

IV. Research Findings

Data analysis was proceeded according to the objective set to answer the research question: “Is it time SI learning mode were officially implemented to PSU students?”

First, the difference in number between those who undertook SI and those who did not was investigated. The subjects’ SI behavior was examined by asking them whether they did or did not undertake the learning mode. Then, all of the subjects were asked about their viewpoints on benefit they may obtain from SI in general, but not only at ESAC. For those who answered that they never did SI, they were asked the reasons for not doing so. Those who answered that they did SI were asked about the frequency of the SI learning activities, types of activities, or material used for the purpose of improving their language proficiency. Questions related to ESAC consisted of two items. The first one asked about the students’ satisfaction with the ESAC in general, and the other asked the students for their suggestions related to the improvement of the ESAC—hinting them such as learning material, counseling, places, etc.

The survey on the number of students who undertook SI showed that those who undertook SI outnumbered those who did not. Four hundred and twenty-eight students (78.8%) out of the total of 565 said they did self-learning, while 137 students or 24.2% said they did not, as shown in table 3.

Table 3: Numbers of students who self-learned and those who did not

Category	Number	Percentage
Self-study	428	75.8
Not self-study	137	24.2
Total	565	100

In general, it can be concluded from the finding that more students learned English beyond what was assigned by the instructor. Those who indicated that they never practiced SI were requested to give reasons for not doing so. They were allowed to give more than one reason. Thus, the 137 students produced 355 answers. The frequency of each reason was shown in table 4.

The majority of the respondents (112 students out of 137, or 81.75 %) said they had too much homework from other subjects to do. The assignments took a considerable amount of their out-of-class time leading to their not being able to afford time to do SI. Similarly, a number of students (68 out of 137, or 49.64 %) said they had too many extra curriculum activities. As well, this took a great deal of time. The other significant reason is the time spent on chatting; 55 students out of 137 or 40.14% admitted that they spent too much time on chatting.

Table 4: Reasons for not undertaking SI

Reasons	Number of respondents	% calculated from:	
		355 students	137 students
English is not important.	4	1.1	2.92
They had too much homework from other subjects.	112	31.5	81.75
English taught in the classroom was sufficient.	23	6.5	16.78
They had too many extra curriculum activities.	68	19.2	49.64
They spent too much time chatting with friends.	55	15.5	40.14
English is too difficult.	33	9.3	24.09
English is boring	25	7.0	18.25
Others	35	9.9	25.55
Total	355	100	--

Interestingly, merely 4 out of 137 students said English was not important. Similarly, only 23 students or 16.78 % said the English they studied in the classroom was sufficient. In addition, a small number of students (25 out of 137 or 18.25%) said English was boring.

Further, reasons for not taking English self-access learning were given for open-ended questions, as summarized below.

- a. They did not see the need of improving English proficiency. The reasons of this contention varied. For nursing students, English was required only for 1st year students. Upon taking the required English course, they did not have necessity to learn the language any more.
- b. Students from other disciplines gave various reasons. Particularly, it was stated that English is not actually used in daily life. Thus, even having learned substantially the skills and knowledge would soon be losing because Thai language was used all day; virtually English was not used.
- c. Interestingly, a male respondent stated that he was so proud of his mother tongue especially his local dialect, that he did not feel like learning a foreign language. This same student mentioned that some time ago he had a serious argument with an English instructor. He became loathsome with the language ever since.

Worse than that, he was mistakenly misplaced in a class consisting of students with better English proficiency while he was categorized as having a limited skill in the language. All these reasons made him not desiring to undertake any English self-access learning.

The figures in table 4 lead to certain generalization concurrent with the informants' response. First, students were rather poor in time management. Most students said they did not use ESAC because they had too much homework from other subjects.

