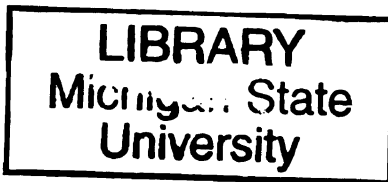




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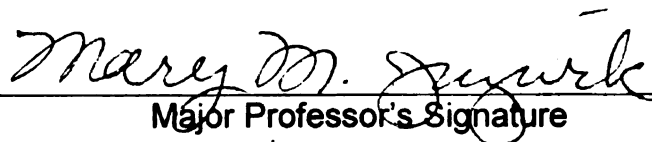
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OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM: A CASE STUDY OF
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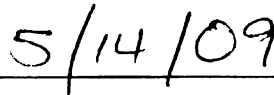
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EFL LEARNING THROUGH LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES
OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM: A CASE STUDY OF
ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDENTS IN THAILAND

By

Ruedeerath Chusanachoti

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ABSTRACT

EFL LEARNING THROUGH LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM: A CASE STUDY OF ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDENTS IN THAILAND

By

Ruedeerath Chusanachoti

This study explored how Thai learners of English as a foreign language, engaged in English activities outside of classrooms to learn and practice the English language.

Three research questions of this study include: (a) How do the participants perceive access and availability of out of class English activities in local environments?, (b) How do the participants engage in out-of-class English activities in local environments?, and (c) What perspective do the participants have on out-of-class English activities? What factors affect their participation in such activities?

The study employed a qualitative multiple case study approach, grounded in the ethnographic tradition. The four focal participants were all third-year female undergraduates majoring in English Education at a Thai university. Data sources include participant observation, field notes, interviews, self-reflection journals, and self-report activity diaries.

The findings about out-of-class English activities illustrate that learners are routinely involved in a range of activities, for example watching movies, listening to and singing songs, doing Internet activities, and reading books and newspapers. The study found, however, that the participants did not perceive all English activities available

outside of the classroom as English learning sources. Rather, they perceived only those sources possessing the following four qualities: transparency, usability, expense, and affectivity. In terms of activity types, participants usually engaged in multimodal, non-face-to-face (yet interactive), receptive, and incidental learning activities. Furthermore, level of participation in out-of-class English activities depended on both internal factors such as identity and motivation as well as external factors such as social networks and social norms.

This study suggested that out-of-class English activities can be beneficial for language learning and merit special consideration by English educators. For example, out-of-class English activities may be incorporated into formal instruction to help learners pay attention to and participate in meaningful communicative activity.

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This dissertation mean to me more than the culmination of years of my study.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

English has become a required language for schools in many countries around the world, particularly in Asia. However, learning English outside of English-speaking countries (i.e., in a foreign language setting) can be a challenge. Many learners feel they have opportunities to use English in their everyday lives. It is easy to believe that if one lived in an English-speaking country, and could use English all the time, it would be easier to improve.

In my experience as a Thai learner of English, learning English in Thailand is not easy. Like many other countries in Asia, English is taught as a foreign language in Thailand. I found many of my friends lacked motivation and that they did not know how and where to advance their English skills except by waiting for teachers to feed them an explicit instruction in the classroom. This is because students were not required to use English in meaningful ways. Later, when I was an English teacher and an English teacher trainer, I also found challenges with the English curriculum, teaching methodology, and textbooks. Although the curriculum encouraged multiple English language skills, learner centered instruction, and a communicative teaching approach, many teachers still based their teaching on grammar rules, rote learning, and textbook based lectures. Many English textbooks were dry, with a lot of grammar exercises and reading passages which did not relate to learners' lives and interests. As a result, learners found English classrooms very unpractical and boring. Yet they liked watching movies in English,

singing English songs, and using the Internet. However, these English activities were usually overlooked and received little support among teachers and parents. Now that I am a researcher, I desire to understand more about learners' lives in order to see and to understand how they learn English from the environments around them and how they create opportunities to practice English from their everyday routines.

Although it is believed that authentic language exposure and opportunities to use language in natural setting can increase language learning experience (Ellis, 1994; R. P. Leow, 1998; Spolsky, 1989, as cited in Norton Peirce, 1995), most second/foreign language studies were conducted in classroom environments. Hence, understanding of learners' behaviors outside the classroom is quite limited. Currently, English language teaching in Thailand is receiving more and more attention due to the increasing availability of media in English. However, there is not sufficient firm data about what Thai learners did outside the classroom that associate with English language. The main rationale of this research is to study the out-of-class language learning of Thai learners studying English as their foreign language. Therefore, this study aims to explore how Thai English as a foreign language learners engage in English language activities and use English environments that are available outside classroom-walls.

In the next section, I address the importance of the problem and issue including my research focus and research questions. I then discuss the significance of the study as well as explain the definition of some key terms. At the end of the chapter I supply the background of the review of related literature which will serve as necessary background for my study.

Problem Statement

In a country like Thailand where English is used as a foreign language, compulsory school level learners spend only 80 hours per year for primary education and 200 hours per year for secondary level in an English class (Prapaisit de Segovia & Hardison, 2008). At the undergraduate level, only four to six English courses are required for all learners in four-year-curriculum. For some learners, these few hours a week in English class are the only time that they are formally exposed to the English language. In the late 20th century, the Thai Government launched the National Education Reform Act (NEA) of 1999 which attempted to provide education for all and emphasized informal and non-formal education for Thai learners (ONEC, 2002; Sangnapaboworn, 2003). The NEA proposed and defined the following three types of education:

1. Formal: curriculum-based and time-dependent
2. Non-formal: flexible learning aims and non-time-dependent
3. Informal: depending entirely on individual interests and personal time commitments

The NEA deemed non-formal and informal education types very important sectors in a largely agrarian rural society with a history of emphasizing only formal education.

After the Ministry of Education announced the NEA, the focus of English teaching shifted focus from learners being able to produce the language and remember grammar rules to having communicative competence, being creative with critical thinking, and being able to develop and conduct their learning on their own outside the classroom. These transformations raise many concerns both about the teachers and the learners. The first challenge is whether there are enough English environments in

Thailand. As English as a Foreign Language¹ (EFL) learners, Thai learners have fewer opportunities to immerse themselves in English language, unlike English as a Second Language² (ESL) learners who have an advantage in accessing English language more readily: from English native speakers, to the media. Although many of the media and technologies in Thailand are presented in the English language (e.g., television programs, music, radio, printed media, and the Internet) learners are still confronted with a choice between using English environments versus a Thai equivalent. Secondly, in response to the NEA, learners are encouraged to engage in out-of-class English activities on their own time. The concern with this relates to how Thai learners nowadays participate in English activities during their free time with the emergence of Western cultures and new media technologies and how much teachers, parents, and adults know about what learners are doing. This brings my attention to the role of out-of-class English environments in English language learning in Thailand.

Scholars in second language acquisition (SLA) support the necessity of informal education and the importance of the language practice from environments around learners (Ellis, 1993, 1994; Krashen, 1982; R. P. Leow, 1998). In the past, SLA and L2 learning and teaching research had been conducted on a set of activities by varying interesting variables (for example, age, ethnic, media) in educational contexts; hence, knowledge findings of language acquisition in the classroom has increased significantly. However, the relevance of activities that learners engage in beyond classroom, such as reading

¹ English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is used when learners learn English in a non-English speaking country such as in Thailand, China and Japan. For example, a Thai learner, who lives in Thailand, learns EFL while the mainstream people are Thai and speak Thai language.

² English as a Second Language (ESL) is used when learners learn English in an English-speaking country. For example, a Thai learner comes to the United States and learns ESL to survive in this country.

novels, e-mailing, and watching movie, were rarely recognized by the teachers and researchers. This also signals the possibility that teachers, parents, researchers, and maybe even learners do not appreciate many of the out-of-class language activities as the language learning sources. Based on limited studies on out-of-class language activities, little is known about what, how, and why EFL learners act once they are outside English classrooms, the potential significance of out-of-class English activities, and what learners can possibly gain from these activities is an under-explored area in the field. Moreover, much research on out-of-class English activities was based on quantitative self-report survey approach and was conducted in ESL contexts. Therefore, I see the need of a study which offers in-depth understanding of EFL learners' naturalistic behaviors in engaging in out-of-class English activities, the reasons that govern such behavior, and the perceptions on those activities and behaviors. The present study, thus, aims to fill this gap by focusing on EFL learners' out-of-class English activities. With this study, using the multiple case study ethnographic approach with participation observation, interviews, self-report activity diaries, and reflection journals, I hope to understand the complexities that out-of-class English activities have in the lives of a group English learners in Thailand.

Purpose and Research Questions

The overall purpose of the research has five aspects: (a) to describe a portrait of out-of-class English activities of learners, (b) to examine how different English activities have evolved in learners' out-of-class environments, (c) to investigate similarities and differences of out-of-class English activities among learners, (d) to interpret learners'

perceptions of their involvement, strengths and problems in the involvement, and factors that affect their involvement in out-of-class English activities, and (e) to suggest and make recommendation on how to integrate out-of-class English activities into English classroom in order to promote learners' English learning autonomously via out-of-class activities.

This study addresses one general question: How do Thai ESL learners engage in out-of-class English activities? More specifically, this study aims to investigate the following three research questions:

1. How do the participants perceive access and availability of out-of-class English activities in local environments?
2. How do the participants engage in out-of-class English activities in local environments?
3. What perspective do the participants have on out-of-class English activities?
What factors affect their participation in such activities?

Significance of Study

This study aims to provide an in-depth description of Thai EFL learners' out-of-class language activities by uncovering the nature of their involvement of participants to English activities in their daily lives and to analyze their perception of affordances and constraints of English environments outside classroom. This study provides in-depth information on the type of activities and environments learners participate in them, as well as how they engage themselves in such activities. It provides evidence in favor of the view that out-of-class English activities in EFL contexts are valuable and should not

be underestimated as a way to enhance learning opportunity and language exposure for students. Although this study has focused on only a group of four Thai college learners, we can extend its implication beyond this specific context. Moreover, it emphasizes the importance of not only noticing and taking advantage of learning opportunities, but also realizing affordances and constraints which may facilitate or hinder the taking up of particular English activities and learners' attitudes involving in out-of-class activities learners participated in.

The understanding of the role of out-of-class activities on learners' lives will benefit EFL teachers to integrate out-of-class English activities that are of interest to the learners which will in turn result in more motivated learners. Furthermore, this study elaborates how internal factors such as individual differences, identity, and motivation, all of which are significant for SLA, influence learners' English practice through out-of-class English activities. In addition, teachers, educators, and parents can use the findings of this study as a guide to encourage learners to seek opportunity to use English outside the classroom, to facilitate their language practices outside the classroom, to develop the ability to search for and create opportunities to learn by themselves, and to enact or promote affordances of out-of-class English activities. This will fulfill the Thai new National Education Reform Act which values the non-formal and informal education equally to the formal education. Finally, relevant parties (for example, teachers, educators, administrators, curriculum designers, materials developers, and educational technologists) can use this study to incorporate, integrate, adapt, or modify out-of-class English environments into the classroom environment.

Definition of Terms and Concepts

It is necessary to discuss and explain terms and concepts which are central to the study in terms of how they were used in this study. This section provides definition of some key terms which were used throughout this study.

Out-of-class English activities or outside of classroom English activities. “Out-of-class” in this study means any time learners spend outside of the classroom. Out-of-class time includes free time, time spent in part-time jobs, and time spent for non-assignment activities. Therefore, “out-of-class English activities” means any non-assignment activities that learners do in English language either academic or non-academic related when they are outside of formal classroom setting with or without intention to learn or practice English language. Some examples are watching movies in English, reading English novels, reading English grammar books (on their freewill), talking to friends in English, writing English diaries, e-mailing, and singing English songs.

Out-of-class (language) learning. The term out-of-class learning in this study follows the definition that has been defined by Benson (2001) as any type of learning that occurs outside the classroom which includes “self-instruction, naturalistic learning or self-directed naturalistic learning” (p. 62). The term “learn” in this study is used in a loose sense to mean a gain in knowledge, comprehension, and skill; to become informed of something; to discover or to find out something; to memorize something. I did not use this word in terms of cognitive process nor with assessment standpoint.

English language input (source). “Input” or “input source” means any English language resource that provide learners opportunity to expose to English language.

Review of Literature

Introduction

This section describes some of the available literature in the areas relating to my study. First, I give an overview of learner autonomy and language learning. Second, I review a number of studies on out-of-class English activities. Then, I discuss a number of significant issues found in the reviewed studies. Lastly, I supply some background information about Thailand including the education system, English subject curriculum, learning culture, English learning and teaching in general, and research on out-of-class language learning in Thailand.

Learner Autonomy

Over the last 30 years, a concern with the nature and benefits of learner autonomy has been well established in the language pedagogy literature. Typically, learner autonomy is defined as when the learners have ability to control of their own learning (Benson, 2001, p. 47). Besides its definitions, Rubin (1975) and Rubin and Thompson (1982) described the characteristics of the autonomous learners as very similar to those of “good” language learners, one of which includes the habit of seeking for opportunities to learn and use the language at every available opportunity including outside classroom. Furthermore, autonomous learners see learning opportunities, take those opportunities, are enthusiastic to learn, are able to make decision about what to learn and what need to be done next, and have the ability to conduct independent learning as well as make use of environment (M. P. Breen & Mann, 1997; Rubin, 1975; Rubin & Thompson, 1982).

The field of learner autonomy is a very broad field which overlapped with many other fields such as psychology, learning and teaching, education, individuality, and educational technology. Learners' out-of-class learning can be viewed as one active behavior of an autonomous learner as in the study by Hyland (2004) and Pearson (2004) which viewed out-of-class learning as the efforts that learners use knowledge they gained from language classes to find language learning opportunities outside the class and exercise those opportunities. To be able to do so, learners unquestionably have learning autonomy. Another area of study in this field emphasized the out-of-class learning as one quality of language learners and/or as a language learning behavior (Freed, 1990; Freeman, 1999; Hyland, 2004; Pearson, 2004). This study follows these researchers and focuses on out-of-class learning, which is a more specific scope on autonomous learning. In the next section, I review some of the important studies that focused on out-of-class language learning and out-of-class language activities.

An Overview of Important Studies on Out-of-Class English Language Activities

Researchers started to pay attention to the language learning in out-of-class context only 30 years ago when the first major study concerned with out-of-class language activities and language proficiency was conducted by Seliger (1977). However, among research in the field of language learning, only a limited number of research was focused on out-of-class language learning and its practical implication (Benson, 2001). Benson, moreover, argued that within those studies, their framework and scope of research is not well defined and sometimes lack sound structure. Benson's observation along with previous research inspired me to construct a study, which pay attention on the

amount and type of outside school environments that language learners may encounter, how they create opportunities to learn from those environments, as well as the ways and strategies learners use in participating in those environments.

In this section, I, first, review major studies which are directly relevant to the present study. Then, I discuss three themes which are focused topics of the studies, including studies that focused on learners, learning, and other variables. After that I address four major limitations I found in the studies in this field. Finally, I address how the present study responds to the strengths as well as what is missing from the previous studies.

The first study I reviewed is Seliger (1977). Being among the first researchers in this field, Seliger examined six upper intermediate adult ESL learners in an intensive program. Seliger identified two categories of learners: high input generators (i.e., learners who were more active in classroom interaction as well as who consciously work on their English outside the classroom) and low input generators (i.e., learners who were passive in their English learning both in- and outside the classroom). Comparisons of performance on language tests showed correlation between membership in either of these groups and performance on field dependence. In other words, high input generators tended to be more field independent and generated more input. This finding showed that the high input generator learners have higher proficiencies than the low input generator learners. Furthermore, there is evidence on a tentative positive relation between out-of-class contact and proficiency. Seliger's study was recognized in two major contributions to the field autonomous learning: two learner categories (high and low input generators)

and his Language Contact Profile (LCP), a self-report survey designed to measure students' out-of-class use of L2, which was used by many scholars.

In 1989 Nunan started his research by studying 44 successful EFL learners in Southeast Asian countries to explore the common efficient patterns in their learning. The learners provided a list of out-of-class activities and variety of sources outside the classroom. In a follow-up study, Nunan further surveyed advanced learners to rank factors that help enhancing their EFL competency (Nunan, 1991, as cited in Hyland, 2004). The top three answers are conversation with English speakers/in groups; finding opportunities to practice outside class; accessing media such as radio, television, and newspapers. Apparently, Nunan's studies revealed that, outside classroom, successful learners activating language via utilizing supply of resources. Correspondingly, Nunan emphasized the importance of learners' development in both learning how to learn skill and out-of-class knowledge. In addition, "the determination to apply their developing language skills outside the classroom" (Nunan, 1991, p. 175, as cited in Hyland, 2004) is pivotal for learners' L2 development.

Modifying the LCP questionnaire from Seliger (1977) and employing this as one of the measurement tools for her study, Freed (1990) explored the out-of-class French use of a group of 38 learners in a study abroad program in France. Although no relationship between the type and quantity of language contact gain as measured by oral proficiency interview score was found, Freed found that different learners profited from different activities. Low competence learners tended to benefit from interacting with people more than higher level learners did while high competence learners profited from interacting with materials such as newspapers, books, and television. Furthermore, she proposed that

out-of-class contact was beneficial to learning of traditional tests of grammar and reading comprehension at the beginning and intermediate levels. Finally, Freed noted that learners who more involved in interactive contact tended to show distinct improvement than those with passive activities. Ironically, Freed's findings did not prove against out-of-class contact. Indeed, her real discovery was that the tests were not sensitive enough to accurately measure student improvement. This finding proved that a longer duration of learners' stay abroad or differing examination methods would be necessary for future research.

In EFL context, Pickard (1996) studied the out-of-class language learning strategies that 20 German learners who studied English in Germany employed voluntarily during their study of English. Pickard employed both a questionnaire on out-of-class learning strategies and in-depth interview techniques. He found that the most commonly found activities were listening to the radio and reading newspapers and novels. Interestingly, more academically oriented sources such as English newspaper, education programs through satellite television, and library materials received slight attention. Furthermore, activities associated with receptive skills (e.g., reading and listening) were mostly selected over those with productive skills (e.g., writing and speaking) due to a lack of opportunities to speak in their learning environments. His subjects, moreover, made most use of activities that they had chosen themselves and which had "intrinsic interest value" for them (p. 157).

One critique of Packard's study is his use of the word "out-of-class language learning strategies." According to Pickard, this term refers to "learner-initiated activities" in the target language outside the classroom, such as reading newspapers and listening to

the radio (p.150). Although nowadays, many studies refer language strategies as language activities, I see these two terms are different. I agree with Gan, Humphreys, & Hamp-Lyons (2004) that these two terms are only partially overlapped. Freeman (1999) mentioned language activities do not exactly correspond to language learning strategies since language learning activities “are overt, conscious and intentional, and should be clearly distinguished from the fast mental processes mentioned in the cognitive literature on learning strategies” (p. 80).

In addition, Yager (1998) studied the effects of informal out-of-class contact on learner attitude and language gains of 30 learners taking Spanish class in Mexico. Similar to Freed (1990), Yager found that, “greater interactive contact correlates with greater gain in beginners” and “greater non-interactive contact corresponds with less language gain in beginners” (p. 907). In contrary to Freed’s findings, “greater non-interactive contact corresponds with less language gain in advanced learners” was also found in Yager’s study. However, Yager noted that different finding might be attributed to level of sensitivity and reliability of selected proficiency measures.

Freeman (1999) studied the time spent on language learning activities of 118 learners from two British universities, half of which studied EFL and the rest of which studied French as a foreign language. Data collection included 118 survey questionnaire participants, 23 interviewees, and six case study students. He found that both groups of learners spent large amounts of time on out-of-class learning though different types of activities. EFL learners spent more time (i.e., 88% of the time) on informal activities, such as listening to the radio and chatting to foreigners, with less time on homework, and reading textbooks. Oppositely, French learners spent most of their time outside the

classroom on formal language learning such as assignment and reading textbooks.

Freeman suggested that in order for learners to gain a positive impact of the time and effort spent on out-of-class language learning, they need to find their most effective ways to use this time.

Aside from quantitative research approach as in many studies reviewed above (e.g., Freed, 1990; Nunan, 1989; Seliger, 1977; Yager, 1998), Suh, Wasanasomsithi, Short, & Majid (1999) used the interview approach to study the out-of-class experience of eight Asian participants enrolled in Intensive English program in the USA. Major four out-of-class activities reported were watching television, going to the cinema, listening to music, and interacting with native speakers. The authors claimed that “out-of-class leisure activities will probably never replace the need for in-class second language instruction;” (p. 14); however, they are beneficial for learners’ English conversation development. In addition, since there was no ideal leisure activity that functions well for all learners, ESL instructors should guide learners to properly select leisure activities that suit their characters.

Lam (2000) opened a website functioning as a gateway for ESL learners to share common interest and socio-cultural entity. The communication platform worked successfully since it created sense of sharing and belonging for ESL learners. The author further concluded that technology could be used to promote writing skills.

