X}	S.D	\bar{X}	S.D	\bar{X}	S.D			
1	develop the listening skill e.g. summarizing, transferring, note taking, answering questions	3.64	0.53	3.50	0.55	3.63	0.42	1.30	0.28
2	develop the reading skill e.g. summarizing, transferring, note taking, answering questions	3.78	0.53	3.77	0.43	3.71	0.51	0.25	0.77
3	develop the speaking skill for building personal relationship e.g. request, permission, greeting	4.06	0.56	3.77	0.49	3.89	0.39	4.76**	0.01
4	develop the speaking skill for presenting information and expressing opinions e.g. group discussion, problem solving	3.67	0.62	3.67	0.53	3.55	0.55	0.59	0.56
5	develop the writing skill e.g. writing essay, writing letter, writing a personal journal	3.01	0.59	3.09	0.69	3.09	0.56	0.30	0.74
6	understand the relationship between language and culture of the native speakers e.g. role-playing, formal, informal language, making appropriate dialogue	3.71	0.68	3.54	0.59	3.70	0.59	1.21	0.30
7	understand the similarities and the differences between English language and Thai in terms of words, phrases and sentences e.g. comparing words, phrases, sentences, pronunciation, translation	3.58	0.54	3.59	0.55	3.52	0.51	0.21	0.81

Table 4.5 (Continued)

No.	Curriculum Implementation Students are taught to...	Education Region						F	Sig.
		1 (N = 48)		2 (N = 62)		3 (N = 30)			
		\bar{X}	S.D	\bar{X}	S.D	\bar{X}	S.D		
8	understand the similarities and the differences between Thai and the native speakers' culture e.g. comparing holiday, family, cultural discussion	3.82	0.60	3.73	0.59	3.54	0.48	2.09	0.13
9	see the merit of learning foreign language and to realize the value of language and culture and able to use them appropriately e.g. writing letter to friends, using eye contact	3.39	0.72	3.15	0.74	3.04	0.57	2.65	0.07
10	use English to seek knowledge for other subjects e.g. searching information in the library or the internet	3.47	0.80	3.44	0.77	3.25	0.65	0.87	0.42
11	use English in various situations e.g. tourist interview, role-playing, play performance, debating	2.89	0.79	2.99	0.71	2.71	0.64	1.61	0.20
12	use English as a tool for learning e.g. discussion, asking and answering questions, expressing feeling	3.85	0.59	3.77	0.67	3.63	0.52	1.15	0.32
13	use English for career e.g. applying for a job, asking and giving information about job, writing resume, job interview	3.07	0.69	3.11	0.79	2.98	0.54	0.33	0.72
14	use English as a tool for furthering study e.g. note-taking, summarizing, paraphrasing, essay writing	3.14	0.86	3.29	0.67	3.21	0.77	0.57	0.57
15	use English to disseminate community e.g. recommend famous tourist spots, local food and product, organizing radio broadcasting	2.65	0.77	2.83	0.74	2.54	0.76	1.66	0.19
	Total	3.45	0.47	3.42	0.49	3.33	0.38	0.58	0.56

*.Significant at .01 level.

According to the data in Table 4.5, the English teachers in educational regions 1, 2 and 3 specified the varying degree of curriculum in practice. They perceive the implementation at the level of “moderate” and “high” with items means ranging from 2.54 to 4.06. As shown in Table 4.5, six out of fifteen statements were rated “moderate” with item means ranging from 2.54 to 3.39. It means that nearly half of the curriculum statements were moderately reflected in classroom in the three educational regions. These statements concern teaching students to understand the writing process, and to see the merit of learning a foreign language. The results also reveal the moderate provision of activities supporting them to use English in various situations, preparing them for career and further study, and assisting them to use English to disseminate information and news in their community.

However, the other nine statements were highly reflected in practice as the respondents rated them at “high” level, with item means ranging from 3.44 to 4.06. The statements highly realized in classes include teaching students to understand the listening process and the reading process, developing the speaking skills (for building personal relationship, exchanging data and information, presenting information and expressing opinions), understanding the relationship between language and culture of the native speakers, understanding the similarities and the differences between Thais and the native speakers in terms of language and culture, seeking knowledge for other subjects and teaching students to use English as a tool for learning.