The fact that the questionnaire provided spaces for supplying others reasons for not undertaking English SI, it was observed that those who said not having time also said they spent most of their free time on chatting and having fun with friends. This phenomenon although reflects different aspects of learner behavior. One thing it indicated was the inefficient time management. More efficient time managers would be able to allot time proportionally.

Nonetheless, it can also interpreted otherwise. In general, Thai learners—at least the participating subjects in the present study—may have similar learning behavior to Hong Kong students as described in Lee (1998). They were hardly enthusiastic to undertake any learning outside the classroom. Moreover, they argued that classroom learning was sufficient.

The next aspect investigated was related to possible benefit the learners may get. Those who indicated that they did SI were asked to evaluate the benefit they had from SI. They were also asked about the time they spent on SI, as well as aspects related to PSU's ESAC.

Concerning the benefit of SI, besides those who had experience in SI or the target respondents, some (13) of those who did not undertook SI provided information to this question as well. Four hundred and forty-one students responded to the questions having 4 choices to select.

Among this number, 355 students said SI was very useful; 76 said SI was fairly useful; 2 said it was slightly useful; and 8 gave other reasons, including not able to evaluate.

It can be concluded from this finding that the majority (355 out of 441 students or 80.5%) at least realized the benefit from SI although it was improbable to find out how much benefit they actually got from the learning mode (table 5).

Table 5: Opinions on benefits from SI

Opinions	Number of respondents	Percent
<i>Very useful</i>	355	80.5
Fairly useful	76	17.2
Slightly useful	2	0.5
Others (e.g. Not able to evaluate)	8	1.8
Total	441	100.00

Looking into the activities the students did or means of SI they used giving them 9 categories of activities or materials, we found that the majority (418 out of 565 students) listened to music. Note, we asked the students' self-learning anywhere, not only at the university's ESAC.

Below presented table 6 showing numbers and percentages of students who indicated the activities they carried out in SI.

The items in the table 6 were ordered according to the frequency found in the study (from high to low frequency). The respondents were asked to tell what they actually did. That is, if they carried out more than one activity, they were supposed to state every of them. The total number of frequency was 1,709, although 565 students responded the questionnaire.

Four types of activities that attracted students' most interest comprised listening to music, watching movies, reading newspaper, and studying English lessons using commercial textbooks, accounting for 73.98 %, 60.35 %, 37.7 % and 36.46% respectively.

Table 6: Activities carried out by students in SI

Activities / means of SI	Number	Percentage*
1. Listening to music	418	73.98
2. Watching movies	341	60.35
3. Reading newspaper	213	37.70
4. Studying English lessons using commercial textbooks	206	36.46
5. Watching TV programs	149	26.37
6. Watching documentary on TV	83	14.69
7. Practice listening English through audio cassette	82	14.51
8. Reading cartoon	80	14.16
9. Talking to native speakers	77	13.63
10. Using other types of materials (e.g. Internet)	60	10.62
Total frequency	1,709	--

*calculated from 565 students

Obviously, the activity most favored to the students was listening to music, which probably because of its entertaining quality. Interestingly, around one-third of the respondents (36.46%) studied English lessons using commercial textbooks and 14.51 % practiced listening English through audiocassettes. These two types of learning material are actually composed of both authentic and semi-authentic texts or simulations, which are considered more comprehensible to learners than purely

authentic materials such as motion pictures or newspaper. It might be reasonable to contend that students' objectives in taking SI matched that of ESAC -- to improve English proficiency.

When asked about the material they used in SI in the university's ESAC, the majority of the respondents (234 out of 397 students or 58.9%) said they spent time using entertaining media (movie and music), as shown in table 7 below. Note, this finding was similar to that in table 6 which concerned SI activities anywhere.

Table 7: Types of material and media used in the ESAC

Types of material and media	Number of students	Percent
1. Watching movies	126	31.70
2. Listening to music on audio cassettes	108	27.20
3. Listening to English lessons on audio cassettes	56	14.10
4. Using internet	89	22.40
5. Others	18	4.50
Total	397	100.00

Another aspect involved the ESAC under investigation was the students' reasons for not using the ESAC.