With the college level participants in an EFL context, Hyland (2004) conducted a survey on prospective teachers’ out-of-class language learning activities in Hong Kong. In this study, 238 learners in English Education major in an undergraduate university were asked to fill out questionnaires, eight were interviewed, and two learners were

examined in more detail through interviews and learner diaries. Hyland found that the most common activities were writing emails, reading academic books, and surfing the net. However, the majority of interested theme they read about was related to their study area. Furthermore, learners felt that opportunity to speak English outside study environment was quite limited although they tried to speak English with colleagues. In addition, Hyland discovered that the reasons for her participants to avoid speaking English in public involved both individual and social as well as political issues such as the concern on negative judgment. Although this study gives a good overall picture of what activities EFL learners in Hong Kong did outside of school, it did not further look at how learners did such activities in detail.

Gan et al. (2004) compare successful and unsuccessful students in China terms of individual differences, motivation, attitude, and learning strategies. The learning strategies the authors examined were different from Pickard's (1996) learning strategies. In Gan et al.'s study, which was framed on grounded theory; there were six issues that marked the difference between proficient and less proficient EFL learners. Among the six, the issue of "what strategies they used to learn and practice the language" was in harmony with this research. Gan et al. also stressed interesting points that less proficient learners mostly relied on rote memorization and were not able to evaluate what they learned.

Discussion of the Reviewed Literatures

After reviewing the research, I found common themes across the studies as well as strengths and weaknesses of these studies. In this section, I first argue that the studies

in the field of out-of-class language learning discussed out-of-class language learning in relation to and overlapping with at least one of the three main topics: (a) learners: individual differences, learners' motivation, attitude, identity, and perception; (b) learning: out-of-class activities, time spent, language exposure opportunity, strategies, and achievement; and (c) other variables: family, friends, teachers and teaching, norms and culture, society, and environment.

The first theme that many studies in the field highlighted is about the learners themselves. This includes every aspect about learners, such as language background, gender, characteristics, personalities, individual differences, identity, motivation, and attitudes. Various researchers agreed on the pivotal role of the individual difference and identity on out-of-class language learning. For instance, Seliger (1977) classified learners into two groups based on the intensity with which they practice a second language (L2): high input generators and low input generators. He found that the high input generators, learners who were more active in classroom interaction, tended to be more field independent. Furthermore, Gan et al. (2004) explored the characteristics that affect level of success of Chinese EFL learning. Their study showed that situation and personal specific characters such as attitude, strategy, and motivation were perhaps influenced by a variety of factors including out-of-class activity engagements. In Lam's (2000) study of a Chinese immigrant male teenager's EFL literacy and textual identity, out-of-class literacy practices such as online chatting fostered "visible improvement" of learner on English literacy (p. 467).

The second theme that most research studies in this field focused on is the concept of learning. This includes studies which focused on out-of-class language learning and

issues related to this topic such as out-of-class context versus formal education, time spent in the learning activities and types of activities, language achievement, skill development, and learning strategies used. Different findings on the study of types of and time spent in the out-of-class language learning activities. First, researchers found that learners engaged in different varieties of out-of-class activities such as watching movies and television, listening to the radio, etc. (e.g., Freeman, 1999; Hyland, 2004; Nunan, 1989, 1991; Pickard, 1996). Second, Hyland (2004), Pearson (2004), Suh et al. (1999), and Pickard (1996), for instance, reported learners did activities associated with receptive skills more than those with productive skills. In addition, researchers discovered that learners were likely to participate in activities related to communication and entertainment such as going to movie theater and using the Internet (e.g., Spratt et al., 2002, as cited in Hyland, 2004).

Many studies focused on the correlation between language achievement and out-of-class language learning. Researchers however found different conclusions, with the positive correlation (Seliger, 1977; Suh et al., 1999) and with the negative correlation or with mixed result (e.g., Freed, 1990; Yager, 1998). Other scholars identified out-of-class language learning as part of the language learning strategies. For example, Pickard (1996) studied out-of-class language learning strategies and included learners' reading newspapers, listening to the radio, and watching television as the strategies that learners perform in order to learn L2 outside the classroom.

The last theme concerns with other variable that might affect learners' out-of-class language learning such as family, friends, teachers, social norms, and culture. Hyland (2004) found that social norms influenced her participants' engagement in out-of-

class face-to-face activities. Other studies reported the effect of environment context on the out-of-class language learning—limited opportunity to communicate to native speakers (Hyland, 2004; Suh et al., 1999), for example.

After reviewing the related literatures, I found four major limitations. First, most of the studies in this field examined out-of-class language learning activities with the specific focus on only one or two out of the three themes mentioned previously (the learners, the learning or activities, or the factors that affect the learning or activities). However, all three themes are important equally in terms of learners' out-of-class language learning and therefore should be addressed and focused in the study in this field.

The second drawback, as Gan et al (2004) pointed out, is the majority of the research in the field has studied in the ESL context where learners immerse themselves in the available English environments. To date, there are only a few studies that look at how learners experience out-of-class English language contact within EFL contexts, especially in Asian countries. Half of the major studies in the field illustrated above, had been conducted within English or French as a foreign language context (i.e. Freeman, 1999; Hyland, 2004; Lam, 2000; Nunan, 1989; Pickard, 1996), with only four studies involved in EFL Asian context (i.e. Gan et al., 2004; Hyland, 2004; Lam, 2000; Nunan, 1989), and none of them was in Thailand.

The EFL context plays an important role on learning factors and learners' learning strategies for three main reasons. First, the potential level of language exposure and the amount of English environments in Thailand are different and cannot be compared to those of Western countries. Furthermore, culture and beliefs also affect learners' learning

strategies. In addition, learners' motivations are different. For example, ESL learners, who live in English-speaking countries, need to be able to survive and communicate with native speakers while some learners in EFL countries only want to pass exams and get good grades. Therefore, the descriptive research that is able to show how foreign language learners interact with out-of-class English environments is needed.

Third, most of the research on out-of-class English language learning activity is survey-based research. Gan et al. (2004) also speculated the same problem with research in motivation, attitude, and language learning strategies field. Moreover, participants may not respond in the self-report survey or questionnaire truthfully, either because they cannot remember or because they wish to present themselves in a socially acceptable manner. Although some research includes interview and journal diaries data collection (e.g., Hyland, 2004), the data gathered are still self-report based. In addition, most studies with surveys or questionnaires can only give the broad picture of either how much time learners use the out-of-class media, what kinds of activities learners engage in during their free time, or how learners think about such activities. Only a few studies that combined quantitative research method with the qualitative research method—survey questionnaire with follow up interview (Freed, 1990; Freeman, 1999; Gan et al., 2004; Hyland, 2004; Lam, 2000; Pickard, 1996).

From the review, I found only one study that employed ethnographic research method such as observation as the major data collection process, that is Lam (2000). However, Lam focused only on one participant's literacy, especially writing. Although Freeman (1999) included interview and case study in his study with the direct observation of classes for his case study, he did not present this source of data as primary

data in his study. Moreover, his goal is to study out-of-class activities; however, his observation was done in class period. Thus, this observation data did not represent the study's main focus.

Finally, although it seems that there are many studies about technology and media that learners used outside of school in the field of technology education and computer assisted language learning which might relate to the out-of-class language learning activities, one shortfall of most research in these fields is that researchers tend to limit their examination to only one or two media or technologies (Zhao, 2005). For example, researchers verified that learners gained higher language achievement from various interactions with books, magazines, newspapers (Nippold, Duthie, & Larsen, 2005), television, subtitles (d'Ydewalle & Poel, 1999), music (Murphey, 1992), and computer Internet technologies (Blake, 2000; Kern, 1995; Lam, 2000; Mark Warschauer, 1996, 2000).

In his review of recent research on technology-enhanced language learning, Zhao (2005) found that most studies conducted in the past were about a single technology rather than about systematic integration of technologies. Although it is important for scholars to focus on certain technology and media in order to collect extensive data and form a deep argument, the broad picture of overall environments is equally essential. Therefore, from a more holistic perspective, previous research suggests that a study that shows learners' use of a variety of environments and language input sources is needed and is worthwhile.

From the literature review, the challenge is how to address these four major shortfalls from the research in the field. We need a qualitative study, which offers an in-

depth data focuses on individual learners' out-of-class English language learning activities in terms of individual differences and identity, rich description of the learners' backgrounds, interaction they participate in, and social contexts in which they participate in the EFL context. This present study aims to explore how Thai EFL learners engage in out-of-class English activities to enhance their English learning opportunity using the case study with participant observation approach, interview, and other data collection techniques to obtain the information from and understand the relation among different angles including out-of-class English activities, individual learners, as well as other variables such as social norms, culture, and society. The research design including the description of context, participants, instruments and data analysis will be provided in chapter 2.

In this section, I reviewed some significant studies in the field of out-of-class language learning. It provided background on what have been done, what is missing from those works, and how my study is in needed. Since the study focuses on Thai EFL learners' English language engagement outside classroom behaviors, the Thailand context as well as education system in Thailand definitely play an important role in many research process including research design, data collection, data analysis, and discussion of the findings. Therefore, I see it is necessary to provide background on English education in Thailand as well as out-of-class language learning in Thailand up front in the next section.

English Education in Thailand

In Thailand, Thai language is the only national and official language whereas English language has been accepted as the most important foreign language. English is used in education and as a lingua franca for international relations and business. In Thailand, the government, education and legal system have been influenced by England. Thus, English language in the government related artifacts, such as street signs, posters and announcements in the sky train and underground train, and government documents, is in British style. Many other media are in American English or Australian English. We did not have a Thai way of spelling English as many other countries like Malaysia or Singapore do. Moreover, it is a required subject for the National Entrance Examination to attend universities. In the business sector, English is the most commonly used second language. English is also the second most commonly used language in the media, after Thai (Wongsothorn et al., 1996, as cited in Baker, 2008). Many government publications appear in both Thai and English and English is generally provided alongside Thai in the majority of public signs. Nowadays, two national English language newspapers, a number of local publications, including English language transmitted via assorted media (e.g., television and radio) are widely available to public (Baker, 2008; Foley, 2005). Hence, in the Thai society, English has been regarded as a prestige tool for higher education and for a better profession. However, English is not the language of communication among Thai people outside the classroom (Prapaisit, 2003). In reality, English is used only by certain groups of people who have to communicate with foreigners in major cities.

According to many scholars who have reviewed the history of English language teaching in Thailand (for instance, Baker, 2008; Foley, 2005; Prapaisit, 2003; Wongsothorn, Hiranburana, & Chinnawongs, 2002), English language teaching has a very long history in Thailand. It began in 1800s when English was taught in the palace to royal family only. In 1921, English became a compulsory subject for students after grade 4. In 1996, the Ministry of Education launched a new policy and made English a compulsory subject starting from grade one depending upon the readiness of the school. The goals of learning were emphasized on student's autonomy with the development of students' language proficiency including communication skills, knowledge acquisition, language culture, and English for specific purposes such as academic and future career. However, the assessment of the 1996 policy showed that the majority of students failed to achieve that prescribed goal, probably due to the learning situation that does not encourage communicative language teaching (Markmee and Taylor, 2001, as cited in Wongsothorn et al., 2002). Hence, the Ministry of Education launched the National Education Reform Act (NEA) 1999 which emphasizes life-long learning for self and social development through cognitive, emotional, affective, moral, ethical and cultural growth. The NEA requires educational institution to develop syllabi and learning content in order to enable Thai students to continually learn English from primary to secondary school (Wongsothorn, 2000, as cited in Wongsothorn et al., 2002). Consequently, the desired curriculum aimed to be continuity, unity, emphasis on knowledge integrated with ethics, universality with global and local concerns, flexibility and standards used to allow learners to graduate.

To enhance learning and teaching, the 1999 NEA offered more latitude for academic institutions to administer time allocation, instructional materials, teaching and assessment approaches. Thus, English teachers will be able to patronize a learner-centered environment that suit to the needs of community. Moreover, the new NEA placed considerable emphasis on life-long education. The curriculum was designed to provide core guidelines taking into consideration the local community problems and needs (Foley, 2005). The students' performance will be assessed from various sources including project work, group participation, and traditional paper-and-pencil tests. For each level, the standards for English language achievement at the end of each semester have been formulated in association with time allocation, strategy, and contents. Syllabus design follows the strands of "Four C's" for implementation and evaluation (Wongsothorn et al., 2002). They are: (a) Communication, focus on listening/speaking; (b) Culture, knowledge of and sensitivity to others; (c) Connections, links to other subject content; and (d) Community, project work and application outside the classroom.

By shifting from rote memorization and grammar emphasis to learner-centered environment, the NEA 1999 attempts to enhance learner autonomy but only a few successful evidences of communicative and learner-centered approach were observed by Prapaisit de Segovia & Hardison (2008). Major possible causes of this failure are for example, teacher's lack of English proficiency, teaching methodology, lack of teaching material, and learners' lack of interest (Baker, 2008; Foley, 2005; Prapaisit de Segovia & Hardison, 2008; Prapaisit, 2003). Another factor which probably contributed to this failure is there was no exposure to English as Thai was used almost 80-90% of the time in the classroom (Foley, 2005).

In an attempt to reform English curricula in Thai tertiary institutions, the new policy on English instruction of liberal education year 2000 mandated (at least) twelve credits instead of six credits in each of the followings: English, general English and English for academic or specific purposes, as required earlier. Similarly, the higher-level education fostered independent work, autonomous learning, and applications of innovations and new technology in ELT. Hence, the first English curriculum is now implemented in all public and private Thai universities.

Out-of-Class Language Learning in Thailand

According to the NEA 1999, the Ministry of Education expects the increase of autonomy, life-long learning, and self-access learning in Thai learners. After the NEA, some scholars started to pay more attention on these topics in Thailand context. There are collections of literature and studies which focused on long-distance learning and non-formal education. Very little literature highlights learner autonomy and/or language learning strategies. For example, Vanijdee (2003) studied the quality and level of learner autonomy of 391 university learners across Thailand who were registering for a Foundation English course in distance learning program. In the same study, Vanijdee, moreover, interviewed and studied eight learners using Think Aloud verbal protocol to examine learners' language strategies. She found that that Thai distance language learners showed varying degrees of learner autonomy. She concluded that learner's autonomy is based on qualities which are part of the learner's personality such as initiative and creative use of strategies. Examples of qualities reported in this study were self-management and self-monitoring (Vanijdee).

Another example is Wongthon & Sriwanthana's (2007) study of the local three-wheel taxi drivers on the English educational needs to communicate with tourist passenger. This research addressed problems and recommendations to improve tourism industry. One recommendation is to put emphasis on life-long learning and out-of-class learning where learners could both learn and work at the same time.

From the review, I found only a few studies on English language learning outside the classroom in Thailand context. Within this small list, most of them were studies which either focused on one medium or activity or used quantitative method. There has, as yet, been no ethnographic research on learner's English language learning through out-of-class English activities in Thailand which is the focus of this present study. As a consequence, my qualitative case study approach study which focuses on out-of-class English activity engagement of Thai learners will contribute to English learning and teaching in Thailand.

Summary

The review of the literature provided an overview of the significant theories, research, and background information that are vital to understanding the nature of English language learning through out-of-class English activities in Thailand context. In the first section, I gave an overview examination of the learner autonomy and its relation to out-of-class learning. In the second section, I reviewed studies on out-of-class language learning such as out-of-class activities, learning strategies, and learners' achievement improvement with out-of-class language learning. In the last section, I provided the background information about English language teaching and learning in

Thailand, the education reform, problems Thailand is facing with, and the current English curriculum that the participants are taking. In addition, I reviewed studies I found among the very few studies related to this field which conducted in Thailand.

Through the review of the literature, it is apparent that learners' out-of-class language learning activities is complex. Furthermore, considering the review of the literature, shortfalls of previous research, and my own experience as an EFL learner, teacher, and teacher trainer, I saw a situation that the Thai EFL learners might experience in accordance with the availability of English language environment outside of the classroom. Given that language environments are so important for language learning and the fact that the Thai NEA is promoting autonomy through non-formal and informal education, the challenge is how to promote L2 learners' exposure to these out-of-class English language activities. In order to obtain a more complete picture of EFL learners' out-of-class English language learning activities, this study needed to develop a comprehensive methodology and extensive analysis. The next section describes how this dissertation is organized and the outline of the chapters.

Organization and Overview of Forthcoming Chapters

This dissertation consists of five chapters. This first chapter serves two purposes. First, it broadly signals the parameters of this study by identifying problems and gaps, stating research questions, and defining several crucial terms and concepts. Moreover, it presented the pertinent literature that encompasses the theories and research related to

out-of-class language learning activities as well as the English language teaching and learning in Thailand.

The following chapter (chapter 2) is dedicated to a detailed description of the methodological approach employed in this study. I begin by describing the rationale for choosing the ethnographic multiple case studies approach along with the participant observation and interview for data collection. Four phases of data collection and data analysis process are described in detail. Furthermore, I discuss the role of researcher and validity issue of the study, in which I elaborate on my role as a researcher and English teacher as well as my relationship with the participants. This chapter ends with the limitation of this study.

In chapter 3, I discuss the finding in terms of description of my four participants: Opal, Benya, Malee, and Namtip. This chapter is devoted to creating individual portraits and rich accounts of each of these EFL learners and her out-of-class English activities engagement habitude. It starts by an overview of out-of-class English activities that all participants' recorded they did daily. Organizing into each participant one by one, I, then, describe participants' English learning background, characteristics, and findings, perspectives, as well as issues which emerged, particularly from the out-of-class activities they engaged in over the data collection period. This chapter paves the way for reader to have better portraits of these out-of-class English learning activities that are further examined and illustrated in chapter 4 to 6, the cross case analysis chapter.

In chapter 4, 5, and 6, I present the cross case analysis. I organized the emerged themes according to my three research questions. I explored the salient patterns in terms of similarities and differences between the participants regarding their experience and

their perception in English activities. The findings helped us better understand of their engagement in out-of-school activities. Chapter 4 responses the first research question, “How do the participants perceive out-of-class English activities in local environments?” In this chapter I focus first on the out-of-class English activities and accesses that are available for the participants. Second I look at the perceived access in out-of-class English artifacts. Third, I analyze the categories of affordance of the perceived out-of-class English artifacts. Chapter 5 discusses the second research question, “How do the participants engage in out-of-class English activities in local environments?” It includes the analysis of out-of-class English activities that the participants engaged in and the time they spent in those activities. I address four natures of the participants’ engagement in out-of-class English activities. Lastly, in chapter 6, I answer my last research question, “What perspective do the participants have on out-of-class English activities? What factors affect their participation in such activities?” Here, I categorized common areas of development based on the participants’ perception, after engaging in out-of-class English activities as well as factors that affect learner’s participation in out-of-class English activities, including internal and external factors.

Finally, in chapter 7, I discuss major threads of argument from the previous chapters of results by giving my reflection on these issues. I draw out implication aiming to illustrate how to assist learners’ out-of-class English activities engagement by implementing out-of-class English activities into English lesson and curriculum. I also address the tension between the advantages and disadvantages of out-of-class English activities. Lastly, this chapter ends with the conclusion of this study.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I supply information about the research methodology on which this research is based. To understand not only English activities that the participants engaged in outside school but also the context in which all activities took place, I employed an ethnographic multiple case study approach. In this case study, I tried to answer an overarching question how Thai EFL students engage in out-of-class English activities. To answer this question, the following three research questions were contributive for data collection and analysis.

1. How do the participants perceive access and availability of out-of-class English activities in local environments?
2. How do the participants engage in out-of-class English activities in local environments?
3. What perspective do the participants have on out-of-class English activities?
What factors affect their participation in such activities?

Given these primary guiding research questions, as well as the purposes of the study, a case study approach represented an especially appropriate means of obtaining data. Thus, in this chapter, I discuss research design, the rationale for employing such an approach, tools, and research method. I organized this chapter into seven sections. The first section is the research methodology, including rationale for adopting this research approach for the study. After I report on my pilot study, I discuss my research site, participants and the participant selection. Then, I introduce my data collection process, which is comprised of

three phases, followed by the data analysis process. I address the issue of researcher's role and validity of the study. I end this chapter with the discussion of some limitations of this study.

Research Methodology

A main purpose of the study was to investigate Thai EFL students' out-of-class English activities based on an insight into the nature of their out-of-class routine activities. The methodology framework was designed to focus on the individual level of out-of-class English activity engagement. In a quantitative approach, direct access to interesting data and participant's information would be superficial; hence, this method would not provide the solid response to this research goal. In contrast, a qualitative methodology requires the researcher to interact with the targeted participant in a naturalistic setting during data collection; thus, detailed information about participants can be unveiled and described. Therefore, I adopted a qualitative case study approach for this study.

Qualitative case studies are based on interpretation of multiple sources of evidence to disclose a circumstance of interest on a particular phenomenon. Relevant sources of information used in this type of study include demographic, social, and personal attitudes. This information inquiry process, so-called "thick-description," in turn provides an in-depth description of the event, the characteristics of an individual, and the setting, for example (Geertz, 1973). Therefore, one strength of a qualitative case study is

the potential it provides for the researcher to understand details of the case's in-depth phenomenon in a particular context.