Table 4.6 Multiple Comparisons of Practice

		Region 1	Region 2	Region 3
Statement 3	\bar{X}	4.06	3.77	3.89
Region 1	4.06	-	0.29*	0.16
Region 2	3.77		-	-0.13
Region 3	3.89			-

*.The mean difference is significant at the .05 level

In addition, the total mean scores in Table 4.5 show that the English teachers in Songkhla implement the 2001 English curriculum at a moderate level (Mean = 3.45, 3.42 and 3.33 in educational regions 1, 2 and 3 respectively). A one-way analysis of variance shows that there are no statistically significant differences among the mean scores of these three educational regions except for Item 3 (Table 4.5, Item 3: $F = 4.76$, $p = 0.01$). Table 4.6 illustrates that there is a significant difference between educational region 1 and educational region 2 at the 0.05 level in teaching students to develop the speaking skill for building personal relationships, exchanging data and information (item 3). The practice of this skill in educational region 1 is at the significantly higher degree compared with educational region 2.

To summarize the degree of the implementation, it is evident that teachers perceive the implementation at moderate and high levels with mean scores ranging from 2.65 to 4.10 (Table 4.3). Further investigation also confirms the moderate degree of implementation (Table 4.5: Total Mean = 3.45, 3.42 and 3.33). A One-way analysis of variance also indicates that there are no significant differences among the mean scores of these educational regions (Table 4.5 $F = .58$, $p > .05$) except item 3. This means teachers strongly agree on the extent of policy implementation.

To probe whether each statement of the curriculum is reflected in classroom, data from the observation field-notes were analyzed and interpreted. The findings are reported based on the 7 curriculum statements.

Classroom Evidence of the Implementation of the Curriculum

Statement 1: A tool for listening, speaking, reading and writing; for exchanging data and information; for building personal relationships; and for expressing feeling and opinions.

The evidence from observation shows that the communicative language teaching which is related to the first statement was reflected in practice. The communicative activities (such as pair work, group work, role-playing and cooperative learning) were used in the classes. Moreover, there were other activities which enable students to use English to communicate with their teachers and their friends such as answering questions, ordering events, expressing opinions, discussing,

interviewing, reading passages and writing paragraphs. However, in some periods, English was taught in the traditional way. The teachers focused on grammar teaching by explaining the grammar rule and its structure, and then having students do grammar exercises.

Statement 2: A tool for understanding the relationship between language and culture of the native speakers.

With respect to the data from observation, teachers tried to incorporate the knowledge of language and culture of native speakers through the content they were teaching. Some examples were giving tips for a hotel service, eating cheese, reserving a room in a hotel, and knowing about job and lifestyle. The activities that represented the practice to understand the language and culture of native speakers were role-playing and making dialogue in particular situation.

Statement 3: A tool for understanding the similarities and differences between the native speakers and Thai in terms of language and culture.

Activities, which represent teachers teaching the similarities and differences of language between English and Thai, were comparing English structure, sentence, pronunciation and translation. The teachers taught vocabulary by providing meaning in Thai together with part of speech and stress. Students were also asked to translate either the sentences in exercises or in the reading passage into Thai. For cultural differences, many items were compared in class such as currencies, food, job, lifestyle, invitation etiquette, and hotel room reservation.

Statement 4: A tool for seeking knowledge for other subjects from a variety of sources.

According to the evidence in observation, there were no activities which represented the attempt to enable students to use English for seeking knowledge for other subjects.

Statement 5: A tool for communication in various situations with other people in school, community and society.

Based on the classroom evidence, there was no evidence showing teaching students to use English as a tool for communication with other people in school, community and society.

Statement 6: A tool for learning, furthering study and career.

Evidence from classroom observation showed that students were prepared to use English for learning through many activities. Some examples were asking and answering questions, group discussion, following instructions and asking for information. These can be considered as study skills development. However, there was no evidence to support teachers preparing students to use English as a tool for career development.

Statement 7: A tool for cooperation and harmony in school, community and society.

Also, within 12 periods of classroom observation, there was no evidence reflecting teaching English as a tool for cooperation and harmony in school, community and society.

Based on the evidence from the classroom observation, 4 out of 7 curriculum statements were seen in classroom to a certain degree. Three statements were not reflected. However, it does not mean that the English teachers in Songkhla do not implement these three statements in class. It is possible that they may be reflected in other periods or in other academic years. The evidence from observation cannot reveal the full degree of implementation because of the limited time observed in classes. However, results from observation can generally confirm that the curriculum statements were reflected in class.

