Problems in Teaching and Learning English at the Faculty of International Studies, Prince of Songkla University, Phuket

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate problems of teaching and learning English at the Faculty of International Studies (FIS) at PSU, Phuket. Researchers questioned 614 students, five Thai teachers of English, eight non-Thai teachers and four administrators in charge of Academic Affairs in gaining the information required for the completion of this study.

The findings show that students from three programs (IBC, CNS and THS) perceived all the problems as fairly serious. The most serious problems were related to facilities, learning environment and to students. However, the questionnaire results showed that there were no statistically significant differences among the three programs except for problems concerning the curriculum and students. In contrast, open-ended questions and interviews added more conflicting details to the fact that students viewed the problems relating to content, teaching and management as the most serious problems being encountered at present.

Teachers encountered similarly specific problems, among the most serious problems were insufficient teaching and learning materials, students’ low motivation, and students’ low proficiency.

The administrators shared a similar concern about problems related to a lack of appropriate in-house materials, students’ low motivation, students’ low proficiency, students’ lack of discipline, and the lack of an effective internal supervision team.

These findings enhance the problems that hinder the learning and teaching of the English language at FIS, and can be of further help in finding appropriate solutions.

Keywords: The Faculty of International Studies (FIS), International Business in China (IBC), Chinese Studies (CNS), Thai Studies (THS), English teachers
1. Introduction
In regards to the awareness of English as an international language, the Faculty of International Languages (FIS) at Prince of Songkla University, Phuket Campus, along with other learning institutions, offer an international in which Thai students have the opportunity to better their English skills (listening, speaking, writing and reading).

It is normal and somewhat expected that students who have difficulties at the beginning of an academic year are later on able to improve and surmount them. This, however, does not seem to apply to FIS students. Despite the fact that an all-English program was provided, only 33 out of 163 third year students were able to graduate with the required minimum TOEIC score of 550. This trend is confirmed by the fact that at present, most third year students having attended an international program for three years still have low scores and do not feel confident and motivated in learning and using English.

Seeking ways to deal with the obstacles that hinder the learning and the teaching of English and finding appropriate solutions to these problems is therefore essential.

2. Purpose of the Study and Research Questions
The purpose of this study is to find out which problems hinder students’ learning in the teaching and learning of English at the Faculty of International Studies. In order to do so, the research questions listed have been used to find the appropriate solutions:

1. What are students’ problems in learning English?
2. What are teachers’ problems in teaching English?
3. What are the administrators’ opinions towards the management of English teaching and learning at FIS?

3. Scope and Limitations of the Study
It has to be mentioned that as the object of this study are the students of the Faculty of International Studies, the results may not be generalized to students entering international programs in other faculties.

Furthermore, due to the limitations of time and budget, a questionnaire was the main instrument used with the large sample of students.

4. Significance of the Study
The results provide useful information needed to increase the understanding of the current problems of teaching and learning English, and the administrators’ point of view reflecting educational management will further contribute to the improved quality of the teaching of English and to the better the management of the faculty.

5. Literature review
5.1 Immersion Program
An immersion program is a program in which a second or target language is taught through courses (Richards, Platt, and Platt, 1993).

On the other hand, Downes and Suguhara (2002) define immersion as a content-based instruction which allows instructors to emphasize the meaning and not the form of the language. Students can therefore participate with teachers in activities or discussions, which will encourage them to have opportunities to talk or use the language to communicate. Therefore, immersion programs provide students with both academic achievement and language proficiency.

Curtain and Dahlberg (2010) define types of immersion programs as follows:
1. Partial or full program refers to a program which provides courses through the second language for a part of or for the whole day in the first few years. Later, the first language will be gradually used and combined with the second language.
2. Partial program is a program in which students learn courses in both the first and the second language for at least half a day or for half a school year.
3. **One-way immersion** is a program in which all students with the same mother tongue study the same second language in school.

4. **Two-way immersion** (two-way immersion or two-way bilingual or developmental bilingual education program) divides students into 2 groups according to their native languages. One group has second language mother tongue students while the other has native speakers of the first language. Both groups study together in the same class and eventually master both languages.

In summary, immersion programs comprise the following 4 objectives:

1. Students master the second language.
2. Students have good competence of the first language, not different or better than regular program students.
3. Students master the subject-matter courses mentioned by the state curriculum.
4. Students learn cultures of both the first and second languages.

A great deal of research shows that studying in an immersion program can lead to academic success or yield better results on students in non-immersion programs in academic and cultural achievement (Genesee, 1978; Lambert and Tucker, 1972; Swain and Lapkin, 1982 cited in Tedick, 2008).