Moreover, Merriam (1998) summarized the strength of qualitative case study approaches as particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic. Applying Merriam's view of qualitative case studies to my study, first it is particularistic as it aimed at circumstances of interest of one particular phenomenon which was a group of students and their behavior in contact with English activities in the outside the classroom context. The study was incorporated with rich information of the cases, which Geertz (1973) called thick description, included a "complete, literal description" of the cases under study (Merriam, 1998, p. 30). Lastly, because the research finding drawn from the researcher's experience, is usually more solid and specific to its context, which in turn allows readers to be able to interpret the study using their own judgment and experiences.

When the case is unique or typical, the single-case study is used to test theory. However, in my study, the focus is to look into participant's activities and their English learning/practicing behaviors through out-of-class English activities, both of which are more descriptive and interpretive. In addition, the analysis is conducted by comparing each participant's out-of-class English activity engagements. Hence, I used multiple cases in order to "understand complex social phenomena" (Yin, 1994, p. 3), to capture variations of circumstances of interest, and to embrace variations across the cases. Similarly, Merriam (1998) and Miles & Huberman (1994) supported the strength of multiple cases approach in terms of precision, validity, and stability.

In this study, I collected the majority of data from interview, observation, and document analysis. Hence, an ethnographic approach, which is appropriate for examining

activities and events, was adopted as a tool to exhaustively illustrate students' activities of interest. This ethnographic approach can provide a thick description which supplies "insight into cultural patterns" (Athanases & Heath, 1995, p. 263). I employ several ethnographic techniques for both data collection/interpretation (Merriam, 1998) and thickly descriptive recorded data (Geertz, 1973) from a weekly basis over thirteen-week of observation period. To ensure validity, I applied a triangulation technique which is recommended to ensure research credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) such as observations, interviews, weekly reflection journals, and daily activity diaries. Furthermore, other artifacts (e.g., MSN IM history chat log, e-mails, magazines, and newspapers) were compiled as existing information for data analysis. Moreover, since a qualitative case study approach focuses thoroughly on the specificity of context, particularities and systematization, generalization of the result may not be soundly made (Johnson, 1992; Stake, 2000).

Pilot Study

During November 25, 2006 to January 20, 2007, I conducted a pilot study for this research project. I aimed to investigate how Thai learners of EFL engaged in English activities outside classrooms. I also intended to explore sources of language input and/or language environments, in which learners participated and threats to the use of those language sources. I selected two out of 36 third-year female English major students in the Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University (CU). I participant observed them outside the classroom for five weeks (December 18, 2006 to January 12, 2007) with 21

observation field notes and countless informal talks. I also performed semi-formal and semi-structured face-to-face 30-40 minute interview with them individually twice, in the middle and at the end of the study. The data were coded using the ATLAS.ti³ program.

The pilot study found that both participants realized the benefits of out-of-class English activities and therefore engaged in several activities in their everyday lives. Moreover, both participants spent a large amount of their free time with English activities, especially watching movies, singing songs both at home privately and at the karaoke, as well as doing activities through the Internet such as surfing websites and e-mailing. I, furthermore, found that regardless of time spent, both participants showed similar trends in English environment usage. For instance, most out-of-class activities they participated in had music and computer Internet embedded in them. Moreover, they did not use most free accesses available for them from the university such as reading or borrowing books from the university libraries, joining student English clubs, and talking with their American professors outside the class. In addition, some factors that affected their participation in out-of-class English activities besides their personalities and laziness were lack of time, lack of support from teachers, family, and friends, and lack of access to English activities.

The pilot study benefited me in conducting this research in many ways besides helping me become more familiar with the topic, research site, and samples. First, it allowed me to see the weaknesses of the study, especially with the subject selection method. In the pilot study, I only focused on selecting the participants who spent the most

³ ATLAS.ti is a qualitative research coding computer program which provides multiple tools that help the user locate, code, analyze, keep track of memos and notes, and visualize the complex relations between materials.

time on out-of-class English activities. This measurement might not be reasonable since the amount of time spent depends on the nature of the activity. For example, students usually spent 90 minutes watching a movie in the theater; however, they spent only 5 minutes on reading a movie poster. Thus, based on the mistake I made in the pilot study, I improved the subject selection for this study by combining both students' amount of time spent in all activities and amount spent on different types of activities. Second, the pilot study helped me improve the quality of all forms and documents that were used to gather data from the participants, such as the survey questionnaire, reflection journal guideline, and daily activity diary form. The directions of questionnaire and reflection journal guideline were revised to enhance understanding and to make them easier to follow. Third, it gave me a valuable opportunity to perform research methodology and practice skills needed in doing some research such as participant observing, field note taking, interviewing, coding data, and analyzing data, all of which cannot be completely taught from reading textbooks or attending classes. Fourth, the pilot study helped me shape interview questions and guide the observation focus. As a more experienced participant observer, I was able to stay focused on the participant and event, as well as to perceive, notice, and aggregate data in more detail. Finally and most importantly, it enabled me to foresee the problems which might occur while I was in the field and allow me to solve them reasonably. Therefore, this pilot study allowed me to conduct a better dissertation research in terms of research design, research plan, and research methodology as well as problem-solving skills.

Research Site and Participants

Research Site

This study was conducted at the Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University (CU) in Bangkok, Thailand. Besides that I am Thai, I chose to study EFL students in Thailand because it is a developing country where English is used as a foreign language. Although the primary language used in Thailand is Thai, nowadays, there are multiple sources of English input, media, and technology available for Thai people to access. Besides English learning in school, which is compulsory, students can learn English from environments either through (a) self-inquiry (for example, textbooks, movies, and Internet) or (b) day-to-day life (for example, advertisement signs and traffic signs). Unlike ESL students in English, speaking countries, EFL students in Thailand are not forced to use English. Thus, the action of learning must come from the individual.

I selected the Faculty of Education, CU because in the English education program curriculum, students will learn about English content, activities, and plausible teaching materials, as well as techniques and ways to help children practice and learn English. Based on this curriculum, English education students should have a fair amount of English language background and be able to realize what some good English learning environments are so that they can either use those environments to enhance their English skills or recommend those sources to their students. Besides, CU is one of the biggest and most renowned universities in Thailand; thus, students in this university should have excellent academic skills. Moreover, the university itself owns abundant resources for

English language learning such as good libraries, computer technology systems, and student clubs.

Another major reason why I picked students in education at CU is my personal familiarity with the site. The Faculty of Education, CU is not only my Alma Mater, but I am also a faculty member there. Having taught English and English teaching methodology there over 3 years, I am familiar with the place, environment, many classes, and the curriculum. Moreover, it also enabled me to access the participants and facilities required for the research such as a private room for the interviews. Through the contacts between my colleagues and me, I could manage to recruit third and fourth year students in English major to fill out the survey questionnaire before I arrived the research site. This was very helpful since I could start my study faster and be able to observe the participants both before the semester ended and during their summer break. Furthermore, as an insider who both graduated from the same program like the participants and taught there, I have an advantage in understanding and sharing feelings of the participants to some extent besides sharing same language and culture.

Participants

Stake (2000) mentioned that in case study research, “nothing is more important than making a proper selection of cases.... [A good] choice would be to examine that case from which we feel we can learn the most. That may mean taking the one most accessible, the one we can spend the most time with” (p. 446). Keeping Stake’s comment in mind, I designed participant selection with the criteria necessary to obtain the maximal

data. Hence, I did not attempt to select participants randomly from a given population. Testing for the students' level of proficiency did not form part of the procedure either.

The four focal participants were purposefully selected from a total of 60 survey questionnaires which were given out to third- and fourth-year English major undergraduate level female students in the Faculty of Education, CU, age between 21-24 years old. Out of 44 returned questionnaires, two questionnaires are incomplete; thus, the remaining 42 were then used for participant selection.

Survey Questionnaire

The survey questionnaire in this study is a 12-page-long set of English language questions mostly in closed question format. It is comprised of four parts:

1. Personal background: age, family, residence area, and means of transportation to school;
2. Educational background: National Entrance Examination English test score, current majors, current GPA, and self-evaluation of English skills;
3. Out-of-class English activities information: types of out-of-class English activities, length of participation time, reasons for participating, and most useful English activities, and factors that affect their participation;
4. Attitude towards English (adapted from Attitude/Motivation Test Battery: International AMTB Research Project, Gardner, 2004).

Parts of the questionnaire are from my pilot study with some revisions according to some problems with participants' understanding of directions and questions which occurred in the pilot study, especially in the environment usage and attitude part.

Participant Selection

The selection of the participants for this pilot study was “purposive.” I selected the focal participants based on their answers to the survey questionnaire in (a) the out-of-class English environments usage part, and (b) the attitudes towards English language part. The participants were students who had positive attitudes towards English language and actively participated in out-of-class English activities. The reason for choosing participants who had positive attitudes towards English language is based on the recommendation from past research works. For example, Gardner (1982) and Crookes and Schmidt (1989 as cited in Ellis, 1994) agreed that students’ attitude is one of the key factors which will lead to their motivation to learn and both learning attitude and motivation affect learners’ learning (Dörnyei, 1998; Ellis, 1993, 1994; Gan et al., 2004; Sanz, 2005). The reason for limiting participants to those who are actively involved in out-of-class English environments links to the goal of the study and the research questions. This study aimed to understand how Thai EFL students engage in English activities outside of school. Therefore, the participants should be those who have already experienced and are involved in these out-of-class activities. In this way, I hoped to gain an understanding of the various types of environments and activities that the participants engage in order to better understand and answer the research questions.

The questionnaires were coded and tallied using the SPSS⁴ program. Only two parts of the questionnaire were calculated for the participant selection: students’ out-of-

⁴ SPSS is a statistical analysis computer program which lets the user code, calculate statistics, analyze statistic elements, as well as create statistical output including graphs, tables, and figures.

class English activities involvement habitual and students' attitude towards English language learning, referred to from now on as activity scores and attitude scores, respectively. The activity scores were calculated from two sources of data: (a) time: the amount of time students participated in out-of-class English activities which were in 5-score rank form, (b) type: number of out-of-class English activities participated out of 11 types listed. The average of the activity scores was 20.23 with 23 out of 42 students (N=44, 2 missing) scoring higher than mean. Next, the attitude scores from 48 questions/statements were calculated following AMTB manual. Out of 42 students, 24 students scored higher than mean (M=165.12). Combining results from both activity scores and attitude scores, 15 students met the criteria of scoring higher than the mean in both categories. (See Appendix A for Table A 1 showing the score of each part for these 15 potential participants.) At first, I aimed at having five participants. I contacted these five students in the order of their activity scores and briefly explained about the research scope and arranged the time for the first meeting. Out of the five participants, one student, Malee, was my participant from my pilot study.

This study first began with five participants. However, I chose to present stories of only four participants and drop one case (Kulda). The major reason for doing so was because of an insufficiency of both observation data and interview data. I was not able to observe her as much as half of what I did with the other cases. Moreover, I only had a chance to interview her once (not including the familiarization meeting before the observation period). These were due to her tight schedule with a part time job as an English tutor as well as her feelings of discomfort about allowing me to observe her at home. After reviewing all sources of data gathered from this participant, I decided to omit

this case and focus on only the remaining four participants in depth. For the sake of this paper, I will only mention the remaining four participants from now on. All names of the four participants given are pseudonyms which correspond to the first letter of their Thai nicknames. Table 1 briefly describes the four focal participants: Opal, Benya, Malee, and Namtip.

Table 1

Participants’ General Background Information as of Year 2008

	Opal	Benya	Malee	Namtip
Age	22	21	23	21
Academic Year	4 th year	3 rd year	4 th year	3 rd year
Majors	Eng. - Eng.	Eng. - Thai	Eng. - Thai	Eng. - Eng.
Current GPA	3.0-3.49	3.5-4.0	3.5-4.0	3.5-4.0
First studied English in school	5 th grade	1 st grade	1 st grade	5 th grade
Hometown	Bangkok	Northern area province	Bangkok	North-eastern area province

Two participants, Opal and Namtip, lived in the university dormitory which was about 5 minutes walk to the Faculty of Education. Benya lived in an apartment near the university which was around 15 minutes walk. Lastly, Malee lived with her family in a house which is far away (seven miles from CU) which takes about 30-90 minutes commuting to school depended on the traffic. (See Figure A1 in Appendix B for the map of participants’ residences.)

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In the secondary level, English education program at the Faculty of Education, CU, learners have to take many English courses (major courses and/or minor courses) besides the twelve credits of the English foundation courses required by the university. The twelve credits are divided into (1) six credits of two core courses (Foundation English I and II) and (2) six credits of selective courses from the English language courses such as Spoken Communication, English for Arts and Entertainment, Skills in English for Graduates, and English for Future Careers. The Faculty of Education requires learners in the secondary school teaching program to complete 74 credits for specialties (37 credits each of the two majors). Learners can choose to major two fields in English, French, German, Thai, Educational Technology, and Psychology Counseling, etc.

Benya and Malee both have English and Thai majors. In English major program, Benya and Malee have to take 26 credits of core courses and 11 credits of elective courses. Some English major core courses are such as Trend of British Literature, Trend of American Literature, English Phonetics for Teachers, English Grammar for Teachers, English Expository Writing Study, and Skills in Writing English Test. Some elective courses are English Oral Communication, Composition-Précis and Letter Writing, English Critical Reading, Speech Improvement, and Translation: Thai-English.

While Benya and Malee are in English and Thai majors program, Opal and Namtip major in English and (Advanced) English major or English double major with the 50 credits of core courses and 24 credits of elective courses. Opal, Namtip, and other learners in English double major have to take 24 credit of the core courses extra than other English major learners, for example, Mechanics of English Poetry, English Report

Writing, Introduction to English Plays, English for Cross-Cultural Communication, and Advanced English Expository Writing. They have choice of 13 credits of elective courses such as Argumentation, Journal and Periodical Reading, and English Critical Reading.

From the English education program requirement, the participants certainly have more opportunities for English learning in formal classroom setting than learners in other majors. Therefore, they may have better English proficiency, language learning strategies, and chances to meet and to talk to English Native speaker professors. Moreover, they may be more likely to have positive attitude towards English language and have more motivation in English learning and practicing. These factors ensure that the participants have sufficient language background to engage in many out-of-class English activities on their everyday basis.

Data Collection and Procedures

Overview

To gain thick description of the participants' habits regarding of out-of-class English activities involvement, in this study, I followed Lincoln and Guba's (1985) use of multiple data sources to enhance the credibility of findings. With a triangulation technique, the researcher is able to test assertions on the whole set of data for corroboration or negation (Lincoln and Guba). Four primary data sources used in this study were participant observation field notes, interviews, students' daily activity diaries, and students' self reflection journal to ensure that I would be able to capture the data within every angle. Other secondary sources included messages from e-mail and MSN

IM, samples from Internet websites, and other related artifacts such as students' reading samples (newspapers, and magazines) video games, and students' writing samples from classes. The data collection lasted approximately 33 weeks from February 14, 2008 to October 3, 2008. In the next few sections, I describe the ways in which I collected the data, which was divided into three phases.

Phase 1: Sample Familiarization and Research Boundary Designation

After the focal participants were selected, I made contact and met with them individually to explain about the study, its goals, its procedures, their rights as a research participant, and the consent form. Then, I had an informal interview with them individually. The interview was conducted in Thai and the goals were to get to know the participant and for us to be familiar with each other. The interview questions included general questions such as education background, hobbies, and family members; routine; their preferred time to be observed; and their comfort zone as far as being observed at home or with friends. At this phase, I also asked the participants to complete two instruments: the daily activity diary and the reflection journal. With diaries and journals, I would be able to see some interesting aspects of students that are sometimes inaccessible by other data collection techniques (Hyland, 2004). These personal documents, according to Bogdan & Biklen (1998), are the narrative that represents a person's actions, beliefs, as well as experience, and thus are reliable source of data.

Daily Activity Diary

The daily activity diary was intentionally designed to capture other activities which participants did within each day. It was used in the pilot study and was very useful and informative. It asks participants to estimate the number of hours spent each day on a wide range of English activities they did outside of school and other details about those activities such as place that the activities occurred, and person with whom they did the activities. Participants were asked to complete this daily activity diary every day or as often as they possibly could do and submit to me once every two weeks. The total return forms were 246 activity diaries.

One major advantage of this instrument is that it is in open-ended form, which allows students to fill in any activity that they possibly think they participated in with no restriction on any particular English activity. Moreover, this anecdotal source provided further information that was not seen by the research observations, such as activities before going to bed. This data source was triangulated with interview data as well as the reflection journal. (See Figure A3 in Appendix C for the sample of the daily activity diary.) Regardless of specific directions about language the participants should use in this instrument, all of them used a mixture of English and Thai language. Besides proper English names such as movie name and restaurant name, they used English language mainly with many words borrowed from English, for example, 'TV', 'e-mail', 'MSN', 'Internet', '[Inter]net', 'menu', and 'DVD'.

Reflection Journal

Reflection journal was a one- or two-page-long free-writing journal, which I asked the participants to write once a week either in Thai or in English. This self-reflection essay was another way for me to get into the participants' heads and know what they think regarding their English activities. In the self-reflection, participants could write anything about the English activities that they did and anything that related to them. I also provided some topics as guidelines in case they did not know what to write about. The writings were in different forms: some were in hand written form and some were in computer typed file. Only Namtip wrote all journals in English. The rest of the participants wrote in Thai with only a few in English. An example of a participant's self reflection journal is in Appendix D.

Although I asked the participants to write reflection journal at least once every week, some participants did not do so. As a voluntary assignment, some participants wrote more than others. Two participants (Benya and Malee) still wrote the journals (two or three journals a month until the end of September 2008) and submitted to me via e-mail attachment although the data collection period ended on May 22, 2008. Moreover, Namtip lost her last three journals due to the problem with her computer and computer virus. In total, I have 52 journals (47 journals from this study and five journals from Malee from my pilot study).

Phase 2: Observation and Interview

After the first phase, I was more familiar with the participants. I started phase 2, which included observation and interview. This phase lasted about 13 weeks from

February 25, 2008 to May 22, 2008 including two major procedures: observation and interview.

Participant Observation

Observation is a key role in an ethnographic research method. Denzin & Lincoln (2000) said that an important way to get data about the community is by entering into that community and looking into the situation. I employed the participant observation strategy because I wished to gain a close and intimate familiarity with participants in their natural environment. This method helped me understand the daily activity of participants through analysis and interpretation of contextual behavior. Moreover, according to deMunck & Sobo (1998), participant observation also enables researcher to access the “backstage culture” (p.43) and to view “behaviors, intentions, situations, and events as understood by one’s informants” in unplanned event. Unlike other methods such as survey, the participant observation allows me to evidence the participants’ actual behaviors as well as what happened, how, and why with regard to an English activity in an out-of-class context. This information might be different from what the participants believed they were doing or claimed happened as found through other research methods. That is because, through participant observation, I have a distinctive chance to “perceive reality from the viewpoint of someone “inside” the case study rather than external to it” (Yin, 1994, p. 88).

My observation had two objectives. One was to investigate the participants’ English learning/practicing behaviors using English environments and their interactions with available English environments surrounding them. The other was to construct “hard

evidence,” that would ensure consistency and validity (Adler & Adler, 1994), by combining the data with other evidence: interviews and other documents.

I acted as both observer (that is photographer and note taker) and participant (by constantly responding in the conversation and/or asking students questions as they worked). From my experience in participant observation of students during my pilot study, I realized the importance of gaining their trust and comfort having me following them and doing activities with them. I kept my participant role in trying to blend in as a part of the participants’ social group or as an older ‘friend’. The first observation was a little tense. I speculated that they felt awkward having a teacher follow them and do all activities with them all day. DeMunck & Sobo (1998) recommended that, “only through hanging out do a majority of villagers get an opportunity to watch, meet, and get to know you outside your ‘professional’ role” (p.41). To develop relationships through hanging out, three steps are moving from formal position, changing from intruder to welcoming, and becoming intimate (DeMunck & Sobo). Therefore, I tried to create atmosphere and reinforce the participants’ impression that, rather than being observer and observed, we were hanging out together. Through the hang out process, I hoped to be able to move from being a stranger who is in the group to learn about the participants to beginning an acquaintance person to the participants and finally to being an intimate to them (deMunck & Sobo, 1998). Furthermore, I attempted to change their perspective on me as a teacher by trying to be like them more. I changed my dressing style, conversation topic, discourse, and mannerisms to fit each participant.

The next observations were much better. I developed and gained participants’ trust, rapport, and friendship as time went by. They noticeably were themselves and

became more relaxed, happy, and comfortable with my presence; so did their friends and family with less concern in having me as a teacher around them. Some participants felt more open to me than others. Some of them treated me as their big sister or friend and talked to me about many things not only about my study and English language learning, but also their secret admirer, their boyfriend, and their fight with other friends. However, I tried to balance my participant role with the observer role by not making significant decision, preference, and comment on their behalf, not leading them to accomplish English language tasks, and not interfering with their behavior, ideas, and decisions.

Within 13 weeks of observation period, I was able to observe the participants both during the last week of class and during their summer break. Many observations occurred both at home environments and other places. Usually both the participants and sometimes other people determined my presence in any event to ensure their comfortable feeling and their voluntarily. I focused my observation on getting descriptive data about how the participants engaged in out-of-class English activities as well as the factors that affect the involvement in those environments. I primarily paid attention to the participants' behaviors while doing English activities both intentionally and unintentionally.