4.3 The Relationship between the Degree of Support for the Curriculum Statements and the Extent of the Perceived Implementation

Research question 3: What is the relationship between the extent of support for the curriculum and the degree of the perceived implementation?

To examine if there is a gap between the degree of support for English curriculum and the extent of its implementation, the paired sample t-test was utilized. Table 4.7 demonstrates the comparison between the degree of support and the level of the perceived implementation of the English curriculum in each educational region.

As can be seen by reference to the t values in Table 4.7, totally there are statistically significant differences between support for the English curriculum (policy) and perception of its implementation (practice) in all curriculum statements ($t = 12.10, 11.29, 10.25, 12.36, 6.96, 10.06$ and $7.77, p = .001$). The results from each educational region also show a statistically significant difference between policy and practice at .05, .01 and .001 level. It can be interpreted that although the curriculum statements are deemed highly important, the implementation of those statements is seen much significantly lower in practice.

Therefore, it can be confirmed that there are significant gaps between the degree of support for the curriculum and the extent of its implementation in Songkhla. In other words, it can be said that English teachers highly support the policy statements and agree that the policy is implemented at a moderate degree. However, they perceive that the degree of implementation was at the much significantly lower level.

4.4 The Problems Obstructing the Implementation of the Curriculum.

Research question 4: What are the problems obstructing the implementation of the curriculum?

To investigate the seriousness of problems obstructing the implementation of the 2001 English curriculum, teachers were asked to specify their opinions on a five-point Likert scale from “1” (least serious) to “5” (most serious) in questionnaire Part 3 (Items 1-19).

Table 4.8 shows the mean scores, standard deviations, and analysis of variance of the problems obstructing the implementation of the English curriculum.

Table 4.8 Problems Obstructing the Implementation of the Curriculum

No.	Problems	Educational Region						Total (N = 140)		F	Sig.
		1 (N = 48)		2 (N = 62)		3 (N = 30)		\bar{X}	S.D		
		\bar{X}	S.D	\bar{X}	S.D	\bar{X}	S.D				
1	The curriculum provides too many benchmarks.	3.50	0.95	3.55	0.89	4.13	0.78	3.66	0.92	5.49**	0.01
2	The benchmarks are difficult to interpret.	3.29	0.97	3.29	0.91	3.77	0.94	3.39	0.95	3.04*	0.05
3	Some benchmarks are difficult to implement.	3.63	1.00	3.77	0.93	4.26	0.74	3.83	0.94	4.69**	0.01
4	Insufficient attendance of the seminar on the new curriculum.	3.21	1.05	3.34	1.17	3.60	1.22	3.35	1.14	1.09	0.34

Table 4.8 (Continued)

No.	Problems	Educational Region						Total (N = 140)		F	Sig.
		1 (N = 48)		2 (N = 62)		3 (N = 30)		\bar{X}	S.D		
		\bar{X}	S.D	\bar{X}	S.D	\bar{X}	S.D				
5	Lack of support from school and community to organize the English activities	3.04	1.22	3.03	0.97	3.20	1.13	3.07	1.09	0.26	0.77
6	Insufficient learning resources such as library and computer laboratory.	2.94	1.24	2.97	1.13	3.27	1.08	3.02	1.16	0.86	0.43
7	Lack of visual aids e.g. tape recorder	3.02	1.14	3.00	1.01	3.17	1.02	3.04	1.05	0.27	0.77
8	Lack of budget to organize activities.	3.15	1.11	3.21	0.96	3.43	1.04	3.24	1.03	0.75	0.47
9	Insufficient knowledge on communicative approach	2.60	1.07	2.42	1.02	2.77	1.10	2.56	1.05	1.17	0.31
10	Unsure about our own English structure knowledge.	2.04	1.07	1.89	0.73	2.07	1.01	1.98	0.92	0.56	0.57
11	Insufficient English language skills	2.20	0.94	2.26	0.99	2.37	0.76	2.26	0.93	0.27	0.76
12	Lack of cross-cultural knowledge	2.38	0.96	2.52	0.95	2.93	1.14	2.56	1.01	2.98*	0.05

Table 4.8 (Continued)