As far as the teaching and learning management in FIS is concerned, it can be said that all the three programs are partial immersion ones. Elaborating this statement, the Thai Studies program offers courses both in English (65%) and Thai (35%), the Chinese Studies program is taught in both Chinese (70%) and English (30%), while the International Business-China program is taught both in English (50%) and in Chinese (50%). Students of THS study in the Thai native language and in the foreign language, English. CNS and IBC students have classes in the two target languages, Chinese and English.

5.2 **Context of English course at FIS**

Students are required to take at least 5 courses or 15 credits. Students who begin EIP will study EIP and English I to English IV but the ones who begin with English I to English IV will have to choose another elective course to complete 15 credits. The first course is English for International Program (EIP) which is divided into 2 main sections: Listening and Speaking and Reading and Writing. English I – English IV are integrated four-skill courses. To elaborate, EIP is for students with lower than 400 TOEIC score. It aims at basic conversations, reading strategies and writing sentences. The objectives of English I are to enable students to communicate using simple English, write paragraphs and strengthen their reading skills. The goals of English II are to increase all the 4 skills and to have students learn how to write essays. The purposes of English III are to have students learn in topics related to academic skills including academic essays, academic presentations and academic reading. English 4 aims at comparative/argumentative essays, simple academic papers, application of interactive listening and speaking, reading and writing.

5.3 **Problems of Teaching and Learning English in an English Program in Thailand**

In order to increase students’ English competence to meet the requirements of globalization and internationalization, in 2001 the Ministry of Education announced a new solution, an English program (EP) in which English is used as a means of instruction. “The program aims to develop knowledge, capacity and English proficiency of the students to enable them to use the English language to meet the needs of internationalization, without compromising Thai ethics and morality” (the Ministry of Education, 2001: p5). The English program in Thailand is a partial immersion.

Although many schools offer English programs, many non Thai teachers who teach English do not graduate in Education, nor did they graduate in teaching English. Therefore, they do not have expertise in what they teach and do not know teaching methodology. Also,
many of them are tourists who want to travel and do not want to stay in a place for a long time. Furthermore, some teachers leave schools without notice, which causes problems to other teachers and to students (Punthumasen, 2007).

Research has shown that English programs or immersion programs are an effective teaching method that is used in many educational institutions including schools and universities. Nevertheless, there are also some problematic issues or aspects that teachers and administrators should be aware of in order to improve the programs. It is thus worth investigating the problems in teaching and learning English at the Faculty of International Studies, Prince of Songkla University, Phuket which offers international or immersion programs in order to find out what are the real problems that obstruct teaching and learning at FIS.

6. Subjects of the study
The subjects who participated by answering questions of the student questionnaires were 614 FIS students from the first to the fifth year who came back to the campus for the graduation ceremony. Forty-four (1st year-4th year) students from three programs: IBC, CNS, and THS were also included in the interview. In addition, five Thai teachers of English, eight non-Thai teachers and four administrators in charge of Academic Affairs participated in the interviews.

7. Research instruments
This study included the following instruments:
7.1) Student questionnaire
The questionnaire was comprised of closed and open ended items which were constructed in Thai in order to avoid the problem of ambiguity. The student questionnaire consisted of two main parts, students’ demographic information and students’ perceptions of the problems of leaning English. The Five Point Likert Scale was used to check their opinions. The open-ended questions asking for suggestions to the problems asked before in the closed items. To ascertain the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach Alpha was used to analyze all the items in the questionnaire. The statistical result ranged in value from 0 to 1 (0.94) which implied that the questionnaire instrument was highly reliable.

7.2) A student interview
Open-ended questions from the student questionnaire were used to ask some randomly selected students on three programs to obtain in depth information and to confirm the information.

7.3) A structured teacher interview
Two versions, one in Thai and the other in English, were constructed based on the major aspects related to problems in teaching English: curriculum, teaching, lesson planning, classroom activities, students, teaching and learning materials and administration and supervision.

7.4) Structured interview for university administrators
The structure interview was constructed in Thai based on the major aspects related to problems in English teaching and learning management: curriculum, teachers, students, teaching and learning materials, teaching and learning quality and support and assistance from the government.

8. Data Collection Procedures
Data collection procedures were done as shown below:
1. Student questionnaires were randomly conducted on 614 students.
2. 44 students of first – fourth years from three programs were randomly selected and divided into small groups of approximately 5 students. They were interviewed using the same open-ended questions of the student questionnaire. Each interview lasted about 45 minutes.
3. All FIS English teachers were interviewed. The interviews lasted approximately 1 hour or
1 hour and a half, and audio recording devices were used to collect and record data.