Field notes. The main purpose of keeping field notes was for me to record and to document my observations, descriptions, reflections, and feelings during the participant observation period. Bogdan & Biklen (1998) mentioned that the field notes are the writing in which the researcher records ideas, reflections, strategies, and hunches of what he/she hears, sees, thinks, and experiences while in the field. I originally took notes by hand while I was in the field with the participants. I made attempts to do my brush up

field notes in my computer in more detail based on my hand-written field notes within the same day or the day following the observation so that the data would not fade away.

My field notes included two types of materials, following Bogdan & Biklen's (1998) suggestion: descriptive data and reflective data. I attempted to be as descriptive as possible and present what I observed in detail without any evaluation. I included participants' portraits (e.g., appearance, dress, and gestures), physical setting, participants' behaviors as well as other present people, dialog or conversation, and my behavior. My field notes reflective data were usually shorter than the descriptive data. They contained my (positive and negative) feelings, ideas, assumption, as well as problems occurring during the observation. Moreover, this section also served as a note to myself where I made comments on and evaluated the participants, the study, and myself. I had the total of 81 field notes (69 field notes from this study and 12 from my pilot study).

Interviews

I conducted three semi-formal and semi-structured face-to-face interviews with each participant prior to, during, and after the observation period. I attempted to set up a friendly interview atmosphere, so that participants felt comfortable answering the questions, yet it was not too informal that the participants did not pay attention. The interviews were cautiously developed by considering research scope based on participant's observation, field note, and reflection journals. The 40- to 60-minute interviews were arranged on the basis of participants' availability. I conducted all interviews in Thai language to ensure that there was no language problem hindering the

interview. The participants, moreover, would feel more comfortable, be able to communicate their ideas more precisely and clearly, and tend to share their insight, experience, and opinion using Thai language with me who shared the same native language. Furthermore, some topics of the interview were their opinion on English activities and English learning they perform/engage in during their free time, so the participants felt easy and relax talking and sharing their experience and idea openly especially with their native language. Additionally, I found that rapport was developed very easily after we had met many times and spent time together during the observations.

Interviewing. In the first interview, I had two goals. My first goal was to explain and to answer some questions they might have about the research procedure as well as to let them sign the observation and interview consent form. My second and more important goal was to get to know the participants as much as possible, especially information about their background, their family, their perceptions of English and English learning, and their routine. It was our first face-to-face meeting to most participants except for Malee whom I have known from my pilot study since 2006. They consented to audio record our conversation. My first interview was with Benya. Following Bogdan & Biklen (1998), I began the interview with small talk in order to develop familiarity. During the interview, I noticed that Benya felt nervous when talking to me. She spoke softly with very short answers, twisted her hands, and shook her leg. I tried to change the topic and talk about other topics which were more general such as her favorite food, television shows, and the shopping centers around CU area. That helped a little; yet, I still felt that she was feeling tense. After the interview, I tried to evaluate the interview and myself as an interviewer by recalling what had happened during the interview, what were some

problems and what might cause those problems. I speculated that her nervousness and tenseness might be due to her reticent character, our unfamiliarity with each other, or our student-teacher social hierarchy. However, whatever the reason for this problem might be, I knew that it was important that I develop rapport and gain the students' trust (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) as soon as I possibly could.

I tried to minimize the tension from student-teacher social hierarchy and to create a friendlier interview space by interviewing the second participant in a quiet coffee shop near the university instead of my office at the Faculty of Education as I did with Benya. We had coffee while interviewing. The interview went better in terms of the participant's anxiety. On the one hand, with the informal and food involved setting, the conversation went smoothly and was friendly. It was like as if we were chitchatting during the coffee hour; therefore, I accomplished my goal in gaining her trust and familiarity. On the other hand, the open setting of the coffee shop made the participant's utterance more difficult to hear in the recorder. Furthermore, the participant was distracted more easily by some people walking by. I solved these problems by having the participants wear the clip-on microphone and seating them facing the wall.

Lesson learned from the first interview taught me to take account of students' feelings and for out-of-class English activities and their perceptions on learning through those activities. The review of field notes and reflection journals gave me findings from previous observation and shaped follow-up questions that sometimes required adjustment or modification. This process helped me validate data and their interpretations to ensure reliability of the research.

Transcribing the interviews. As earlier mentioned earlier, I audio-recorded all interviews. Since the interviews were conducted in Thai, I needed to both transcribe them and translate them into English language. I found that these processes were time-consuming and labor-intensive. Since this study is not aimed at examining the language element or discourse analysis, the exact utterance word by word of the participants was not of much concern. I was interested in the participants' ideas, opinions, reflections, and experience stories on and about out-of-class English activities, their perception of those activities, and their English learning during their free time. I, therefore, decided to transcribe and translate based on the main point that the participants gave and not using verbatim transcript and translation method. In doing so, I attempted to keep the original message as much as possible.

Before I started to transcribe and translate the interview, I listened to the whole interview record at least once before and several times during the process. I found that the translation part was much more difficult than the transcribing. With the big difference in grammar structure of Thai language and English language and with the informal style of the conversations during the interview, I found it was easier to combine two or three short sentences (usually phrases or cut-off clauses) in Thai and translate them into one solid complete English sentence. I tried my best and made every effort to keep the original message and meaning from the participants when I transcribed and translated the interviews.

When I incorporated the participants' utterances into the text, I enclosed short utterances (less than 40 words) were enclosed within double quotation marks ("...") and presented long utterances were presented in block format without the quotation marks.

The italic text in single quotation signs⁵ ('...') indicates English word(s), phrase(s), or sentence(s) in original utterance or writing or reading. Thai people borrow many English words and mix them with Thai language such as "computer," "TV," "shampoo," and "e-mail." These borrowed words are pronounced with Thai accent, with the tone but without stress, and sometimes are shortened, e.g. the word "Internet" is pronounced as "Internet" and/or "net" or the word "e-mail" is pronounced "e-mail" and/or "mail." The participants borrowed many English words when speaking or writing Thai especially during the interviews. I tried to keep the sense of how the participants used English language in their everyday life including in their speech as much as possible. Therefore, I maintained every English word(s), phrase(s), or sentence(s) which the participants used (when they heard, spoke, saw or read, and wrote) with italic text in the single quotation marks. The square brackets ([...]) were used when I added letter(s), word(s), or phrase(s) for the grammatical and interpretable purposes. For instance, when the participant said in Thai "Nu Len Net Muey Khuen Ka" (meaning "I used the Internet last night"), I translated and wrote in this paper as "I used the '*[Inter]net*' last night." The participant actually pronounced the word "net" which is the short version of the word "Internet" that many Thai people used. Among Thai people, we know that the pronunciation of "net" which stands for "Internet". Therefore, [Inter] was added for readers' clarification. Another example is "I learned English from '*TV*', '*com[puter]*', '*e-mail*', and books the most," said the participant. This sentence was spoken in Thai; however, she borrowed English words (i.e. "TV," "com," and "e-mail") and pronounced them with Thai accent. When I quoted this sentence, I put "TV," "com," and "e-mail" in the single quotation to signal

⁵ The single quotation marks are not used as the typical English linguistic or grammatical convention.

that these words were spoken in English. The word “computer” was spoken as “com” which was the short version of “computer” for many Thais. The “[puter]” was added to the word “com” that the participant pronounced to be meaningful for the readers.

After I finished translated the transcripts all interviews, they were returned to the participants for “member check” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) before being analyzed as data. The “member check” process helped increase “trustworthiness” in this study (Lincoln & Guba) as it allowed participants the opportunity to verify the interpretations, translations, and transcriptions.

Phase 3: Follow up Interview Electronically

After I returned to the States, I still kept in touch with the participants through e-mail and MSN Instant Messenger. This phase lasted till October 3, 2008 (the last reflection journal was received on this day). I e-mailed them asking some questions that emerged after I transcribed the interviews and reread the field notes. Two participants still kept their self-reflection journals, though they only wrote one or two journals a month, and sent them to me as an e-mail attachment. Some of the participants e-mailed me, telling about their lives during the school year and activities they did in general. These data were very valuable in terms of counter-balancing the missing data from the field, correcting my misunderstanding that I had from the field, clarifying the interviews, and reaffirming my understanding of their behavior and thought.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is an on-going process occurring simultaneously with data collection. Given the nature of my research which focused on participant observation, I was portraying participants' involvement of out-of-class English activities. I also organized my data according to my research questions. From my experience working on the study, I found that data analysis processes in qualitative research often intertwined with the data collection process. Therefore, these two processes sometimes occurred simultaneously. For example, while I was working on transcribe and translate an interview, I started to analyze it, write some memos and notes about the idea and points that I questioned and noticed.

Throughout the analysis process, I followed the procedures of data analysis described in Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw (1996), Bogdan & Biklen (1998), Miles and Huberman (1994). First, I read collected data—field notes, interview transcriptions and other documents—as a data set. Second, I asked questions of collected data and began the open-coding process for constructing analytic codes and categories of participated environments, with particular regard to some salient details such as: pattern, how, when, where, and for what purposes. After selecting themes from the open codes, I developed the coding system from the repeated behaviors, words, phrases, and ways of thinking that displayed distinctive patterns after reviewing the field notes and interview transcriptions many times. In addition, I wrote the initial memos to connect evidence found to theoretical ground. Based on integrative memos, some assertions about relationships between students' participation in English environments outside school should be captured and formed. I looked for the emerging themes or patterns which help identify

specific focal students and environments. I attempted to find evidence to confirm and disprove tentative claims arose in the memos in the earlier stage.

I prioritized my data sources into two levels: primary data (i.e. the observation field notes and interviews) and secondary data (i.e. reflection journals, dairy activity diaries, questionnaires, and other sources of data). I coded the observation field notes and interview transcripts by phrases, paragraphs, and whole sections using the ATLAS.ti program. I used the same coding system and coding categories for all secondary data. The reflection journals along with other data, such as MSN IM history chat logs, e-mails, and journals from Hi5 webpage, were kept in original language and coded by ATLAS.ti program. I did not attempted to translate these secondary data into English before coding (except for the daily activity diaries) because of the large amount of data and for the sake of time. Since two participants had done their dairy activity diaries in English language in the MS Excel program, I decided to translate and encrypted the other two participants' activities diaries into the same form and coded them using MS Excel program.

With the emergence of new themes on the new set of data, the data analysis process was reactivated and run repeatedly. The original data and preliminary output were reevaluated and compared to the most recent data. If a common pattern was found, the newly found theme was combined into the existing theme. Otherwise, a label of new theme was attached to the most recently found theme. Consequently, initial codes and categories were continually modified to accommodate more information from analysis of field notes and transcripts. By sifting through the data, I traced the salient characteristics of each participant, including factors influencing their participation and perception. Since

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I was open to possible emerging themes and patterns, I was able to classify and group theme findings among participants in terms of similarities and differences.

Role of Researcher and Validity

Role of Researcher

The issue of my role as researcher received considerable attention since it shifted to include a researcher, an English instructor, a counselor, and even an elder sister. To achieve the goals of this study, I had to carefully balance these roles by considering each role's prudent conduct. As a researcher, my main duty was to accrue and augment knowledge of out-of-class activities. In the role of an English instructor, I examined students' academic practice and contributed back to them. My role as a counselor or older sister enabled me to develop close relationship with participants and thus, they tended to be more open to sharing personal issues in the interview and informal conversation. Although I had planned my participant observer role, I was still faced with several challenging issues worth discussing. .

Negotiation between Researcher's Background and Observations

Being an alumnus of Faculty of Education at CU, in addition to being a Thai person, I have both advantages and disadvantages in sharing the participants' experiences, feelings, and thoughts while observing them. Geertz (1973) stated that "anthropologists don't study villages...; they study in villages" (p. 22). These shared experiences and culture between the participants and me led me to easily become part of

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their community. They not only helped me understand the participants better but also benefited me in gaining trust from the participants and their friends as we have common ground.

My personal background influenced both my interaction with and interpretation of the participants. In my first meeting with Opal, my personal background and social norms led me to have a presupposition and prejudice about Opal's provocative dress style. I even thought about changing the participant since she seemed to have no interest in academics and I could have a hard time rely on her cooperation. After carefully reading my field note, I realized that I unfairly judged her based on my own experience and belief. Therefore, I started to look at her in a truthful way. Surprisingly, I found out that she was one of the most reliable and responsible participants. This lesson taught me to be careful and did not let my personal background overpower my researcher role.

Negotiation between Participant and Observer

Being a participant observer is not easy. Bogdan & Biklen (1998) advised new researchers to balance their roles as participants and as observers when doing the participant observation research. They suggested that too much participation could be disadvantage as the researchers will blend in and will influence the subjects' original intentions. Moreover, it is likely that I would fail to capture many details while observing, as I would treat things as normal occurrences and disregard them as important. At the same time, too much observation could sometimes not obtain thorough information that existed within participants' group but hardly to be noticed from distant observer.

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Although Bogdan & Biklen recommended that researchers have to find the appropriate level of participation and observation while doing the research, I occasionally found myself becoming oversocialized and thus sometimes lost my critical perspective among the participants and their friends. For example, I found myself not paying enough attention to detail when I went to a pub with Namtip and her friends and thus not able to write an extensive field note. After finishing writing the field note, I evaluated and examined what went wrong with my observation. I speculated that it might be because I over-participated with Namtip and her friends. I admitted I had a great time and forgot that I was there as the observer. It was not until the last half an hour that I realized that I had not taken any note at all. Thus, I started to control, recollected myself, and assumed my researcher role. Keeping Bogdan & Biklen (1998) in mind, every once in a while I reexamined my participant observer role to determine whether I had become too native and too close to the participants.

Negotiation among Several Roles

Since I assumed several roles while conducting this research, my main challenges were to negotiate these roles according to the circumstances. As an English teacher, I always wanted students to have the opportunities to learn and practice English as much as possible. Occasionally, I wanted to help them solve language problems they were struggling with as well as guide them to see and use some English activities which I believed would be useful for them. For example, while Benya and I were walking in the MBK shopping center, we passed a warning sign. Benya did not pay any attention on the sign at all. With my English instructor role, I guided her on how she could learn English

from this warning sign. As a consequence, Benya read the sign and became more aware of all the signs and posters she saw the whole day I was with her.

Although it seems that I manipulated participants' natural reaction to environments, I treated this action as the strength of participant observation. First, although one might consider this action as an intervention to Benya's naturalistic behavior in out-of-class English activities, she also benefited from my suggestion during participant observation. Benya admitted later both in the MSN interview (on 10/02/08) and in her reflection journal (B-Ref 17, 9/19/08) that my explicit guidance that day was the key for her turning point starting to notice everything in the environment around her which became one of the important topics in this study. Clearly, my action was to promote the participant's learning and encourage her to see learning opportunity, not to hinder her learning/engagement in the out-of-class English activities. Second, with this data collection method, I was able to balance my reciprocal relationships with my participants. For instance, during participant observation of Benya, I performed my instructor role by scaffolding her in how to learn English structure from the environment. At the same time, as a researcher, I observed her reaction and was able to write rich and thorough field notes.

Conclusion

In sum, I assumed several roles while doing the qualitative research with participant observation method. I based my judgment on the participants' benefits in terms of their learning and their privacy. For instance, I mentioned some free out-of-class English learning sources to the participants such as an Internet phone call program

(Skype), *Daily Xpress* newspaper, Internet websites for ESL learning, and free download dictionary program. Taking an English teacher role, I introduced resources to them and they had latitude whether to exploit these sources. Serving in researcher role, I scrutinize whether the participants engaged in and how they participated in any out-of-class English activities as well as in those learning sources I introducing to them.

Stake (2000) stated, “qualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world” (p. 447). Hence, the observation would sometimes inadvertently trespass into participant’s private lives. Therefore, since I served several roles in this study, I had to firmly keep the collaborative relationship with my participant and most importantly, their privacy and confidentiality was always reserved. Clearly, I made arrangements with my participants on my presence and their names were changed to pseudonyms to conceal their true identity.

Validity, Reliability, and Trustworthiness

In order to improve the quality of this qualitative study, attention has been given to the validity and reliability of the findings. To ensure the validity, reliability, and trustworthiness of the study, I employed many techniques and methods from Lincoln & Guba (1985) and Merriam (1998): triangulation, member check, long-term observation, and peer review.

First, I used triangulation, which is a process that can increase validity by using multiple data sources to support the findings of the research. DeWalt & DeWalt (1998) stated that “the goal for design of research using participant observation as a method is to develop a holistic understanding of the phenomena under study that is as objective and

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accurate as possible given the limitations of the method” (p.92). Through observation, the researcher can have an opportunity to see and to comprehend broader aspects of context and phenomenon. Then, better inference on descriptive research questions or sounder proof on hypotheses testing can be anticipated with confidence. In addition, supplementary strategies such as data collection technique (e.g., interviewing, survey, and questionnaires) and document analysis can be applied in conjunction with an observation to enhance the validity of study. In this study, observation field notes were triangulated with other sources of data included interviews, daily activity diaries, reflection journals, and other artifacts.

Second, I used participant member checks with the interview transcripts. The interview questions which were formed by the observation field notes acted as the member check of my understanding and interpretation of the observation. The English version interview transcripts were sent back to the participants for their member check, moreover. In doing so, some made comments, elaborated on certain points, or corrected my interpretations especially with the observation during the interview. In the process of conducting member checks, I kept in mind that I should respect the participants’ voices.

Third, according to Lincoln & Guba (1985), prolonged engagement in observation is one way to increase credibility of the study. I engaged in long-term study of the case through participant observers, which is 13 weeks in the field and 33 weeks for total data collection period. After spending time with the participants, they tended to open to me and allow me to access their “internal” thought. This gives me better comprehension on the influence of cultural knowledge and meaning on their actions.

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Finally, I attempted to submit early drafts of the research findings and data analysis to peers for review and feedback. Lincoln & Guba (1985) defined peer debriefing as “a process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytic session and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer’s mind” (p. 308). My research peers were my research club comprised of four to six doctoral English/literacy education students including me. In biweekly 2-hour meetings, this research club helped me not only see different viewpoints, perceptions, interpretation, and analyses within the same data set, but also confirmed my assumption and interpretation as well as identifying relevant issues on data collection and data analysis.

Limitations

Some limitations of this study are discussed together with possible research improvement. First, this study only focuses on the four-Thai female English education major students in the Faculty of Education, CU in Bangkok. Hence, it was not rational to generalize results of this study for larger populations such as Thailand population or even the EFL students in other places outside Bangkok. Nevertheless, the results of this study can still serve as springboard for further research. As Cohen (1998) stated in a review of research methods:

Sometimes the data from semi-structured and unstructured instruments can be used effectively to identify dimensions that can then be used profitably in structured interviews or questionnaires. [Likewise,] it is difficult to generalize

from a single case study, but when a series of them produces similar results with respect to be or another dimension, then generalizations may begin to emerge from the data. (pp. 28-29)

Moreover, all participants in the study have high English proficiency and are in English major. On the one hand, this study explains the English activities that four successful English learners do routinely to enhance their opportunities to learn and practice English outside of school. On the other hand, I could not attest to whether participants used English environments because they were competent in English, or whether having a habit of participating in English environments helped them gain language proficiency.

Furthermore, this study emphasized the English environments that the participants used outside school but did not examine participants' academic English practices per se. In fact, the study did not attempt to determine ways to build a bridge between English proficiency or school English and English environment involvement outside school. However, the knowledge gathered from this study could pave ways to connect in-school English classes and usage of English environments outside of school.

Another limitation to this study relates to the questionnaire. First, the questionnaire is in English language which might affect participants' understanding of questions. However, as the participants of this study are English major students, I believe this issue does not affect the main findings from the questionnaire. Second, the questionnaire is mainly composed of 'closed' nature questions. For example, the list of activities was fixed, although an open question was included to allow the participants to add any activity not on the list. However, virtually all ignored that question with only two

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people filling it in. Nevertheless, the survey questionnaire was not the major source of data in this study.

Lastly, many findings come from the analysis of self-reports. Cohen (1998) who studied the strategies that students use for out-of-class activities pointed out that:

One of the main problems with oral interviews...is that much of the data constitutes self-report or the learners' generalized statements about their strategy use. ... Once learners move away from instances of language learning or language use behavior, they may also tend to become less accurate about their actual strategy behavior. ... Learners may overestimate or underestimate the frequency of use of certain strategies. They may also be unaware of when they are using a given strategy, and even more importantly, how they are using it. (p. 30)

The problem would arise when participants might provide information that they feel comfortable to share or they think the researcher needs. In some cases, this information might not reflect their true identity or opinions. However, if the researcher is aware of this potential pitfall in a method, the problem could be accommodated and even its negative effect minimized on the research outcome. Thus, though the self-report is merely a part of the decision, Cohen (1998) believed that, for most learners, "items referring to general behavior (i.e. 'what you tend to do...') may elicit learners' **beliefs** about what they do, rather than what they actually do" (p. 35, emphasis in original). Although many of data collections in this study were in self-report form, data were triangulated with the participant observation method which increases validity and trustworthiness for the study.