Table 8: Reasons of not using ESAC

Reasons	Number of students	Percent
1. Not knowing the ESAC	187	36.20
2. Not interested	37	7.20
3. Lack time	153	29.60
4. No idea how to begin	140	27.10
Total	517	100.00

It was shown in table 8 that a number of students (187 or 36.2 % did not know the existence of the ESAC. Similar numbers of students (153 and 140 or 29.6 % and 27.1 %, respectively) said they did not have time and did not know how to begin improving their English language proficiency.

Interestingly, a number of respondents gave reasons for not liking English as briefly summarized below.

- a. English was difficult and there are too many aspects—grammar, vocabulary, etc—which were hard to learn by themselves. Some said they did not like vocabulary.
- b. They got bored because of not comprehending what was taught in the class. Related to this argument, some stated that English instructors did not have effective teaching techniques.

As for the category rather than specified, respondents gave various answers. A number of them stated that they had never undertaken English self-access learning because they were lazy. A similar number said they practiced the learning mode only before taking an exam.

Regarding the frequency of self-learning, it was found that about half of the respondents (225 or 52.2% out of 413) said they did self-learning once to twice a week, as shown in table 9 below.

It was noticed that most (52.2%) students took SI twice a week, almost equal to the time allocated in literature, as reviewed earlier. Closely related to frequency is the time they spent on SI, which was asked as opened-ended question. Three hundred and fifteen students gave information. It was found that 141 (44.8 % students said they spent one to two hours a week on SI. Another 45 % (135 of the respondents)

spared merely 30 minutes for the learning. Yet, 39 respondents or 13 % said they spent more than two hours a week on the English self-access learning.

Table 9: Frequency of SI

Frequency of self learning	Numbers of students	Percent
1. Less than once a week	88	20.40
2. Once a week	13	3.00
3. Once to twice a week	225	52.20
4. Twice to three times a week	76	17.60
5. Others	29	67.00
Total	431	100.00

It was evident that a large number of students (45%) spent only 30 minutes on the English improvement. That is, they spent only one over 336 the time they all had in a week (24 hours times 7 days). This amount did not seem potential to help learners improve foreign language proficiency. Besides, this figure indicated that the resources provided in the ESAC have not been worthily utilized, like the finding in Khon Kean University.

Those who undertook SI were also asked to assess their English proficiency after having undertaking SI for some time. Three hundred and ninety-seven students gave responses and most of them (96.7 %) said there was an increase in their English language proficiency, as shown in table 10 below.

Interestingly, while those who said their proficiency increase fairly much accounted for almost half (41.1%); those who said they have improved their English significantly and those who said their English proficiency only slightly increased accounted almost the same number; i.e., 29.5 % and 26.2 %, respectively.

Table 10: The result of students' SI

Results of SI	Number of students	Percent
1. Proficiency increased significantly.	117	29.5
2. Proficiency increased fairly much.	163	41.1
3. Proficiency increased slightly.	104	26.2
4. Not yet satisfied	13	3.3
Total	397	100

The last question the subjects were asked was about their opinion on the ESAC service. It was aimed to find out whether the users were satisfied with the ESAC in general. As mentioned earlier that subjects participating in this study were not assigned to use the ESAC, it would not be rational to examine their opinion on ESAC too much in detail. Thus, aspects of services, such as opening hours, number and quality of materials and media, were not asked. In stead, we requested them to supply answers to an open-ended question hoping to elicit a broad range of information.

Given four levels of satisfaction—very highly, highly, fairly and not yet satisfied--it was found that most students (58.23 % or 329 students) were fairly satisfied, 18.23 % (103 students) were highly satisfied, and 67.2 % (38 students) were very highly satisfied. Those who were not yet satisfied with the ESAC service accounted for only 16.8 % or 95 students.