4. Each administrator was interviewed for about 1 hour or 1 hour and a half and the interview was recorded.

9. Data Analysis

The data from questionnaires was analyzed using SPSS in order to find mean scores and standard deviations. After that, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was implemented to find if there were any significant differences among the 3 programs. Specified problems that found statistically significant differences were proved further by a multiple comparison analysis carried out to find out the pairs of differences.

In this study, the mean scores were interpreted as follows:
- 4.51 - 5.0 means most serious problem
- 3.51 - 4.5 means very serious problem
- 2.51 – 3.5 means fairly serious problem
- 1.5 – 2.5 means slightly serious problem
- 1 – 1.49 means least serious problem

10. Findings

The results consisted of three parts as follows:

10.1 Students perceived problems in learning English

With reference to the students’ questionnaires, the students from three programs (IBC, CNS and THS) perceived the problems as fairly serious. The most serious problems were related to facilities, learning environment and students. However, the results showed that there were no statistically significant differences among the three programs except for the problems concerning curriculum and students.

In contrast, open-ended questions and interviews added more conflicting details on the fact that students viewed the problems related to contents, teaching and management as the most serious problems being encountered at present.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Problems</th>
<th>IBC</th>
<th>CNS</th>
<th>THS</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>Level of Seriousness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>fairly serious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>learning environment</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>fairly serious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>0.05*</td>
<td>fairly serious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>teaching and learning management</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>fairly serious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>.000**</td>
<td>fairly serious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>course contents</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>fairly serious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>fairly serious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>testing and assessment</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>fairly serious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>fairly serious</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Ranks of problems in learning English from opened-ended questionnaires and interviews perceived by students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Problems</th>
<th>Frequency (N=614)</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Problems</th>
<th>Frequency (N=4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Books and other learning materials are insufficient.</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Contents too much focus on writing.</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Communication or speaking skills should be emphasized.</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>There are not many foreign students to practice speaking with.</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Contents too much focus on writing.</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Teaching hours per semester: 4 hours a week are insufficient.</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Some contents are not related to real life.</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Books and other learning materials are insufficient.</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Learning equipment such as projectors and computers do not work properly.</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>There should be a room where students can watch English films, use English programs, listen to music, and practice listening.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>There should be more elective courses related to real life.</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>There should be outdoor activities and/or students can practice the language outside in real-life situations.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>In one course with many Sections, there should be the same grading criteria.</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Communication or speaking skills should be emphasized.</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>There are no teaching techniques that attract attention.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Tutorials for TOEIC should be offered to assist students to prepare themselves for the test.</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Some activities or games should be used.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>There should be more elective courses related to real life.</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10.2 Teachers’ perceived problems in teaching English

Teachers encountered similarly specific problems, which included insufficient teaching and learning materials, students’ low motivation, students’ low proficiency, inappropriateness of the curriculum to students’ needs, a discrepancy between the curriculum and students’ proficiency (it was too difficult for their ability), the inability to have activities in classroom, lack of an English environment, unsuccessful activities with low proficient students, outdated materials, and ineffective teaching equipment. However, it can be said that the most important aspect to improve is related to teaching and learning materials. Another crucial factor hindering their achievement in English was students’ low proficiency and low motivation.

Table 3: Ranking of problems in English teaching and learning perceived by teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Problems</th>
<th>Frequency (N=12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Teaching and learning materials were insufficient.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Students had low motivation.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Students were low-proficient.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Curriculum needs to be adjusted to suit students’ needs or goals.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Curriculum needs to be adapted to suit students’ ability. It was too difficult for most students.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Inability to introduce various activities to attract intention due to time limitation.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>English environment both inside and outside was needed to help the students practice their English.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Classroom activities were not successful because of students’ low proficiency.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Materials available were not updated.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Teaching aids in classroom regularly did not work properly.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10.3 Administrators’ Opinions towards the management in teaching and learning English at FIS

With regard to the interview with the administrators (based on Table 3) nine serious problems were perceived as problems most administrators agreed on. They included lack of appropriate in-house materials, students’ low motivation, students’ low proficiency, students’ poor discipline, lack of an internal supervision team, teachers’ lack of effort to develop their teaching, teachers’ lack of expertise in the teaching field, and lack of supportive environment for learning English.

In summary, among the numerous problems, the problems of most concern were related to teaching materials, students, and teaching. Materials provided to students and the students themselves were the most essential factors needed for urgent improvement.
11. Discussion of the main findings

Some problems presented below were a source of serious concern for students, teachers and administrators.