Summary

This Chapter outlined my research methodology conducted in this study. First, I described the rationale for adopting qualitative multiple case study and ethnographic approach in details. Then, pilot study, research site, and participants' selection were introduced to provide better portrait of this research. I, furthermore, provided the sequence on data collection which included four phases followed by data analysis process. Next, I discussed my major concerns about role of researcher and research validity. Finally, I closed this chapter with the consideration of issues on some methodological limitations.

CHAPTER 3

FOUR CASES OF OUT-OF-CLASS ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACTIVITY IN OUT-OF-CLASS ENVIRONMENTS

In this chapter, I provide descriptive data for my four participants. The data are from participant observation, field notes, interviews, participants' daily activities, and reflection journals. I organize this chapter into six subsections. This first section serves as an introduction to the rest of the chapter. It provides the chapter organization and the rationale of my presentation of participant portraits. The next four sections which are the heart of this chapter are the portrait of each participant. I decided to organize this chapter around the participants individually.

Each portrait includes three major topics: (a) the background description of the participant (e.g., general description, personality, English learning background, and overview of everyday routines); (b) description of major out-of-class English activities that the participant engaged in, how they participated in each activity, what they think they learn from those activities, as well as their opinion on those activities; and (c) their perspective on the out-of-class English activities. This chapter ends with a short summary of the whole chapter.

Although many topics in each portrait overlap each other as the participants did the same activities, I see it as an essential to portray this section case by case. First, after I

observed each participant and closely read my field notes, interviews,⁶ and their reflection journals,⁷ I realized that all the participants are different from one another. For example, although the participants did the same activities, listened to the same songs, and watched the same television program, they did the activities differently, their perspective on the activities was different, and they had different purposes, approaches, and attitudes in doing the same activities. (See Appendix F and Appendix G for the statistical data calculated from the participants' activity diaries.) Moreover, I wanted to keep the essence of case study qualitative research approach which is central for this study by providing thick description of each participant with an account of her personal, cultural, and social background information. As a consequence, I present each participant's case separately with the goal of reporting the descriptive data as organic and contextualized as possible. The following four sections are the portrait of my four participants: Opal, Benya, Malee, and Namtip, respectively.

⁶ As mentioned in chapter 2, all interviews were conducted in Thai. The interview transcripts were translated into English on the transcripts Italic and single quotation marks were used when the participants spoke or wrote in English. The square brackets were used when letter(s), word(s), or phrase(s) were added for the grammatical and interpretable purposes.

⁷ Participants wrote almost all of the reflection journals in Thai with some English words and phrases. Only Namtip wrote all journals in English. Thai journals were translated from Thai to English with the same system as the interview.

Case 1: Opal

Description

Opal (pronounced O-Paw in Thai) was 22 years old. She was about 5.2 feet tall and 115-120 lb weigh with honey color skin. She had bangs with waist-length straight black hair. She had big round eyes in a round-shaped face. She always dressed provocatively. She usually wore a low neck-line short dress, big earrings, fashioned necklace, and high-heeled sandals. She sometimes wore a fitted low-cut mini-T-shirt, tight mini-shorts, a big flower and feather pin, big earrings, and high-heeled shoes. She was a beauty-loving person who showed high interest in trendy fashion and her appearance. Opal always wore a lot of makeup, thick foundation, pink brush-on, mascara, pink lipstick and thick black eyeliner. She depicted herself as having strong feminine styles and characteristics.

Opal was a friendly and chatty young woman who liked to talk about herself, her life, her friends (especially male friends), and other general topics. Moreover, she was frank, outspoken, and enjoys sharing her ideas, opinions, and feelings and was easy to engage in conversation with. She was a self-confident and independent person who was comfortable being in front of people and enjoys being impressive and receiving attention from people. There were many times that she was not the center of attention, and she was displeased. Being a goal-oriented person with determination and dedication, Opal had a strong intention to advance her English-speaking skills and sought every possibility to reach her goal. Opal had real interest in fashion and make up. She, moreover, liked modern dancing such as hip-hop, funk, and modern jazz. She was in a dance group in the

Faculty of Education and performed in many events. She took some dance classes and practiced dancing with her dance peers after school.

Opal's mother got divorced when Opal was very young. She lived with her mother. She had two half-sisters (same mother but different father) both of whom were married and lived with their family. Although both of her sisters were over ten years older than Opal, she felt close to them very much. Opal's home was in the suburb of Bangkok which was quite far from the university; therefore, she decided to stay at the university dormitory because of the convenience of the transportation. She had an assigned roommate who was a fourth year student in the Faculty of Allied Health Science.

The university female dormitory room was an extremely small room with a bunk bed and a small built-in desk. Opal had to share bathrooms with her friends on the whole floor. She complained about her dorm that it was so small, and it was too hot to stay in the room all day because there is no air-conditioner but a ceiling fan. Therefore, she barely stayed in her room during the day or during an exam period. Opal got along well with her roommate, who was a fourth year student in the Faculty of Allied Health Science. She confessed that she could not study in her room if her roommate was in the room because she would not be able to concentrate.

Opal was now finishing her fourth year as an education major student in Faculty of Education, CU. She had English and Advanced English majors. Next semester, she would do the internship as an English student teacher in one of the public schools in Bangkok as a practicum requirement of the program for one year before graduating. Although Opal was an easy-going person, she did not have many close friends at school

with whom she always hung out. She mentioned that it was because she liked to do things alone.

English Learning Experience

Opal first started to learn English at school when she was in the fifth grade. However, it was not the first time that she spoke English. Opal narrated that she grew up hearing English songs from the sixties and seventies such as “Beautiful Sunday” because her mother was a singer in a band for a ballroom dancing club. Her mother and her sisters usually practiced singing during their free time. When she was five years old, her mother forced her to sing some English songs with her sister so that they could perform in some events. She did not know any English and could not read any English at that time; so her mother sounded out all English words into Thai spelling and let her sing along while listening to the original version from the cassette tape.

Opal had been very much interested in English language since she started to learn English, although she recalled that neither school nor family had seriously supported her to study English. Her goal in learning English is to be able to use English efficiently and fluently. She gave an opinion on her use of English language that “It seems that I don’t use English because I just want to practice or learn English language itself. ... However, I use English to achieve other things such as different culture, way of life, way of thinking, and knowing people” (O-Interv 2, 4/9/08).

Opal explained to me that she had just started to work on her English seriously during the last two years. When she first entered Faculty of Education and passed the

English screening test for English majors, her speaking skills was poor. She narrated her story in the interview:

One day when I was a second year student, my American professor met me at the mall and asked me where I was going. I could not answer him. I said nothing but 'Umm' and 'Err'. After that day, I was stressed out about my speaking performance because at that time I was a second year English major student; yet I could not speak English. I set a goal to myself, to be able to speak English. I believed in myself that I can practice English by myself, in one way or another. (O-Interv 2, 4/9/08)

From that day Opal aimed to improve her English-speaking performance. She thought speaking skill was the first and most necessary skill for her as an English learner and as an English teacher in her future.

Then, I started thinking about the way to help me reach my goal. I 'google[d]' hoping to find some articles for me to read some suggestions about language learning. ... One day I came across one English learning 'website' which has the 'chat room' feature; so I signed up for the 'chat room account'. ... I started to 'chat' in that chat room after that day. ... I had many friends from China and Turkey, and I had a good time chatting with them. About a month later, I think, I felt that my English was better. I felt more confident, so I started to chat with people who were English native speakers such as 'Australia' and '[United States of] America' and who labeled themselves as 'ESL' instructor. ... At that time, my only goal was to be able to speak. Learning English to me was to be able to 'communicate' fluently with people. This skill was much more important than 'grammar' or reading, I think. (O-Interv 2, 4/9/08)

Opal continued to use English and practice English by herself through many English activities in her daily life such as online chatting and journal writing. The more she used English, the more she felt comfortable in using English. At the time of this study, Opal saw herself as being fluent in English speaking. She thought that her English had improved very much, and she was now at the same level as some of her friends whom she looked highly upon in terms of speaking proficiency when she first entered the Faculty of Education. In the survey questionnaire, Opal rated herself 4 on the 5-score

scale (1 is poor and 5 is excellent or very fluent) on all English skills, except for speaking skill which was rated 5.

Overview of Opal's Daily Routine and Out-of-class English Activities Involvement

Opal participated in many English activities outside the classroom. On most days, she was involved in English language as much as Thai language. She considered herself a person who used English and Thai language equally. She used Thai language with her family, Thai friends, and in some other contexts, such as buying food. On the other hand, she used English language talking and MSN Instant Messenger⁸ (IM) chatting with her International friends as well as reading books and listening to music at the coffee shop. She also saw herself as actively use English environments.

I think I am eager to use all environments that are in English whereas other people are not enthusiastic in using them. I think I am not shy to try new things and to learn and practice from new sources of knowledge. (O-Interv 2, 4/9/08)

If we compare the amount of English environments I use to the amount of environments available, I think I use them a lot, and I am happy for the amount that I use them in terms of time used and types of environments used. (O-Interv 3, 5/8/08)

On her free days, after getting up, Opal usually turned on the music, opened her computer, and read news from Internet websites. She set her Internet home page to be

⁸ Instant Messenger (IM) is a type of synchronous chat or Internet Relay Chat which is a form of Internet-based, real time text communication between users on the same system. Registered online users will communicate through type text in real time with his/her simultaneous online partner. The MSN IM (<http://www.msn.com/>) is a free download program which associated with MSN Hotmail e-mail account. It is more private than the public chat room because only people who are in the user' list will be able to IM chat with him/her. Some features under this MSN IM program include the group chatting, conference services (including voice and video), file transfer, web camera, and talking directly for free over the Internet.

Bangkok Post website (<http://www.bangkokpost.com/>) in order to force herself to read news every day. Later, she might check her e-mail or IM chat with her friends depends on whether or not there were any friends online at that moment. After that, she went down to have brunch or lunch at the dormitory canteen. In the afternoon or evening, Opal normally walked to the nearby shopping complex with her favorite book. There, she usually window-shopped, went to the bookstore to get a free English newspaper (*Daily Xpress*) and/or free bilingual magazine (*BK* or *Guru*), and read her books and the newspaper at the coffee shop. Sometimes, she listened to the music from her cell phone while reading. Opal usually spent 2-4 hours reading in the coffee shop. After dinner she always stayed online waiting for her friends to MSN IM chat or talk through Skype⁹ program. Opal communicated (either IM chatted, e-mailed, or talked) at least with one foreign friend within one day.

According to observation and the self-report daily activity diaries, Opal spent most of her time using the Internet through MSN IM and Hi5¹⁰ network website, reading books and free newspapers, as well as talking face-to-face or Internet phoning with her visiting friends from Holland and Denmark. In the following section, I show how Opal engaged in each out-of-class English activity and her perception of those activities.

⁹ Skype program (<http://www.skype.com/>) is a software program that allows users to make telephone calls from a computer to the telephone or cell phone and to call from one computer to another over the Internet. The computer to computer call is free and unlimited time under the condition that both parties must simultaneously be online and have registered account with the program.

¹⁰ Hi5 is a social network website. In Hi5 website (<http://hi5.com/>), members create a profile including personal information such as interests, age, and pictures. Members can communicate to their friends by posting both text and graphic message in others' profile page. It is like a board where friends can stick the post-it note to the profile page owner. The term "comment" becomes familiar known among Hi5 website users. Others applications are such as photo album, slide show, songs, and gift sending.

Doing Internet Activities

Opal did many activities through the Internet, especially text chatting through the chat room and MSN IM as well as using the Hi5 network. Opal first participated in the chat room when she was in her second year of Faculty of Education. She discovered one public chat room from an Internet website (www.englishbaby.com) when she was looking for the websites to help her improve her English speaking skill. On this English learning website, there are different public chat rooms. Users needed to sign up for an account in order to be able to access the chat room. As in many other chat rooms, a user can make up his/her online name (i.e. screen name) and the users' identities are anonymous to the public.

According to the interview, Opal chatted with people in the chat rooms from this English learning website. She made a lot of friends from China, Turkey, Australia, Holland, and around the world. She realized that people joined this chat room for different purposes, e.g., making friends, learning English, learning about a different culture, doing business, and finding a date. Moreover, some of the people in that chat room did not focus on practicing English, used bad language such as swear words all the time, and were "dangerous." Opal said, "Many times, especially in that public chat room, some people tried to get some personal information from me, talked about a sexual topic, and approach me to submit my picture in some suspicious websites. It's 'crazy' and 'scary'" (O-Interv 2, 4/9/08). Therefore, she usually asked some chat room friends to MSN IM chat with her, since she claimed that the MSN IM had better features and was more private than the chat rooms in this English-learning website. Opal chose the MSN

program because she had been using it through her hotmail e-mail account since she was in high school.

Opal described herself as “a recovered ‘MSN [IM] addict’ person (O-Interv 2, 4/9/08).” She mentioned that she used to spend ten hours a day IM chatting with friends, mainly with an Australian man name Mark (pseudonym) whom she knew from the English-learning public chat room. Mark was an indirect inspiration for her to use MSN IM two years ago.

Mark is very much crazy about me. ... We IM chatted every day. ... We IM chatted about everything, what I did for the day, what I ate, and movies I liked, etc. I also sent my writing assignment through the MSN IM and asked him to proof read for me. He corrected my grammar and explained it through the MSN IM. (O-Ref 2, 3/31/08)

Opal viewed MSN IM as a part of her routine life. She told me that once Opal told me that once she turned on her computer and connected to the Internet, she stayed online on MSN IM all the time until she went to bed. Nowadays, she stayed online 4-6 hours a day IM chat with her three friends: Olin (Danish), Robert (Dutch), and Mark (Australian) (all pseudonyms). “I would run to take a shower, talk on the phone, and came back to ‘chat’,” explained Opal. Opal mentioned that currently she used MSN IM less than she did in the past because of her busier semester and the technical problem with her computer. She still IM chatted with or e-mailed Robert and Olin almost every day. Her MSN IM routine had changed from staying online all day waiting for her friends to appear online to making an appointment via e-mails with Robert and Olin for the time and day to appear online on MSN IM.

During IM chatting, I observed that Opal rarely opened the dictionary. If she needed to do so, she would find some words in her Longman dictionary program installed in her computer. She mentioned in the interview:

I tend to think that 'MSN' is more like a live chat. 'MSN' is like a 'conversation' but in written form whereas 'e-mail' is like letter writing but 'informal' style and faster than mailing letter. ... I don't use 'karaoke'¹¹ language, and I don't use shorthand much. I will use it for only some words such as 'thanx', 'tmrw', and 'btw'. (O-Interv 3, 5/8/09)

Opal told me in the interview that she did not use IM discourse including abbreviations, shorthand, and emoticon much. However, from my observation, she used a lot of emoticons such as ☺ and ☹ as well as shorthand such as 'pp' for people, and 'u' for you while IM chatting. She, furthermore, used a very informal MSN IM discourse style with many punctuation marks such as exclamation points and question marks. She sometimes did not capitalize at the beginning of the sentence and when using the pronoun "I". For example, when Opal IM chatted in English with her English major female friend (AAA) trying to set up the time to meet for her group work the next day (O-FN 16, 5/10/08, English language and emphasis in original):

Opal: *'What do you think? What time?*
AAA: *How about 10*
Opal: *10!!! (Surprised face emoticon) don't know. too early.....for me*
!!!!!!
AAA: *Really? What time then?*
Opal: *How about noon? Then we have 3 hour to talk 'coz i have to meet*
BBB at 3. She wants me to go shopping with her.
AAA: *Shopping again? !!!!! (Surprised face emoticon)*
AAA: *noon is ok. I wanna see a movie See Prang. Did you see it?*

¹¹ Karaoke language in MSN IM is when the Thai words are spelled out into English letters according to how they are pronounced in Thai language such as "Sa nook mai" for "Is it fun?" Many times some Thai IM users mix the karaoke style with English language, for example, "Have to go now. I Hew Kao mak mak." for "Have to go now. I am hungry very much."

Opal: *Nope. wanna see it too. I will go with Robert on Friday.*
AAA: *Robert????? Who????? New guy? American?*
Opal: *Netherlands*
AAA: *Dark tall and handsome?*
Opal: *ha...ha...ha... White, short but veryyyyyy cute'. (Laughing face emoticon)*

Moreover, Opal sometimes smiled, laughed, and exclaimed in English such as 'What?', 'Oh! No!', and 'Nice' with the monitor while she was IM chatting with her friend. She used MSN IM as her main activity and did some other activities as her minor activities such as taking a shower, studying, doing homework, and eating.

During the interview, she discussed some features of the chat room and MSN IM which both benefited and hindered her English language learning and practice. She mentioned that chat room was her first choice as an out-of-class environment she would like to use in order to improve her English-speaking skill. That is because first no one knew who she was through the chat room because she could use a fake name while chatting. "Therefore, I felt complete safe and would not feel embarrassed if she made mistakes in grammar or spelling," she said. Second, because the chat room and MSN IM was text-based communication, Opal said she could proofread her sentence, erase any misspelled word, or edit her sentence to be grammatical correct before sending it. Third, unlike the face-to-face conversation that she had to respond immediately, she had some time to open the dictionary if she did not know a word or to think about how to say the sentence in English (O-Interv 2, 4/9/08).

However, Opal stressed that this anonymity feature of the chat room could cause danger for the users if they did not use this environment warily. Opal added that MSN IM was more private and thus safer because she could screen people she would IM chat to.

She stopped talking to those people who sent her harassed chat conversations and only IM chatted with people who were polite, she reported. In her opinion, chat room and MSN IM was a double-edged sword. It was a useful English environment which helped learners practice English language. On the other hand, it could harm learners who used it obliviously.

Besides MSN IM and chat room, Opal also actively engaged in Hi5 network website. She had her Hi5 profile page set up. She stated:

I use the '*Hi5*' network website as a place to keep my photos and as a place that my friends can come in and take a look at my photos. I started to work on my Hi5 '*profile*' page because I wanted to '*impress*' a guy whom I liked a long time ago. He is not Thai, of course. (Laugh) I made my '*Hi5*' website just to '*present*' myself in certain way and sent the link to him so that he could '*browse*' my pictures. ... It was the time that Hi5 network was really '*boom*'. Everybody had to have a Hi5 page account. If not, you could be considered outdated. I was one who followed the crowd. (O-Interv 3, 5/8/09)

On her Hi5 profile page, she wrote a long paragraph about herself: make up and her favorite hobbies, books, and music. She had more than 150 pictures arranged into five albums and seven slide shows. Moreover, she had a list of hyperlink songs under the section '*My Music Application*' where visitors could click and listen to those songs along with the music video through the YouTube website which was embedded in the Hi5 website. However, she did not write any journal entries on her page.

Opal did not spend much time on the Hi5 website compared to what she did on MSN IM. She checked her profile page once or twice a week to see if there was any new comment for her. Not surprisingly, most of the comments sent to her were in Thai language. Opal most of the time replied to the comments she received from friends with short sentences, normally in Thai language. According to my observation, she sometimes

wrote comments on her friends' page in English or in Thai mixed with English. She used English language with only some friends, especially when they sent her English comments. Opal usually wrote informal short comments with abbreviations as '*OMG*' (Oh my god), '*BTW*' (by the way), and '*R U ok?*' (Are you okay?). Some of her comments she sent to her friend are "*I've been very busy mag mag na ka. I think I'm going to Starbuck's tonight. :) Wanna join ?????*" From this example, Opal used karaoke language ('*mag mag na ka*' means very much) and fast speech ('*wanna*') in her comment.

The Internet is very important for Opal. Based on her normal routine, she did at least one Internet activity a day, either IM chatting, e-mailing, visiting the Hi5 network website, or using search engine (Google). During the observation period, there was a week that her laptop was broken and she did not have a computer to use. She complained with me about her "mysterious life" without her computer every time we met during that week.

Reading Books and Magazines

Opal viewed reading as one of her hobbies. She did not intend to learn English or know new vocabulary from reading. On the other hand, she found that she was happy when reading; therefore, she read. In her opinion, reading books broadened her mind, supplied her with new ideas, rationales, and different view points on something and made her happy, in addition to practicing reading skill. A part of Opal's routine was going to the coffee shop to drink tea and read her favorite book and bilingual magazines.

Opal read many English fiction books, especially those which were not too long and were full of inspiration and unexpected turning points. She had read *The alchemist: A fable about following your dream*, which she mentioned inspired her on how to conduct life and continue to live meaningfully and encouraged her to have hope and self-confidence. She was now reading *Maximum ride: Saving the world and other extreme sports*, which is the third book out of four books in the series. Most of the time, Opal chose to buy a book by its author, its received prize and award, and its cover design.

Opal usually went to the book stores which were in the shopping centers near her dorm two or three times a week. Opal looked very happy when she was in the book stores. When she first entered the book store, she walked directly to the cashier counter and picked up a free English newspaper (*Daily Xpress*) and sometimes a free bilingual magazine (*BK*, *Guru*, or *Viva*). After that she walked to the Best Seller shelf, then, New Arrival shelf. She picked some books up and first looked at the front cover and then read the synopsis on the back cover. Then, she opened and read the first three pages of the first chapter. Opal explained “I wanted to see if the book is interesting, fun, and arouse me to follow through the whole book.” Moreover, she said she normally bought pocket book size with paperback type books because of their cheaper price (O-FN 7, 3/27/08). She sometimes walked to the magazine shelf. She read some imported magazines about fashion and celebrities. She normally spent an hour or an hour and a half in the book stores just to browse around the books and magazines without buying anything. “I cannot buy every book as I want to because I do not have that much money and I would not have much time to read when school started,” Opal confessed (O-FN 7, 3/27/08). However, she enjoyed reading the synopsis of each book so that she knew the short story of each

book. She said she felt very knowledgeable when she could respond to her friends' conversation about some books. She commented that she did not have to read every book yet she felt good knowing a brief story about every book.