No.	Problems	Educational Region						Total (N = 140)		F	Sig.
		1 (N = 48)		2 (N = 62)		3 (N = 30)		\bar{X}	S.D		
		\bar{X}	S.D	\bar{X}	S.D	\bar{X}	S.D				
13	Student-centered activities are a waste of time.	2.42	1.09	2.82	0.98	2.83	0.95	2.69	1.03	2.57	0.08
14	Extra work leads to lack of time to prepare the lesson.	3.17	1.31	3.34	1.25	3.53	1.22	3.32	1.27	0.78	0.46
15	Students have insufficient knowledge in English.	3.27	1.23	3.48	0.95	4.23	0.77	3.57	1.08	8.52***	0.00
16	Large class size makes it difficult to organize communicative activities.	3.50	1.41	3.68	1.05	3.37	1.29	3.55	1.24	0.69	0.50
17	Students do not see the merits of learning English.	3.77	1.06	3.77	1.06	4.33	0.71	3.89	1.02	2.75	0.07
18	Environment of community around school does not support students to practice English in their real life.	3.92	1.01	3.85	1.11	4.33	0.80	3.98	1.03	3.73*	0.03
19	The influence of university entrance examinations	3.94	1.06	4.21	0.98	4.33	0.66	4.14	0.96	1.87	0.16

*. Significant at .05 level

**. Significant at .01 level

***. Significant at .001level

Table 4.8 demonstrates the mean scores of the problems obstructing the implementation of the curriculum in three educational regions and the one-way analysis of variance testing significance of the differences among the mean scores of each problem.

With respect to the data in Table 4.8, English teachers in three educational regions view problems obstructing the implementation of the curriculum at three levels: “very serious problem” with item means ranging from 3.43 to 4.13, “fairly serious problem” with item means ranging from 2.77 to 3.34, and “slightly serious problem” with item means ranging from 1.89 to 2.60. The problems identified at the high degree of seriousness concern the curriculum, students, large class size, community, and the influence of the university entrance examination. The teachers stated that the curriculum provided too many benchmarks and some are difficult to follow. They also indicated that large class size made it difficult to organize communicative activities. Moreover, students did not see the value of learning English and the environment of the community around school also did not support students to use English in their real life. The other very serious problem is related to the university entrance examination which still influences the English language teaching at the Expanded Level. Lots of upper secondary students would prefer learning English grammar structure for entrance examination than doing communicative activities in English class (Musigrungsi, 2002).

The fairly serious problems concern the curriculum interpretation, the lack of teacher-training, school support, learning resources, and visual aids. Students’ English proficiency is also problematic. The teachers claimed that the benchmarks were difficult to interpret and they moderately attended the seminar on the new curriculum. Insufficient learning resources (e.g. library and language laboratory) and teaching aids (e.g. tape recorder) were agreed to be the fairly serious problems. The teachers also stated that they were not supported by their schools in terms of opportunity and budget for organizing English activities. The teachers viewed the student-centered activities to be a waste of time and they cannot afford to prepare the lessons because of the extra work it will demand. The last fairly serious problem concerns students. They have insufficient knowledge in English.

Four problems concerning the teachers themselves are indicated as slightly serious. Those are knowledge about communicative approach, English structure knowledge, language skills and cultural knowledge.

In sum, English teachers in Songkhla agree that there are problems obstructing the curriculum implementation at varying degrees of seriousness-slightly serious to very serious. These problems concern the curriculum, teachers, students, teaching aids, school support, community, large class size, extra work and the influence of university entrance examination. The problem of teachers having insufficient English structure knowledge was indicated at the lowest degree of seriousness (Mean = 1.98). On the other hand, the influence of university entrance examination was seen as the most serious problem (Mean = 4.14). The overall results show that various problems obstruct the success of the curriculum implementation.

As shown in Table 4.8, although it can be seen that the teachers in three educational regions indicated the problems at the same level of seriousness, the one-way analysis of variance shows that there are some significant differences among the mean scores of certain problems. Table 4.9 shows the multiple comparisons of problems 1, 2, 3, 12, 15 and 18 as a result of the comparison.