11.1 Students

Two problems concerning students were their low proficiency and low motivation.

11.1.1 Student’s low proficiency

With English as the sole means of instruction, students who received less than 400 in the TOEIC examination have had difficulty coping with an all-English program and with English in general. This resulted in teachers having to simplify their language and adjusting their materials, which ultimately prevented the progression of the English program and the progress of the weakest students.

11.1.2 Students’ low motivation

The fact that the majority of FIS students have low motivation represents yet another obstacle on the road to successful learning. In fact, low motivation limits the scope of students and inhibits their risk taking when students have to learn two foreign languages, like the majority of IBC and CNS students who have gradually lost interest in learning English and focused more on learning Chinese.

11.2 Learning environment

According to Lightbown and Spada (1993), learning in an environment in which the target language is used dramatically increases learners’ abilities in acquiring English skills. Nevertheless, students at FIS cannot improve much because of their being in an unrealistic English environment.

The small number of foreign teachers (14 teachers for almost 500 students), their offices being in different buildings, the absence of international students and the lack of regular activities are all factors that hinder the practice and the acquisition of English.

For most students, for instance, the learning ends when the classes end, and they are reluctant to seek teachers for advice or clarification, which is in line with Faerch’s and Kasper’s avoidance behavior that occurs when

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Problems</th>
<th>Frequency (N=4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The teachers should create suitable in-house materials to strengthen students’ proficiency.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The students lacked motivation.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The students had poor competence of English.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The students were undisciplined.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The faculty lacked effective faculty internal supervision team.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Teachers accommodated levels to suit present student’s ability.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Some teachers did not attempt at developing their teaching.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Expertise in teaching English as a foreign language or second language should be prerequisite for teaching.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Insufficient English activities hindered creation of an English</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Ranking of problems in English teaching and learning perceived by administrators
students are not ready to produce the language or not capable to form the language (1983).

11.3 Facilities: teaching and learning materials
One of the top ranked serious problems concerns the inadequacy of learning aids. The views of most students and teachers are congruent. Both agree that the teaching materials are not updated or interesting. The administrators on the other hand, basing their reasoning on the scarce number of borrowed materials recorded at the library, do not see a valid reason for ordering new books and aids and expect teachers to produce their own.

11.4 Curriculum
As seen earlier, both students and teachers thought that the problems related to the curriculum were that it aimed beyond students’ current ability and that it did not match the students’ needs or goals for their further career or education. On the other hand, some administrators mentioned that the teachers taught only simple content and did not try to strengthen the students’ ability. The possible explanation for this may be that once teachers realize about students’ competence, it is difficult for them to give advanced lessons since the students cannot master even the simple ones.

11.5 Contents
The students opine that communication or speaking skills should be more emphasized, and some contents are not related to real life. The possible explanation may be that each English course focuses on different writing skills: sentences and paragraphs in English I, and different types of essays in English II, III and IV. When teaching, teachers may take longer time in having students practice writing than other skills. In students’ opinions, they may think that they have to learn many types of essay writing which may not be useful for their work in the future. Instead, they may need communication skills which are the first important skills used most in communicating with people in daily life or in jobs rather than writing skills.

11.6 Teaching
Many students mention that they are facing the problem of uninteresting techniques and suggest that some motivating activities or games should be more frequently used. Teaching techniques are useful in teaching if they draw students’ attention and if they give motivation and positive attitudes toward learning at the same time.

One possible explanation may be that some teachers could not employ games or activities because of curriculum contents and requirements and because of a limited time frame. Nevertheless some activities, as teachers complained, could not be completely carried out because of students’ low proficiency. This makes teachers ignore using some activities and focus more on explaining contents instead.

11.7 Teaching management
Teaching management problems are related to the number of 4 learning hours per week and to the lack of tutorials for TOEIC preparation. The fact that students study English only for 4 hours (two times or two days per week) may make them feel unconfident in using English. Moreover, they may think that they should have opportunities to learn English more often and more thoroughly than other students in regular programs.

In the context of tutorials for TOEIC preparation, students are required to take the TOEIC test and to attain the score of at least 550 or 600 in order to graduate. This makes them realize the need of TOEIC and request the assistance of the faculty. Again, the problems English teachers found were that tutorials were held for students without charge, and that they attended classes only at the beginning. When questioned, students responded that they did not have enough time and they were so busy with assignments, which did not allow them to attend the whole program. This circumstance discovered by teachers may be one possible
11.8 The lack of an effective internal supervision team

Supervision can help improve teacher development. Even though some teachers have degrees related to teaching, this small number cannot be compared with a larger number of teachers without a teaching degree. Moreover, the supervision team is composed of the administrators of the faculty who do not have a teaching background but are assigned by their administrative positions. Furthermore, FIS is a new faculty which includes many young staff with limited experience and excessive administrative jobs, which may cause them not to work efficiently and effectively.