Her reading habit was obvious. Every time I saw Opal, she always had a book with her in her big purse. If she did not know where to go or what to do during the day, her first choice would be to go to the coffee shop and read. Many times, she switched from reading her book to reading the free bilingual magazines and English newspapers that were available at the coffee shop for a short while. Two free magazines that Opal usually read at the coffee shop were *Viva* and *BK* both of which were English and Thai bilingual magazines.

There was one time that Opal sat in the coffee shop and read for 5 hours. She told me that she enjoyed the story of *Maximum ride* very much. In her opinion, a book is another world that she would like to discover. I noticed that while reading, Opal never opened the dictionary. Opal, moreover, did not read out loud or move her lips while she read. She sometimes listened to the English music from her cell phone while reading. She usually read during her free time and before going to bed for half an hour at least. I observed Opal reacted to the book while reading. She smiled, frowned, sighed, and moaned sometimes in English such as '*Awe!*' and sometimes in Thai.

Reading books was the second activity that Opal did most often after MSN IM. She explained that books were the most convenient English environment to use in her case. That is because she could carry a book with her everywhere while she could not do the same with her computer. Therefore, if she were out of her dorm room, the environment she tended to use the most was books. However, English books were very

expensive in her opinion. Opal did not borrow many books from the university library. She mentioned that there were not a lot of books that she would like to read in the library.

Reading Newspapers

Opal read newspapers every day. She read both online newspapers and printed newspapers. She set her Internet home page to the *Bangkok Post* website which was an English language Thai newspaper. Therefore, every time she opened her Internet the first page that appeared on the screen was this *Bangkok Post* website. Opal did not have television at her dorm room. Hence, the only source through which she could update herself on the current news was newspapers. Setting a home page to a newspaper website forced her to at least scan through the headlines of different newspapers and maybe read some news, in which she was interested. She did not read the hard copy of *Bangkok Post* because it was expensive, and she would not read the whole paper, she said. Furthermore, she told me that she had never bought printed English newspapers because they were two or three time more expensive than Thai newspapers. She also found that the English newspapers were most of the time too thick and that more than half of the paper that she would not read such as “Business” and “Sports” section.

Daily Xpress was an English Thai newspaper which Opal read almost every day. Opal got this free paper from the coffee shop, the sky train station, or the book store. She usually read *Daily Xpress* at the coffee shop or at home. When she got the newspaper, she first browsed through the whole paper, just flipped through the paper page by page. After that she looked at the front page and “The City” section usually on page 1-7, where there was local news, to see if there was any interesting news. She first read the headline, then

the sub-headline. If she thought that the news was interesting from reading these two or three sentences headlines, she would continue reading the whole news. If not, she would skip and read another one. Opal quickly skimmed through international news section. She paid attention on “What’s on/What’s up” section, which was a list of events such as art exhibition and concert in Thailand. She also read comic page and movie review and played Sudoku game.

Opal’s main purpose for reading newspapers was to update current news because she had no television. She mentioned she knew that she had two options, to read Thai papers or English papers, both of which she would accomplish her goal of knowing about the news. When I asked her why she chose to read English newspaper instead of Thai newspaper, she answered that one main reason she read *Daily Xpress* was because it was free, and she could pick it up at the mall almost every day. “I didn’t read ‘*Daily Xpress*’ because I want to learn English or practice my reading skill. I read it because I want to know the news and what’s going on,” Opal said that to me when I first saw her reading a newspaper in the coffee shop. She added that, “‘*Daily Xpress*’ is ‘free’. ‘Free’ is good. What else is better than this? I got to know about news for free, and I can learn new words and use English language as the extra profit” (O-FN 2, 3/10/08). While reading, Opal did not run her finger across lines or open the dictionary or write any notes. I noticed she never finished reading the whole paper. She never read the “Horoscope,” “Business,” and “Sports” sections. She felt that the horoscope had too difficult vocabulary that she would not understand. Moreover, she stated that she was not interested in sports at all.

Talking to Friends

Opal sometimes spoke English with some of her Thai friends from school who were English majors, including Malee and Ohm. However, she did not speak English to all her friends because she said some friends did not want to speak English with her. In addition, Opal had many International friends. She had known most of them from the chat room and MSN IM since two years ago. Opal mentioned three friends that she talked to the most, Mark, Olin, and Robert, all of whom she stated she was special to or who were special to her. I noticed she talked about these three people many times that we met, especially Olin and Robert.

As mentioned earlier, Mark was an Australian man whom Opal met in the chat room in the EnglishBaby website two years ago. After that, they became IM chat partners. Opal told me that she talked to Mark every day both through MSN IM and through telephone. "During those days, Mark called me almost every day, 3-5 times a day. We were really close friends, even more than friends," she said.

Mark is the person who helped me a lot with my English. My speaking skill is considerably improved, part of it because of him. I practiced speaking with him both through 'MSN' IM and phone call. We talked about everything. I learned how to express myself, my ideas, and my feelings. More importantly, I learned Western culture. I have never been abroad. Therefore, I find it is really interesting listening to a different culture, food, way of living, way of thinking, and norms. ... We wrote letters to each other as well. ... Mark is very patient and has never laughed at my English mistakes. He is my best English teacher. ... I have talked to him for more than two years now. Lately, I have to admit that I feel a little bored talking to him. Thus, I have stepped back a little. (O-Ref 6, 5/7/08)

Currently, Opal said she still kept in touch with Mark but as a friend. She talked to him every once in a while. Usually Mark called her. Opal mentioned she talked to Olin and talked to Robert more often, especially through Skype program with Robert.

Olin was from Denmark. They had been friends for more than one year from the Englishbaby website. Opal told me that Olin loved Thailand very much and had been to Thailand many times, at least once every year. Olin could speak Thai fairly well. Opal informed me that Olin and she had many things in common, therefore, they could talk to each other for hours, usually in English.

During my observation period, Olin visited Thailand and visited Opal for three weeks. Olin stayed in a hotel near Opal's dorm; therefore, they saw each other almost every day during his stay. Opal's routine changed once Olin arrived. Opal normally did most activities in a day alone if without me. During Olin's visit, she met him almost every day and was with him at least three hours a day and maximum of 12 hours. The activities they usually did together were going to the coffee shop to have coffee or tea and read, watching movies either at the theater or at Olin's place from DVD, having dinner, and chatting.

I met Olin at a mall near Opal's dorm and we all went out for dinner (O-FN 14, 4/28/08). He could speak Thai very well, better than what I expected. I noticed that Opal used Thai language with Olin a lot (about 60% to 70% of all conversations). During the dinner, there were many times that Opal started the conversation in Thai. Olin picked up the conversation and talked to Opal and me in Thai. Then, when the conversation got more complicated, he used English to us. Moreover, Olin usually spoke English to us on complicated topics, such as education, politics, and society. During those English conversations on more specific topics, Opal kept quiet and listened to Olin and I talked and she did not respond to anything. I noticed that during the dinner, Opal did not feel comfortable using English language with Olin with me present. After the dinner, we went

to see the movie and ate ice cream after the movie. Opal spoke more English with Olin while we ate ice cream after the movie. I suspected that she felt more comfortable having me when she was with Olin. Moreover, the topics that we talked about were about the actors and movie we just saw which were easier and closer to her experience than the government and politics which Olin raised during the dinner. Opal told me on the next day we met that normally she used both English and Thai equally with Olin, depending on her mood and the topic. She mentioned:

I can speak English well with Olin only about more general everyday topics. With more '*serious*' or difficult topics such as government, politics, or academic topics, I consider myself at the beginning to intermediate level. I am learning and practicing though. I think the more I talk with Olin and Robert about those topics, the better I will become one day. ... Many times, especially with Olin, I use Thai when I don't know an English word because I am too lazy, and I know that he knows Thai. (O-FN 15, 4/29/08)

The topic of the conversation is the factor which affected Opal's use of English language. Opal was more familiar with the discourse of everyday conversation such as food and weather than she was with more academic ones. This is not surprising because she had more experience with everyday conversation through MSN IM and chat room chatting with friends and telephoning with Mark.

Opal also had another International friend, Robert, who was from Holland. She told me that she met Robert in a coffee shop while Robert was in Thailand for his vacation eight months ago. Opal mentioned that Robert was friendly, funny, and fun to talk to. After Robert left Thailand, they kept in touch through MSN IM. He sometimes called her. She also added that she felt attracted to Robert.

One day while Opal was reading books in a coffee shop, we discussed the Skype program. Opal told me that she had tried this program for two days with Robert after that

conversation, and she liked it. She found that Skype allowed her to talk to Robert for hours just like a phone call, but it was free. “Last night, I ‘*e-mail[ed]*’ Robert and told him to ‘*log in*’ tonight at 10 p.m. I will be online at the same time, so that we can talk again,” said Opal. She reported that she used Skype program to talk with Robert almost every night at least two hours. She added that she had a webcam attached to her computer; therefore, she could see him while talking and he could see her too.

I loved the ‘*Skype program*’ very much. I can now talk to Robert almost every day with no telephone expense at all. Last night I talked to him from midnight until 5 a.m. in the morning. I really like this free program. ... I didn’t have the chance to talk to Robert and all my international friends much because the international phone calls are very expensive for me, too expensive. (Laugh) I had to ask him to call me, but I hated doing so because I feel that I am so selfish. Therefore, I IM ‘*chat[ted]*’ with him through ‘*MSN*’ program because it is ‘*free*’. MSN IM is good, though not as good as talking with him on the phone. It is better than not having a chance to speak English with any friends at all, especially with Robert. However, the ‘*Skype*’ program is the best. I can use the ‘*web-cam[era]*’ which makes me feel like as if I have him as company all the time I am in front of the ‘*com[puter]*’. ... I’m so glad that I tried this program. Now I can both use English and practice my ‘*conversation*’ skill with Robert and I can talk with him almost every day. (O-FN 2, 3/10/08)

It is interesting that almost every time that Opal talked with Robert through Skype program, her roommate was in the room with her. It is obvious that her roommate would hear everything that Opal said to Robert or anyone on the phone because the room is very small. However, Opal seemed not shy either to speak English with Robert or to talk with Robert romantically in the presence of her roommate.

Robert did not know Thai much except for some words and phrases; therefore, Opal used English while talking with him. I observed that the conversation between Opal and Robert was usually about general topics, activities she did within a day, her mother, her roommate, and Thailand. They sometimes tried to teach each other their native

language some words in their native languages. Occasionally, they both would do some other activities while talking on Skype program. For example, Robert watched a movie, and he would tell Opal about the story he was watching. There were many times that Opal ate midnight snack while talking with him. After Robert told Opal that he would visit her some time in May, their conversation was all about planning his two-week trip. One week after Olin left Thailand, Robert arrived at Thailand. She spent all day with Robert, going shopping, sight-seeing, traveling, eating, watching movies, and going to the pub dancing.

It is interesting to note that within my three months of the participant observation period, Opal had two international friends visiting her for a total of five weeks. Although many people would see this as an opportunity to learn English language, Opal saw that she gained more than language skills. She was more excited to discover aspects of a different culture and other people's ideas. Moreover, she had chances to learn some expressions from different languages as well as the discourse culture of those expressions.

There were many times that Opal complained about some of her friends' misunderstanding and misjudging her based on the fact that she had many international friends. She expressed her feeling in the interview:

A lot of my friends give an excuse that they do not have someone to speak English to. They condemn me for feeling attracted to Western guys. This hurts me very much. I do not want to speak English so that I can '*flirt*' with some guys or vice versa. I will speak English to anyone who will speak with me. (O-Interv 2, 4/9/08)

Opal admitted that this prejudice discouraged her at the beginning. Later, she noted that she did not care much about this sarcastic talk anymore. In her opinion, she was the

person who knew about herself and her feelings the best. If she felt happy in talking to her International friends and if being friends with Westerners increased her chance to use English, she would do it, and she saw no loss in doing so, she finally commented.

Participant's Perspectives on Out-of-class English Learning Activities

Opal agreed to the saying “English is around you.” She wrote in her first reflection journal, “It is the matter of whether we can see those opportunities and how to use them cleverly and to their greatest advantage.” Furthermore, Opal added:

For me, I don't think I am able to put myself in the learning ‘*mood*’ all the time. However, I try to use English as much as possible. I do many out-of-class English activities based on my feelings toward them. I will do it only if I am comfortable and feel happy to do so. Whenever I start to feel reluctant or bored doing such activities, I will stop immediately. (O-Ref 1, 3/16/08)

Opal is the one out of all the participants who engaged in the most variety of out-of-class English activities. She was happy with her enthusiasm in using and practicing English outside the classroom. She commented on her friends and many Thai learners who did not cleverly exercise their available English environments. She once compared herself to those learners in the interview:

One big difference between other students and me is I like to take whatever I get from the class to use outside classroom environment. For instance, when I learned new expressions in class, I would try to use them in my everyday life or try to find the way to use them as much as I can. I like to bridge the knowledge I gained from the class to my routine life outside the classroom. In my opinion, I don't think that my friends try to bridge the ‘*gap*’ between knowledge gained from the classroom and activities I do based on my everyday life. (O-Interv 2, 4/9/08)

In Opal's opinion, she did not intend to use English in her everyday activities to practice or learn English language. However, she said, “I use English to learn other things

such as culture, way of life, way of thinking, etc. I didn't read '*Maximum ride*' to learn English vocabulary or grammar, but I want to learn the Western teenagers' lives." She, moreover, explained, "It is fun to know more about what food they eat, some specific discourse they use among teens, as well as how American people think and live. Eventually, I think I indirectly and '*automatic[ally]*' practice my reading skill (O-Interv 2, 4/9/08)." Opal summed up that these "other things" that she mentioned, such as culture and way of life, were hardly included in any English class, yet they were abundant in the media outside the classroom. Therefore, the best source to gain this knowledge was from doing out-of-class English activities.

Case 2: Benya

Description

Benya was a 20-year-old very fair-skin girl around 5.5-5.6 feet tall and 150-155 pounds weight. She had very short-layered-dark blonde-and red-highlighted hair. Her appearance along with her dress style challenged gender boundaries. She did not adopt a very feminine look. Moreover, she was a low-maintenance young woman. She did not wear any makeup or perfume. Every time that I met her, Benya always dressed in big t-shirt, knee-length or $\frac{3}{4}$ length loose fitted (baggy type) khaki shorts and flip flops.

Benya described herself as a laidback and shy person. She did not like to make any decisions and would always be a follower among her friends. She was an easy going person who was very flexible and willing to compromise with anyone and anything. Benya was not a very articulate person, yet, she liked to write and express her feeling and

thinking through letters. In addition, she had a hard time sharing her own voice and she needed time to process and put her thoughts together.

Benya was born and raised in a medium size province in the lower part of Northern Thailand, about 300 miles from Bangkok. Benya lived with her family with one older brother and one younger sister. Her family owned a local business in the area. She had a very tight family and relatives. After Benya got admitted in the Chulalongkorn University, her parents rented an apartment for her near the university area. Although her apartment was only about three miles from campus area, she usually drove to campus every day which took her about five to ten minutes drive. Benya usually went back home during holidays or important days such as someone's birthday. Sometimes, her family came and visited her in Bangkok.

Benya had everything she needed in her medium-size full-furnished studio apartment: a full bed, air-conditioner, fan, refrigerator, microwave, television, DVD player, telephone, computer with Internet connection, stereo, and PlayStation II unit. Benya was interested in gemstones. She had a collection of different stones such as lapis, rose quartz, and cat eyes on a shelf in her apartment. She also researched their qualifications and their astrological healing power. She always wore a gemstone bracelet or necklace. In addition, she was very interested in fortune-telling, tarot, superstition, spiritualism, and telepathy. She gave the tarot reading to her friends, relatives, and relatives' friends as her hobby.

Benya was now finishing her third year in English and Thai majors. She mentioned that she paid more attention to her English major courses than courses for her Thai major. She admitted that she chose Thai major because she did not know what else

to take. According to Benya, she only knew that she wanted to have English major. (Benya could not take Advanced English major due to her English major screening test score.) Benya did not hang out with many friends from the College. Moreover, most of her friends were in Thai majors. She normally went out with her two cousins and friends from her hometown, some of whom were studying at the universities in Bangkok.

English Learning Experience

Benya studied English for the first time when she was in the first grade at the biggest public school in her hometown. She shared her English learning experiences with me, which she believed were like those of most Thai students: the teaching was based on the textbooks, grammar, and homework assignment and the teachers used Thai language in class all the time.

Although her father and mother did not know or speak English much, at home, her father and mother always played folk songs and some old songs from Carpenters, Bee Gee, the Beatles, Santana, and Felicia.

My dad loves karaoke singing very much. I remember that my dad used to sing the karaoke almost every day when I was young. They were all '*Folksongs*' ... He usually sang '*I started a joke*', '*Let it be*', '*take me home country road*', '*Five hundred miles*', etc. Oh! I forgot '*John Denver*' or maybe '*Elton John*' (can't remember) '*leaving on the jet plane*' (my dad loves this song very much). ... My dad usually asked us to sing with him. ... When I was in junior school, every time that my friends came to my home, my dad would ask my friends and me to sing those songs just for fun. (B-Ref 2, 3/22/08)

Benya grew up with English language around her through songs. She was familiar with English in very early age both from school and from those songs that her father listened to and sang almost every day.

When Benya was in grade eight, her English teacher taught the class to play “crossword.” According to Benya’s explanation of the game crossword, it was played exactly like scrabble. Following Benya’s choice of word this scrabble-like game will be referred to as crossword from now on. She told me that she started playing crossword that day. However, her interest in and devotion to crossword did not start until she was in grade ten when her English teacher founded a crossword club for students. She added in her reflection essay, “My teacher practiced us by giving some words and asked us to come up with new different words which use the letters from the given words the most. I think it is very challenging and fun” (B-Ref 1, 3/13/08). She joined the club and spent a lot of time after school practicing crossword and learning new techniques for the game. She added that she went to many school-level crossword competitions and won many events. She dreamed of going to national.

When I asked about her start point in learning English and using English environments, Benya told me that her major inspiration was one Thai superstar who was very famous. She started to pay attention to English learning and had the goal of continuing her education in Australia. She said:

If you ask me about why I try to improve myself in English from environments, I have to say it is because I would like to imitate Ann Thongprasom. ... I can say that I am crazy about her. When I was in high school, she took a break from her entertaining career and went to *‘Melbourne, Australia’*, for a one-year English *‘Intensive’* Program. Since that day, I started to dream of myself going to study abroad just like Ann. Later on, she shot one movie in Australia while she was studying there. I promised to myself that I have to be at the place where she stood in my favorite scene.

I think Ann is my ideal person. And if possible, I would like to follow her path if it is a good thing. She makes me have a goal to my life and to my English learning. I try hard to practice my English so that I can continue my study abroad. I now know what to learn English for, which is for going to Australia and not just for the exams and grades. I also did some research about the education system and the funding. I also bought some books about studying in *‘Australia’*. ... This may

sound funny but it is true. I like Ann very much and I can do everything just like her, for example two years ago I ate pineapples every day because Ann did so. (B-Interv 1, 3/1/08)

Benya's positive attitude towards English combined with an inspiration from her favorite celebrity influenced her to have a strong desire to learn English and put her effort into reaching her goal.

Benya rated her English proficiency with all English skills as moderate which was 3 on the 5-score scale (1 is poor and 5 is excellent or very fluent) from the survey questionnaire. She told me that she knew a lot of vocabulary which she learned from playing crossword. However, she admitted that her weak point was she was too shy to speak. Therefore, she felt that her speaking skill was weak compared to other skills. Her ultimate goal in learning English was to further her study abroad. In addition, a successful language learner, in her opinion from the interview, was a person who "could use the language to communicate with people successfully with no requirement of native-like accent" (B-Interv 1, 3/1/08)

Overview of Benya's Daily Routine and Out-of-class English Activities Involvement

Having been observing Benya for weeks, I found that she participated in out-of-class English activities more or less depending on the activities. During the observation period which was a school break, Benya had two styles of life and routine: the day that she tutored children and the day without tutoring. On the days that she had to tutor children, she woke up at 7:00 a.m. She and her cousin, Tanu, drove together to the tutor center which was in a big shopping mall. She started tutoring from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. After that Benya, her cousins, Tanu and Tanu's older brother, and their friends normally

had dinner at some restaurants around the university area and chitchatted until late, or went out for a movie. During the break, Benya tutored children three days a week depending on the appointment, normally Monday, Thursday, and Saturday.