Table 4.9 Multiple Comparisons of the Problems

		Region 3	Region 2	Region 1
Problem 1	\bar{X}	4.13	3.55	3.50
Region 3	4.13	-	0.58*	0.63*
Region 2	3.55		-	0.05
Region 1	3.50			-
		Region 3	Region 2	Region 1
Problem 2	\bar{X}	3.77	3.29	3.29
Region 3	3.77	-	0.48*	0.48*
Region 2	3.29		-	- 0.00
Region 1	3.29			-
		Region 3	Region 2	Region 1
Problem 3	\bar{X}	4.27	3.77	3.63
Region 3	4.27	-	0.49*	0.64*
Region 2	3.77		-	0.15
Region 1	3.63			-
		Region 3	Region 2	Region 1
Problem 12	\bar{X}	2.93	2.52	2.38
Region 3	2.93	-	0.42	0.56*
Region 2	2.52		-	0.14
Region 1	2.38			-
		Region 3	Region 2	Region 1
Problem 15	\bar{X}	4.23	3.48	3.27
Region 3	4.23	-	0.75*	0.96*
Region 2	3.48		-	0.21
Region 1	3.27			-
		Region 3	Region 2	Region 1
Problem 18	\bar{X}	4.33	3.85	3.29
Region 3	4.33	-	0.48*	0.42
Region 2	3.85		-	- 0.06
Region 1	3.92			-

*.The mean difference is significant at the .05 level

Regarding the data in Table 4.9, it is interesting that teachers in educational region 3 seem to face these six problems at a higher degree of seriousness than the others. These problems include too many benchmarks, the difficulty in interpretation and implementation of some benchmarks, non-supportive environment of community around school, the lacking of teachers' cultural knowledge and students' insufficient English knowledge.

4.5 Summary of the Findings

The main research findings can be summarized as follows:

Regarding the degree of support, it can be summarized that the English teachers in three educational regions in Songkhla strongly support the 2001 English curriculum statements. This implies that the teachers agree with the 8 standards and the 28 benchmarks that are related to four main aspects: communication, other cultures, other subjects, and relationships with the community. The teachers might think that these aspects are necessary for students to cope with the fast changing world. In other words, the teachers agree that the current English curriculum is suitable for English language teaching and learning in the globalization age.

As for the degree of implementation, the English teachers in Songkhla perceive the curriculum implementation at "high" and "moderate" levels. It can be said that the 2001 English curriculum is reflected in practice. This may suggest that the teachers implement all the aspects required by the curriculum. However, the evidence from classroom observation shows that only some curriculum statements are reflected in class.

Turning now to the relationship between the degree of support for the curriculum statements and the extent of the perceived implementation of the curriculum, the significant differences are found. The degree of support for the curriculum is at "high" to "very high" levels while the extent of its implementation is at "moderate" and "high" levels. Therefore, the extent of the implementation of the curriculum is much lower than the degree of the teachers' support for the curriculum. In other words, there is the significant gap between the policy and practice. Teachers agreed that it was good but could not follow it strictly.

With reference to the investigation of current problems in English language teaching situation in three educational regions in Songkhla, many problems are found obstructing the implementation of the curriculum. The problems are agreed as “slightly serious” to “very serious”. Those problems are related to the current curriculum, teachers, students, teaching aids, learning resources, large class size, not having support from school or community, and the influence of the university entrance examination. The teachers mention that the 2001 English curriculum provides too many benchmarks, and some benchmarks are difficult to implement. They also indicate that the environment of the community around the schools does not support students to use English for communication. In addition, large class makes it difficult to organize the communicative activities. Moreover, students do not see the merits of learning English because they think that they do not have opportunity to use English in their daily lives. The influence of the university entrance examination is indicated as the most serious problem. The teachers try to teach English grammar instead of implementing communicative activities. However, the teachers are confident about their English proficiency. According to the specified problems, it can be said that the curriculum statements may not be reflected in practice at the maximum degree because the teachers have problems in their English language teaching. Those problems then may obstruct them from achieving the success in teaching.

In conclusion, the results of this study show the high degree of support for the 2001 curriculum but the much lower extent of its implementation. It can be said that there is a significant gap between the policy and practice. The correlation coefficient asserts that the teachers in three educational regions agree upon the importance of curriculum statements and perceive the curriculum implementation at the same degree and in the same rank orders. The data from classroom observations confirm that curriculum statements were reflected in real practice at some degrees. However, the findings of the study indicate that the English teachers have problems in their current teaching situations. The problems are related to many aspects such as the curriculum itself, students’ proficiency in English, large class size, environment of community and the influence of the university entrance examination. These problems are specified at the moderate and high degree of seriousness.

Based on the results of the study, there are some important points which require a further discussion. Chapter 5 presents the discussion of the main findings, implications and recommendations.