12. Implications

Some suggestions derived from the findings are provided to improve teaching and learning at FIS.

1 The findings show that students, teachers, and administrators are aware of the problem of students’ low proficiency. To help them strengthen their English skills, the faculty may provide an intensive course before the first semester starts, or a remedial course which is set in the students’ regular schedule.

2 Students’ low motivation is one of the problems faced by teachers and administrators. Students may turn their low motivation into high motivation if teachers attempt to promote various activities which suit their interest and abilities.

Moreover, teachers may need to think harder about their lesson plans and utilize various teaching techniques to encourage students to have positive attitudes towards English and to believe that English is not a difficult or boring course. Furthermore, the faculty or teachers may need to emphasize the importance of English in globalization, for example by inviting some successful graduates to talk about their career and life, or by taking students to English speaking countries or in an environment in which English is the only language used as a means of communication.

3 The study reveals that a supportive environment for English language acquisition should be promoted at the faculty. Most students use English only in classroom, so the faculty may provide them with more English activities outside class time such as English zone or English camp.

4 The findings indicate that most teachers and students are not satisfied with the teaching and learning facilities provided at present. The faculty may provide a room in which they can self-study. The room should include a corner where they can practice listening, watch English films, and self-study. Another option is to have a self-study center where students can practice English skills and study more from English books, newspapers, magazines, CDs, etc. Having a self-study centre will also allow teachers to easily access materials.

5 The study reveals that the administrators think that the lack of in-house materials designed by teachers is significant. This finding implies that teachers may not know how to create or design materials, so the faculty may provide a training course about material designing and invite experts to hold workshops for them.

6 As found in the study, a number of students and teachers are facing the problems of a mismatch between students’ goals or needs after graduation and curriculum contents. To relieve these problems, the faculty may need to analyze and see what students want to be, what topics they are interested in and what skills they need to improve. The information obtained can be used in designing materials, designing curriculum and deciding which elective courses to offer, and preparing a remedial course or intensive course for them. Moreover, the faculty may offer more elective courses related to careers.

The findings also reveal that the curriculum is one of the serious problems faced by CNS students. This finding implies that the students may realize that the lack (or the insufficiency) of English in their program is
highly serious. While IBC and THS students have more chances to study English in other content subjects, most CNS courses are taught through Chinese. Thus, CNS students have the least opportunity to encounter English. In order to provide this group of students with more English lessons, the faculty may offer remedial courses, have students study more courses through English, and promote activities.

7 The administrators admit that the faculty lacks an effective internal supervision. A possible way to overcome this is to have training for the supervision team. Moreover, the faculty may invite experts to supervise the team at the beginning. Furthermore the supervision should be done regularly in order to assist and to help the teachers develop their teaching. Apart from knowledge about supervision, a teacher training program should be also provided to help the supervision know well about teaching and material preparation.

8 It was found that students were not absolutely satisfied with the teaching techniques. The faculty may provide teacher’s training or send teachers to participate in teaching conferences to update their teaching knowledge and learn more about new trends of teaching. In addition, the faculty should also provide a teacher training program to help teachers improve their teaching, material preparation and self-evaluation and class observation.

9 The results also showed that students requested more elective courses related to daily life and more TOEIC tutorials. The faculty may enquire about the course they really need and wish to study first and then provide courses and tutorials based on their interests.

13. Recommendations for further studies

In order to confirm the findings, some areas are recommended for further study.

1 The results revealed that most teachers had positive attitudes towards their teaching while the administrators disagreed about their teaching knowledge and methodology backgrounds. This study employed only the in-depth interview as the main instrument to collect data from teachers. Further research may incorporate classroom observation for a semester to confirm the findings and to have a clearer picture of real teaching and learning situations.

2 This study aimed to investigate problems found in FIS only, thus, the findings cannot represent the problems of learning and studying of other international programs. It is recommended that further research on problems of teaching and learning of an English-Chinese or English international program in other universities around Thailand should be conducted. The results found will be very fruitful in solving problems properly and effectively.

3 The findings showed that most students have low motivation, which leads to failure in learning English.

4 Students’ need analysis should be launched to investigate their interests and the goals of their study. The results may be useful as guidance for teachers and administrators to design the curriculum to serve their needs.

5. After employing some problem solving methods, research should be conducted to prove whether the methods can actually solve the problems.

References