On Wednesday and Friday, she tutored an American visiting professor Thai language from 10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. After that, she was free. In a week, Benya normally had two days that she did not have to tutor which meant she could stay in bed until noon. During her free time, Benya usually stayed in her room, played computer games, played PlayStation games, watched cable television, read her horoscope from the newspaper, talked on the phone with her family and friends, prepared for her tutoring, and napped. She often went online, checking her e-mail, MSN IM chatting (usually in Thai), and searching for some information about gemstones and tarot. Benya always went to the shopping mall very near by the university and her dorm for lunch and dinner. She often went out with her friends and her relatives, eating, watching movies, and chatting. Besides, she did many activities which related to her interests in gemstones, tarot, and fortune telling. For example, she researched all information about gemstones and tarot from the Internet. She sometimes e-mailed some friends, whom she knew from the tarot websites, asking him/her about some suggestion for the meaning of the cards when certain cards appeared together. She also read a book *The True Power of Water*. She was also like the many other Thai late adolescents who liked to listen to English songs. She usually listened to both Thai and English songs while driving.

Although participating in many English activities, Benya saw herself and not using enough English environments, at least not to their greatest advantage. In the self reflection essay, Benya wrote:

In my opinion, many times, I neglected good opportunities to learn especially with English that I could find too easily and too often such as posters, advertisements, signs, etc. I think I missed a lot of learning opportunities. I should have learned and grasped English more than what I did. I think I have a better chance to learn English from out-of-class English environments than many of my friends. That is because I have more access to many activities compared to other friends. To be honest, I don't have money constraints. I have all environments and activities outside of the classroom waiting for me. Yet, I think I haven't used them as much as I should. However, I am trying to change and starting to notice the opportunity to learn English from environments and to engage myself in the English activities that I have never noticed nor done. ... I started to force myself to read signs, posters, and newspapers. (B-Ref 3, 3/26/08)

Benya realized the importance of English environments, the abundance of out-of-class English activities, and the opportunity to practice English from them. She used English environments because she liked doing those activities (such as playing games and watching movies) and because she wanted to practice English (such as reading newspapers).

In the following section, I portrayed how Benya participated in four major out-of-class English activities: playing games, either through computer or through PlayStation; she also tutored students both Thai students and an American person, watched movies, and read newspapers.

Playing Games

Benya loved playing games. She played games almost every day. The length of time she played games varied from half an hour to five hours with the average of one hour and a half. Games that Benya played varied and could be divided into three major

categories: online Internet games, computer software games, and PlayStation II¹² (PS-2) games. For the sake of this paper, I followed Gee (2003, p. 1) in using the word “video games” for the generic term for all types of games unless specified.

The online Internet game that Benya played most often was the crossword game through www.thaibg.com. The website was a Thai website which had many games such as chess, checker, Othello, and scrabble (which was called crossword in this website). In order to access the game, Benya had to connect to the Internet and sign in with a user name and password with which she registered for free. (See Figure A5 in Appendix E)

The crossword game is similar to the regular board crossword game with same rules. Besides playing online through computer, there are only two functions that have been added to this online version. First, there is a live chat pane on the right hand side of the screen which supports both Thai and English chatting. Signed in member can choose to play the game against other player (unspecific competitor), or to view the competition and/or to chat with other people in the chat pane. Benya English chatted with her opponent sometimes while playing. Second, there is an automatic computer function which works as an inspector which will detect any word which is not in the dictionary and will pop up the notice in the chat pane and ask the player to change the word.

While playing online game, Benya often opened what she called a ‘crossword dictionary’ which was an old thirty-page staple bound paper which had lists of words. For example,

fnlm *AIR nsty

¹² The PlayStation (PS) is a new generation entertainment technology which allows you to play video games on your home television through the PS console unit and controller.

fnlm *AIR nsty
ps HONE* drsy

I asked Benya how to use it. She explained that the capital letters in the middle are the base, the letters in the front or the back of the base are the added on letters. For example, AIR can be conjugated into fAIR, nAIR, lAIR, mAIR, or AIRn, AIRs, AIRt, AIRy. The asterisk (*) stands for the common side on which the added letters usually occur, either as prefix or suffix. Once in a while, Benya would use the regular dictionary when playing crossword; otherwise, she used this crossword dictionary.

Benya played several computer games. She had the games installed in her computer. She usually played the strategy graphic theme-based games such as Theme Hospital and Restaurant Empire. (See Figure A6 and Figure A7 in Appendix E.) Both games are simulation computer games that the players need to design the architecture, interior, and exterior; choose the equipments; hire staffs; manage job operation; and run the business. The games are in English language with the background story, goals, directions, interactions, warnings, and utterances either in written form popped up in the bubbles or in spoken form. Benya commented:

I love playing 'game[s]'. I have played 'Theme Hospital game' since I was in High School and 'Restaurant Empire' since last year. When I was young, I had never paid much attention to any English instructions, tips, popped up messages in each scenario, or conversations and utterance from any 'sims' [or avatars]. I just wanted to play the game. However, I had not completed many scenarios. Later on, I started to read the instructions and messages, all of which helped me to play the 'game' more easily, gain better 'score[s]', and win the scenario. I also opened the 'dic[tionary]' to find some words that I didn't know. Now, I feel that I practice my English a lot from playing these 'game[s]'. (B-Interv 2, 4/2/08)

According to Benya, she had just realized the importance of English statements in the game, which told directions, goals, and warnings which randomly appeared. She was indirectly forced to read or listen to them in order to play the games victoriously.

In addition, Benya played many games which used English language from PS console. I participant observed Benya played some PS games such as Resident Evil 4, Fatal Frame, FIFA Soccer, and Guitar Hero for more than 3 hours. (See Figure A8 and Figure A9 in Appendix E.) Resident Evil 4 and Fatal Frame games start with a 5- to 7-minute-long movie, English sound and English subtitles, telling the introduction story of the games. All games share a common feature of having avatars. The conversations among the avatars are important as they signal the player some secret places or some directions. In some scenes, the games also provide the instructions for the avatar such as *'shake off'*, *'pick up'*, *'kick'*, and *'jump over'*. In FIFA Soccer game, there were many soccer technical terms through the commentary such as *'pass the ball'*, *'offside'*, *'outer step'*, *'cover it up'*, and *'He is in possession'*.

Of all out-of-class English activities available, Benya played video games most often and with the longest time. When I asked her what English activity outside of class she thought was the most useful for her in terms of English language enhancement, she immediately answered without hesitation that it was video games. She also stated that, “compared to learning English in class, playing video game is more fun and more motivating. It is maybe because I have to compete with someone, especially the crossword game” (B-Interv 3, 5/13/08). Benya also gave a lot of interesting insight about the crossword game and other games in her self reflection essay.

I think one thing that makes 'crossword' games very interesting is sometimes we have never thought that some words might have meanings. For example, we usually think that we cannot use a person's name 'John'. However, it means men's restroom. I learned all these words and their different meanings from this game. It is a good sport game which does not require good English skills. One has to practice and play it often in order to see how to use letters most effectively. It needs English vocabulary knowledge, playing experience, strategy and planning skill, sagacity, and finally luck. (B-Ref 1, 3/13/08)

I noticed Benya was very emotionally excited while playing video games. She always swayed her body left and right or shouted when the avatar had to elude the zombies, when the ghost appeared in the scene, or when she got a goal. According to my observation, Benya sometimes moaned or exclaimed when the opponent gained big scored in crossword game. Many times she ran and checked the opponent's words in the dictionary. Benya wrote:

I think playing video games helps my reading skills the most, with the vocabulary and listening skills the second and third. ... Playing games is the best English practice in my opinion because I automatically absorb all English from the games. I might not catch those English sentences at the first time I play it. Yet, I have to see those sentences again and again every time I pass that scenario. It usually takes me more than 10 times to pass the first scenario of many games such as 'Theme Hospital' and 'Resident Evil'. There I saw all pop ups and heard the announcement over and over until I was able to catch them. (B-Ref 17, 8/26/08)

Furthermore, Benya told me about one of her friends who, she said, "was addicted" to a game which used German language. "He plays this game every day. Now he knows many German vocabulary." Benya continued, "I don't think he was trying to learn German so that he played that game. Remembering German words which he heard from that game is the byproduct of having fun playing that game (B-FN 15, 4/12/08)." For Benya, the main reason for playing video games is because they are fun and she enjoyed playing them. The fact that she could practice her English language through video games was the additional benefit from playing video games.

Tutoring and Talking with Students

During summer school break, Benya privately tutored English to four students, the fifth, seventh, eighth, and eleventh graders. She met them two hours each time for each student, two to three times a week. On her tutor day, she drove with her cousin, Tanu, to her aunt's friend's tutor center which was in the shopping mall in another neighborhood. She worked there from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. tutored English and Thai while Tanu tutored math and science. Benya liked teaching. She did not work because she was in need of money. She said:

I tutor because I have known these children as their mothers know my aunt. I tutored them last break as well. I do it because I love these children. I have a enjoy spending time with them. Plus I don't have anything else to do during the break. I tried to keep myself active in terms of English learning as well. In my opinion, tutoring is good because it forces me to study, to keep my grammar books around me, and to use English language or to at least keep me active in academic English. I learn many new vocabulary words, grammar points, and idioms along with my students. It also gives me good teaching experience which I can use for my student teaching in the near future. And it was a good use of free time during the break. (B-FN 6, 3/23/08)

From my observation, although Benya used Thai in explaining all English grammar to the students, she sometimes read English sentences and passages out for them. Moreover, she had to prepare the lesson for them. She usually searched for some exercises, quizzes, and passages from the Internet and the English books from which she claimed she learned English grammar while preparing for the teaching.

Besides tutoring English to children, Benya also tutored Thai language to a fifty-year-old female American Professor, Dr. Nancy, who was in Thailand for one year as a visiting scholar at CU. Benya met Dr. Nancy for one hour a day, twice a week usually Wednesday and Friday. Benya had just started teaching Dr. Nancy in February, 2008.

Dr. Nancy wanted Benya to teach her speaking and grammar with a little reading. Benya used English with her when explaining all Thai grammar. She often said a Thai sentence and transcribed it into English for her.

According to Benya, she was too shy to speak English. Teaching Dr. Nancy was one forced opportunity for her to speak English which she believed was good for her.

I am shy. I rarely speak English to anyone. ... I don't have foreign friends that I will talk to. I have foreign friends in 'MSN' but we don't talk on the phone. The only person that I speak English with is Dr. Nancy. I talk to her because I have to teach her. (B-Interv 3, 5/13/08)

I know that I missed many good opportunities to learn from Dr. Nancy. I think I am very *'passive'*. I like listening but not speaking or asking questions. I should have asked her to share stories about many things she mentioned to me such as *'Easter Day'* or *'Thanksgiving'*. Had I asked her questions about these events, I would have known about *'American culture'* even more. ... I know this bad habit and personality trait obstructs my English learning. I am working on it. I try to keep in mind to ask more questions when talking to her. (B-Interv 2, 4/2/08)

From the interview and informal talks during observations, Benya understood how much she needed to change and thus tried to improve herself. She shared her strategy to overcome her shyness. For instance, she wrote some questions that she forgot to ask Dr. Nancy during the conversation and brought them to the next session to ask her. Benya found that this helped her feel less timid because she had prepared for what to say.

Benya thought she "learned from Dr. Nancy more than Dr. Nancy learned from her". Benya admitted to me that "I like to teach Dr. Nancy. Teaching Thai to Dr. Nancy is like having a *'conversation partner'*." While Dr. Nancy wanted to know more about Thai language, Thailand, and Thai culture, she supplemented Benya English language, the U.S. and Western culture.

I think I gained many things when I teach Dr. Nancy. I also learned a lot of 'culture' from her. For example, last week I met her. She gave me a basket of 'chocolate' eggs and told me 'Happy Easter'. She said that I was like her daughter in Thailand. She would give her daughter this basket for 'good luck' blessings. She said it was like 'Santa Clause' would bring presents for 'Christmas', in 'Easter' the rabbit would bring me 'good luck'. ... I really enjoy talking and listening to Dr. Nancy. She is so knowledgeable about everything. Sometimes I think that I learn about other things much more than practicing English having conversation with her. ... I feel that talking with her broadens my mind. I now see many things differently. I realize the differences between East and West people. ... Last time she told me story about 'Christmas' and 'Thanksgiving'. I understand and know about Western culture and way of thinking more. (B-Interv 2, 4/2/08)

I think I learned a lot from tutoring Dr. Nancy. I have to speak a lot of English and I have to explain Thai 'grammar' to her in English which is very difficult. There are many times I cannot explain well. She also helps correct my English 'grammar' and my 'pronun[ciation]'. I think I can practice all English skills from one hour of teaching her. I have to speak and listen to her. I read some English sentences and translated them into English or vice versa. I have to compare Thai grammar to English grammar so that she can understand better. (B-FN 3, 3/18/08)

According to Benya, talking with Dr. Nancy was one of the most useful English activities she did outside the classroom during the school break. She knew more about American culture, history, and ways of living, all of which were topics that Benya would not encounter with in her everyday life living in Thailand. In addition, Benya sometimes asked Dr. Nancy questions about English language she had. For example, she told Dr. Nancy about her trip to the National Book Fair that she and I took together via the underground train (MRT). She talked about the sign at MRT station, 'Mind your step'. Benya asked Dr. Nancy how to use the word 'mind' in the sentence. Dr. Nancy explained to her that the phrase 'mind your step' was British English, whereas 'watch your step' was American English (B-FN 9, 3/30/08). During the class, I noticed there were many idea exchanges between Benya and Dr. Nancy after the teaching on different topics, especially differences between Thai and American culture and perspectives such as

hobbies among teenagers, dream jobs, food, family style, religion, and school systems.

Many times, Dr. Nancy was the person who dominated the conversation and Benya took the passive role listening to Dr. Nancy most of the time. However, when it came to topics about Thailand and Thai language, Benya claimed the expert role and spoke English.

On the down side, Benya realized that she devoted a lot of her time in a week both to teaching (three full days tutoring four students and two hours a week tutoring Thai to Dr. Nancy) and to teaching preparation. She mentioned that she did not have enough time for herself and for doing other out-of-class English activities such as playing games, reading books, or watching movies. However, Benya commented on the advantages she gained from the teaching, “although teaching consumes a lot of time from my holiday, it is better than staying in bed, eating, and wasting the time. At least I do something that is useful for me and for them (B-Interv 2, 4/2/08).”

Although she enjoyed tutoring Dr. Nancy and thought that it enhanced her English language, she could only do it during the break. Dr. Nancy left Thailand and went back to the U.S. in May 2008, which meant that Benya had less chance to speak English in her daily life. However, Benya intended to keep in touch with Dr. Nancy via e-mail or Skype program. Benya reported that Dr. Nancy planned to continue learning Thai from her online at least one hour per week. When the semester started, Benya planned to tutor these four students once a week on Saturday but for three-hour-period instead of two hours as it was during the break.

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Watching Movies

Watching movies was another of Benya's common English language activities. She watched American movies both at the theater and on the cable television. She shared with me watching movies was one of her favorite hobbies besides playing games, eating, and sleeping. There are more than five movie theaters and multiplex cinemas, which play several Thai and American movies, around the university area. Therefore, it is very convenient for Benya to go to the movie theater. She had membership cards for two theaters. She also added, "I feel lucky I can see movies as often as I want. First, there are many theaters close by. My parents allow me to see movies without permission asking. I also have 'cable' television in my room (B-FN 3, 3/18/08)." She went to see the movie usually with her friends or her cousins at least once a week during the school time and two to four times a week during the break.

Benya decided to see movies based on her preference, trailers she saw, and movie reviews she read from the newspaper. I went to see a movie with her many times usually before or after lunch or dinner. Most movies were English dubbed and had Thai subtitles, such as *The Spiderwick Chronicles*, *Water Horse*, *Horton Hears a Who*, and *Vantage Point*. She sometimes watched Thai movies, with Thai dubbed and had English subtitles. Benya informed me that she always read the subtitles. After the movie, Benya often talked about the movie, telling me her favorite scene, her favorite role, and her point of view on the movie. She occasionally asked me questions about the vocabulary and some phrases that she could not understand. Sometimes, she noticed incorrect or funny translation in the subtitles. She pointed out after a Thai movie we saw together that the

translation of the English subtitles and Thai sentences that the actor spoke were totally off, for example from the word buffalo in Thai to '*elephant*' in English (B-FN 7, 3/25).

When Benya was in her room, she usually turned on the cable television such as HBO and Cinemax channel. These two channels always played movies all of which were in English with Thai subtitles. She mentioned:

I turn it on but I don't really watch it. I just don't want to stay in the quiet room alone. I also try to open the movies so that I can listen to them while I am doing activities such as reading books, preparing for my teaching, playing computer '*game[s]*', '*e-mail[ing]*', and browsing '*Internet*' websites. Every time that I can catch a sentence or phrase from the '*TV*', I will repeat that phrase or sentence. Normally, they are short expressions such as '*thank you*', '*oh, yes!*', and '*that's right*'. I try to imitate their '*accent*' and '*into[nation]*'. ... I don't use the '*dictionary*' while watching '*TV*'. I think I'm too lazy. I will open the dictionary after watching a movie only if a word really catches my ears and sticks in my head. (B-Interv 3, 5/13/08)

Benya used the television as her friend when she was in her room doing other activities.

She did not read the Thai subtitles or pay any attention to the movie. She left the television on to get used to the English accent. She would watch the whole movie from television only when there was a movie that she looked forward to seeing. Then, she would pay attention to it and watch it without doing other activities. She used the English sounds with Thai subtitles feature. She commented that she could not totally understand the movie without the Thai subtitles.

In one of Benya's reflection essays, she reflected on her preference for watching movies:

If I have to choose to stay with one and only one English environment for the next two weeks, I will choose movies. I would like to watch movies all day and every day. I would like to watch them without subtitles, with English subtitles, and with Thai subtitles and to compare which one works the best. I think watching movies is good relaxing hobby and it is good English practice at the same time. (B-Ref 8, 5/22/08)

She went to see movies because of her personal preference. On the other hand, she often turned on the television and listened to the movie while doing other activities because she wanted to practice her listening skill. She explained:

I don't think that I learn much from watching movies. I mean really learn as in learning new vocabulary, idioms, or '*grammar*' points. ... I don't mean that watching movies is not useful. However, I feel that it is a skill practice activity. I think I practiced my listening skills watching movies. Although I read the '*subtitle[s]*', I listen to English speaking too. I think at least those sentences passed my ears, so I can practice my ears and I can get used to English language. (B-Interv 2, 4/2/08)

According to Benya, listening to English language from the movies was different from listening to English language from other activities. She explained in the second interview (B-Interv 2, 4/2/08) that "I can only practice listening skills from other out-of-class activities in a very short period of time, except for teaching Dr. Nancy." Benya gave an example, "when I walk in the mall, I occasionally hear some English announcements but they last only for a very few minutes, even seconds. But when I watch movies, I have to spend an hour listening to English language non-stop."

According to observation, interviews, and reflection journals, Benya saw the opportunity to practice her English listening skill through watching movies. She acknowledged that the nature of listening skill practice she got from movies was different compared to other media that she listened to. In the movie, actors and actresses would talk about topics in different contexts depending on the story. Moreover, she also mentioned that movies were a good source for her to get used to English in different accents. In addition, she could practice listening for a long period of time since usually a movie that was at least 90 minutes long.

Reading Newspapers

Benya thought that newspapers were a good out-of-class English learning activity. She subscribed to a newspaper and tried to force herself to read it and open the dictionary for new words. When I visited Benya's apartment, I saw a big stack of old English newspapers in a plastic storage box lying in one corner of the room. She told me that she subscribed to the *Bangkok Post* last year and it had expired two months ago. She added she was debating between continuing the subscription. She said:

On the one hand, I don't want to subscribe to it because I did not read it much. I usually read the horoscope and only a few columns. Therefore, I don't want to waste money. On the other hand, if I subscribe to it, I will feel guilty for not reading it. This could force me to read English newspaper which I know is a good reading practice. (Laugh) (B-FN Field 2, 3/15/08)

One day around a month after I first met Benya, she saw me with the *Dairy Xpress*, the free English newspaper. She looked at it and we talked about where to get this paper. After that day Benya started to read the *Dairy Xpress* and decided not to subscribe to the *Bangkok Post* because she could read the *Dairy Xpress* for free.

I like the '*Daily Xpress*' because first I don't have to buy it. If I feel like reading it, I can pick it up in the bookstore in the mall where I usually go for lunch or dinner. Second, it has many pictures which make me feel that it is less serious, compared to many other English newspapers. It is not that thick and it contains only important news and columns that are related to the majority people including me. It has less news and issues of business and politics. (B-Ref 15, 8/6/08)

I noticed that when Benya first got the paper, she would first open to the horoscope. Then she would quickly browse from the first page to the last page. After that she started to read "Today's Forecast" and opened to the page "To See" and skimmed through the "Movie Reviews". Later on, she flipped through the paper to see if there was any interesting local news. She reported that she usually read the headline and then

looked at the pictures. If the headline and pictures caught her interest, she would continue reading that column, she explained. "I look through every page including advertisement pages, except for the politic and sports columns. Sometimes, I underline words that I don't know and if I have time and I am not too lazy, (laugh) I will open the '*Talking-dic[tionary]*'," Benya continued (B-Interv 3, 5/13/08). She also mentioned that she developed her new habit of doing the word search game from the *Dairy Xpress*. When Benya had lunch or dinner alone usually at the mall, she always walked to the bookstore to get the *Dairy Xpress* first. She always read newspapers and did word search game while she was eating alone or waiting for her students to finish the exercise or reading assignment which she believed was how she used time wisely. In her reflection essay, she wrote:

I have been playing '*word-search*' games every day for a month now. One new move that I am trying to do is to open the '*dic[tionary]*' and find the definition and synonyms of the words from the game, at least two words every day. I want to force myself to learn new words every day, not just to play the word search game for fun. ... Furthermore, reading newspapers is fun, especially the horoscope and movie reviews sections. In addition, I like the word search game. Doing the word search game helps me increase my vocabulary knowledge which is good for my crossword skill as well. (B-Ref 19, 2/20/08)

From her reflection and interview, Benya used a newspaper in various ways and for different purposes. First, she read horoscope because of her own interest in this area. Second, she checked the movie reviews to see what movie she should go to, as watching movies was one of her favorite hobbies. Furthermore, she found that the word search game which she played for fun was actually useful and she learned new words from this game. In addition, she read some news, as it was good reading practice. Finally, she

opened the dictionary to find some words she did not know from the news and the word search game to increase her vocabulary knowledge.

According to Benya, she saw two major strengths of newspapers. First, she could read it anywhere and any time she wanted to. Unlike watching news on the television, which was fixed to the time, Benya could read *Daily Xpress* any time even when she was outside her apartment or waiting for her friends somewhere. Second, she explained that she often chose to read only news and columns that she was interested in and skipped the rest, which was different from watching news on television, in which she could not select anything. On the other hand, one big constraint that Benya felt with newspapers was they were sometimes too brief with insufficient information. She gave an example of the movie reviews section which was always one paragraph long with very short description on actors and theme. Many times, she felt that she could not capture any essence of the movie. She added that if she felt the need, she would go online and further read about that movie from the Internet.

Participant's Perspectives on Out-of-class English Learning Activities

Benya valued out-of-class English activities very much. In her opinion, language learning should not be limited to the classroom only. She suggested an interesting analogy in her reflection journal:

I see learning English language as building a square. All English courses I took from school gave an outline of the square. All out-of-class English activities such as playing games, watching movies, and listening to the music, all of which many people tend to think of as non-learning activities, become hundreds of dots to fill that square. At first the dots are scattered everywhere both inside and outside the square. The teachers and learning from the classroom help tidy those dots and

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reshape my square. Therefore, in my opinion, in order to learn English language effectively, I need knowledge and practice both from the classroom and from outside the classroom. (B-Ref 19, 9/20/08)

Although Benya perceived the necessity of engaging in out-of-class English activities as evidenced in the above reflection journal, she did not think that she exercised the available out-of-class English environments cleverly and to their maximum advantage, which she mentioned all the time in informal talk during observation, interviews, and reflection journal. However, from my observation and the interview, I am led to believe that Benya underestimated herself in reporting this. I noticed her participation in many out-of-class English activities. She usually demonstrated signs that she learned something new as well as practiced her language skill. For example, I observed Benya recited words while playing video games, opened the dictionary, and talked about phrases and/or culturally relevant topics that she saw, read, or heard from one person to another person. I speculated that Benya's self-underestimation in out-of-class English learning might come from the non-academic intention of her participation. Many times she mentioned that she did those English activities because she enjoyed the activities. Therefore, she might not have viewed her engagement in all English activities for fun as English learning behavior. However, these activities for her, though not equal to the learning behavior, enhanced her English proficiency.

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Case 3: Malee

Description

I met Malee in 2007 when she was 21 years old. Malee weighed around 100-103 pounds and she was 5.1 foot tall. She had beige skin, neck-length dark brown curly hair. When Malee was at school, she was neat and always well dressed, with a long skirt and a school uniform blouse. When she had no class, she usually dressed in teens' modern style blouse with stretch jeans and one-inch-high casual shoes. She wore light make up with light colored lipstick and perfume. Overall, Malee dressed appropriately and she always appeared to be classy: not too high-end fashion but not outmoded either. From many outsiders' perspectives, Malee was a quiet, solitary, and peaceful girl who was not outspoken and did nothing but studied. After having been familiar with her, I found that Malee was a friendly person who was very articulate and willing to share her insightful ideas and opinions if she was offered the opportunity to do so. In addition, Malee saw herself as a perfectionist person who wanted to be best and do best in everything.

Malee lived in Bangkok with her father and one elder brother. Her mother passed away several years ago. Her father was a business man. Malee was not close to her brother much because of the age difference. Malee usually drove to the university. Her house was not extremely far from the university (about 7-10 miles); however, she spent about one hour to two hours on the road driving on school days due to the bad traffic in Bangkok. Thus, she preferred coming to school in the morning before 7:30 a.m. to get away from the traffic even on Friday when she had 11:00 a.m. class. She told me that she

normally sat at the common area and studied or reviewed the lesson alone before her class.

Malee was extremely focused on her academic life compared to the rest of the participants and many of her peers. She worked hard and studies hard. She dedicates most of her free time to school-related matters. She was a good student and is a straight-A student. Malee was very well-known among her classmates as the most diligent and best disciplined person who was a top ten student in every class. She could manage her time well and knew when to study hard and when to relax with her friends. Moreover, she had strong concentration and was able to study for hours even when there were a lot of surrounding distractions. In addition, Malee invested herself in academics not only with English courses but equally with other courses.

When I first met Malee, she was in her third year (2006 academic year) in Thai and English majors. She was in the same year as Opal. She was my participant in my pilot study (November 25, 2006 to January 20, 2007). I met Malee again and chose her to be one of my participants in this study during the 2007 academic year when she was in her fourth year (22 years old). All pilot study data from Malee were used in this study as well as the new data that had recently been collected for this study. Malee always hangs out with three close friends; two were in Thai and Psychology majors and one in English and Advanced English majors whose name is Leo.

English Learning Experience

Malee graduated from one of the public schools in Bangkok. She first learned English when she was in the first grade. She stated that she graduated from old

curriculum (B.E. 2521 or A.D. 1978); therefore, her teachers relied on text books and the national curriculum and the communication in everyday real life was not focused on at all (M-Interv 0A, 12/24/06). In the interview, Malee frankly admitted that she did not value English learning when she was in school. Malee also had bad attitudes towards her English teacher when she was in junior high school. She said:

When I was young, I didn't care much about English at all. I studied English because I had to take the exam. Although I liked English, I didn't feel the need to practice by myself outside school. It may be because I was so young and always wanted to have fun. (M-Interv 0B, 1/18/07)

I thought that my English teachers had really bad English pronunciation with strong '*Thai style*' accents. ... I started to compare their accents to the accents I heard from the movie. I didn't like my teachers' accents at all. I thought I hated that accent and the teaching '*style*'. ... I began to pay less attention to the class and tried to use outside classroom media such as music and movies to help me improve my English '*accent*' since then. I think this became my habit and belief that if I want to be good in English, besides learning in the classroom, I had to find other sources of input to help me learn and practice. (M-Interv 0A, 12/24/06)

Although Malee had negative feelings toward her English teacher, she had a strong desire to acquire the English language so she sought for input outside the classroom which could help her reach her goal.

According to Malee, her family did not support yet did not discourage English learning. In terms of education views, she saw her family as an average Thai family which was “‘*okay*’ with English language and English learning”. Her father earned his Master's Degree in Germany; therefore, he did not favor English much. On the other hand, her older brother valued English. He graduated from a private International university in Thailand and was now working using a lot of English language.

In the second interview of the pilot study, Malee told me that when she entered English major, Faculty of Education, she found that she was so behind compared to other

friends (M-Interv 0B, 1/18/07). She met many friends who she looked highly upon in terms of English proficiency who tried to practice English and advance their proficiency in every way at all times and everywhere. She told me that these friends made her push herself harder and try to develop her English proficiency to be accepted among friends. Moreover, she now sees the importance of English language. Malee has positive feelings towards English language and English language learning.

Malee's ultimate goal for learning English is becoming a bilingual person. In her opinion, a successful language learner is a person who is able to communicate using English meaningfully, understand culture of the language, and use the language appropriately according to discourse and context. Malee's favorite English skill is speaking which is the skill she thought she was best at. She wrote in her Reflection Essay that "I speak English fast and fluent. My friends always compliment me that I have very good accent. Some said that I pronounce like a news reporter. I am very proud of myself" (M-Ref 2, 12/29/07). Besides having a good accent, Malee saw herself as having a good to excellent command of English in all skills.

Overview of Malee's Daily Routine and Out-of-class English Activities Involvement

I first observed Malee from December 18, 2006 to January 12, 2007 which was in the middle of second semester of 2006 academic year. Therefore, Malee always got up very early and drove to school. She usually studied, reviewed the lessons, and worked with friends on group assignments while she had free time at school. After school, she drove back home and relaxed, watching television. Malee always listened to the radio

(English songs channel) while driving. After dinner she usually checked her e-mail and worked on her assignment on the computer along with listening to the music.

I met Malee again and did some additional observations and interviews from March 3, 2008 to May 16, 2008. During the summer break, Malee tutored English to two students for four hours a day on Monday and Wednesday. On her free day, she helped her maid with the easy chores such as sweeping the floor and doing laundry. She always listened to English music and sang along while doing the chores. She sometimes watched movies from the cable television or rented DVD with her maid. Besides that Malee preferred going shopping at least once a week, she went to the local coffee shop to relax, to listen to her MP3, and sometimes to read a book, a newspaper, or a magazine. Another of Malee's every day routine is e-mailing. She spent at least half an hour every day checking, reading, and sending e-mails.

Malee saw herself utilizing and merging out-of-class English environments into her daily life routine. She saw everything as opportunities for her to practice English. She also believed that "the main part that makes my English 'okay' is the English activities outside classroom, not English 'course[s]' I took at school (M-Interv 1, 2/27/08)." The fact that Malee participated in many English activities is not because she solely wanted to learn English. Malee did not let any learning opportunity pass her by without grasping it. Although many English activities which she was involved in were based on her preferences, she utilized them cleverly and resourcefully. In Malee's opinion, using out-of-class English environments helped her develop her English proficiency. She wrote:

I think when I know something but I don't use it, I tend to forget. Therefore, I try to use it again and again, so that I can remember it. It is like the saying '*You hear, you forget; you see, you remember; you do, you keep*'. For me the best way to develop my English is to use it again and again until it becomes a part of me just

like Thai language. I try to use English environments as much as possible. I think what I gain from English activities is when I use them over and over. For example, I listened to the same song more than ten times in order to get some pronunciation of words. Another thing is I use English environments until I am used to them and feel no difference using English in those activities or feel comfortable and have no pressure using English in those activities any more. (M-Ref 14, 6/9/08)

Using English through out-of-class English activities is a way of language skill building, according to Malee.

Malee engaged in many English activities although she told me many times that she was too busy studying to do other activities in English. I observed that she spoke English to herself and wrote English notes for herself all the time. Furthermore, Malee always listened to and sang English songs. She also used e-mail and read almost everything in sight, especially posters, street signs, advertisements, product labels, and menus. In short, besides many out-of-class English activities, she used the following four environments most extensively: songs; herself; e-mails; and posters, labels, signs, and logos which I illustrate in the following sections.

Listening to and Singing Songs

Malee's life often included English songs. Listening to and singing English songs were her favorite activities. Malee listened to the music at least three hours a day on average. She listened to the music while she was doing many activities, for example, driving, doing chores, studying or reviewing for the lesson, taking public transportation such as the BTS sky train. While Malee was driving to and from school and home, she usually listened to the radio and sometimes CDs. She liked to listen to the radio because

it played billboard hit songs. It was a way for her to know what songs were popular right now so that she was not left behind, she explained.

Moreover, she had an MP3 full of English songs, which she listened to when she was at school, at the coffee shop, and on the BTS sky train. There were many times that Malee was listening to her MP3 while reviewing her lesson at the common area when I met her.

I love my 'MP3' player. It is compact enough to take with me everywhere so that I have songs to listen to anytime I want. I have hundreds of English songs in this little 'MP3'. ... I listen to it when I study. I find myself having better 'concentrat[ion]' if I listen to the music while studying. The only concern is I tend to lost control of myself and sing along with the song instead of reading. Therefore, I have to restrain myself from singing along. (M-FN 4, 12/22/06)

Malee kept her MP3 along with the headset with her all the time. She showed me her big handbag and told me five things she must have with her in the bag: a wallet, mirror, handkerchief, cell phone, and MP3. When Malee was at home, before she started to work on her assignment, she always listened to the music and sang for few minutes. She mentioned:

I always listen to the music and sing for a few minutes before I start working just to rouse my feeling and 'mood'. I normally sing English songs. While working, I usually don't listen to the music since I tend to sing along when I hear the music. When I feel bored or tired from work, I stop working to sing songs just like 'recharg[ing my] battery'. After I feel recovered, I will back to work. (M-Interv 0B, 1/18/07)

Malee loved singing and listening to English song very much. During the summer break, Malee helped her family with some chores. I saw her carrying her small boom box, which played English songs either on a CD or on radio channel, with her everywhere when she mopped both first and second floors. When she went to the back of her house

doing laundry, she also carried the boom box with her. I observed her sing along the songs and sometimes did little dance while mopping the floor and ironing. Malee admitted that she loved singing. She shared with me one day while we were eating,

When I like a song, which I normally hear from the radio, I will try to catch the lyrics of that song. Then, when I get home, I usually look them up on Google. I type in some words or phrases that I can catch and remember. After that I will download that song, listen to it, and try to get the lyrics out. I will blank the part I don't know what it is sung. Next, I will google the lyrics and compare my version to the original one. I think it is very fun and challenging to see how much I get it right. Finally, I will practice singing along. (M-Ref 6, 3/2/08)

Besides singing privately at home, Malee went to sing karaoke with her friends once every three or four weeks depending on how busy she was. She usually went there with her English major friends such as Opal and Kate (another participant for my pilot study). She usually sang English songs but sometimes she had to sing Thai songs depending on the group of friends they went with. For instance, on her friend's birthday, Malee went to sing karaoke with their friends who were non-English majors. She sang only two English songs.

[At the karaoke,] all the girls sat on the sofas and started to choose the songs to sing. Three non-English major girls were in charge of choosing the songs. Malee added her opinion once in a while. She chose her favorite song, "Eternal Flame." Kate asked for her favorite Thai songs too. We ordered some coke along with the popcorn.

They started to sing. Most of the songs were Thai songs. Everybody sang together although only two persons held the microphones. Everybody could sing all the songs that were on so far. I noticed that all of them were very familiar with all the Thai songs that they chose. Then, when "Eternal Flame" came up, only Malee and Kate [another participant for my pilot study] sang this song. The other two girls [Malee's Thai major friends] sang only with the hook part as the chorus. After that another Thai song came, everybody in that room sang together. (M-FN 12, 1/12/07)

After Malee and I left the place, Malee complained that she could not sing as many English songs as she wanted because only Kate and she were English majors and the rest were her Thai major friends. She mentioned that it was totally different when she went singing with her English majors friends (M-FN 12, 1/12/07). She usually went to karaoke and sang many English songs with her English major friends including Opal. It seems that going to the karaoke is very common for Malee and her friends and they enjoyed this type of activity.

Music for Malee is more than music. She did not listen for English songs for pleasure or for fashion only. She saw music as the most important out-of-class English activity which she did most often and from which she learned English the most. When I asked Malee what she learned from listening to and singing English songs in the interview, she answered:

I love singing. I think singing a song is good '*pronun[ciation]*' practice. I learn a lot of pronunciation and stress. I think the pronunciation and '*stress*' catch my ears the most through the songs and not through the '*dictionary*'. It helps me speak English fluently and naturally. ... Moreover, I get a lot of '*synonym[s]*' and vocabulary words which need to be rhymed with others. I also learn '*sentence structure*', modified words, and where I can put these modified words. (M-Interv 3, 5/12/08)

Different styles of songs have different language styles as well. For example, the lyrics in '*hip-hop*' songs usually have specific language styles, full of slang and informal language. If we compare the lyrics in '*hip-hop*' songs, those in '*pop*' songs, and those in '*country*' or '*folk*' songs, we will see the different language style. (M-Ref 2, 12/29/07)

According to Malee, English songs are an excellent source for her to practice pronunciation and learn language style and culture, both of which are not easy to acquire from the textbooks used in the classroom. In addition, Malee wrote about the usefulness of songs in her reflection journal:

My new activity now is rapping. I watched the movie *'Step Up 2'* and I really like the song *'Low'*. I now practice rapping this song. I try to imitate the singer and concentrate on the *'accent'* and *'intonation'*. If I find some words that I don't know while singing, I will open the dictionary to check their pronunciation and their meaning. I sometimes open the Internet. For example, I found the word *'shawty'* and *'shorty'* in this song *'Low'* many times. Therefore, I checked their definition from the Internet and found that they are urban slang for a girlfriend or any girl just like *'baby'* or *'babe'*. ...

Listening to music helps me a lot in language learning. It makes me see how people really use a language in the real world as opposed to the textbook world. For example, the grammar rules that I have learned for years, third person singular noun takes verbs with *'s'*. This rule doesn't hold true for the song *'Love is Color Blind'* song, in the *'hook'* the singer sings *'It don't matter'*, not *'It doesn't matter'*. However, if we look closely, this sentence is *'ok'* for some groups of people and in some contexts. I think this is important for English teacher and this cannot be learned from regular English class in school. (M-Ref 6, 3/2/08)

From this reflection journal, Malee not only practiced pronunciation while singing songs, but she also learned vocabulary and sentence structure. Malee picked up a lot of slang, group specific language style, and language culture from songs, especially hip-hop and rap songs. However, Malee realized the danger for “other language learners who might not aware of this discourse specific language and might misunderstand that this language style was acceptable in academic field and use it as Standard English” (M-Ref 6, 3/2/08). Therefore, Malee recommended that teachers acknowledge the students and introduce them to different types of discourse contexts so that they understand how to use language appropriately in different situations (M-Ref 6, 3/2/08).

Talking to Friends and Self

Malee talked to herself and her friends, especially with Leo, wrote English reminders and notes, and used English in her lecture notes and reading notes for herself. Moreover, she always spoke English to herself. I saw her complain in English to herself

in low voice. Most of the time, the topics were about the weather, the traffic, and short everyday expression. There were many times during the observation that I misunderstood Malee as talking to me while she was talking to herself. For example, on the way back home one day, we were in the car and Malee was driving. She turned on the radio (English contemporary songs channel) as usual. The traffic was bad and Malee seemed to be so annoyed. She uttered, “*How come the traffic is this bad! I should have left earlier.*” Then, I asked her if she was talking to me. Malee answered that she was complaining to herself. Malee did something like this many times. Usually, she pronounced short English sentences, for example, *‘I can’t believe it is winter time...too hot.’*, *‘What should I do next?’*, *‘Who’s calling?’*, *‘Turn left here and turn left again next traffic light.’*, *‘Thank you.’*, *‘What did I do?’*, and *‘Oh, sh*t!’*. Malee reported:

I talk to myself a lot such as steps of what to do first, next and last. They are short sentences or *‘phrase[s]’*. I also have bad habit using some English swear words and slang such as *‘sh*t’* and *‘Oops’*. I got all these from the movies. I try to catch some of the swear words or *‘slang’* from the movies since they are real language that people normally use and are not taught in school. (M-Interv 0A, 12/24/06)

Moreover, Malee talked to her English major friends in English sometimes. She often spoke English to Leo, her close friend. The conversations were usually about how they thought about the class, their friends, and what they would do after school. They sometimes discussed their group project assignment in English. When they did not know how to describe their idea or vocabulary in English, they substituted Thai sentences or words.

During the exam period, I noticed that she tutored herself in English. She recited what she read from the book or her note in English with the closed book. Many times, she did that with her eyes closed and a lot of hand gestures. Not only did she tutor herself in

English, but she also wrote some notes in English. Malee usually had her own short note after reading a textbook. For instance, she wrote, '*Gram-Translation → Non-Eng teacher/use mother tongue/read Eng. sentence and translate to native lang*'. Additionally, Malee wrote English reminder notes. She noted down in a small Post-it paper things such as, '*e-mail Aj. [Professor] David about HW*' and '*Room 512 at 3pm*'. I observed that she also made her grocery shopping list in English. I went shopping with Malee at the supermarket. Malee pulled out the shopping list which was in English and she read it out loud to herself. In the note, there were words like '*bread*', '*jam*', '*Coke*', '*tissue*', '*BD card*', '*scotch tape*', and '*clip*' (M-FN 17, 4/6/08). During shopping, she pronounced the product label to herself and murmured some English sentences to herself such as "*I need strawberry jam. What else?*" (M-FN 17, 4/6/08)"

Malee thought that talking to herself in English was one of the good ways to practice English. She could practice her pronunciation, stress, and intonation. Moreover, it helped her with the fluency. She noted in the interview:

I don't want to be able to speak English moderately just for communication as a lot of people may want. However, I want to be able to speak with accuracy, fluency, and an excellent accent. (M-Interv 1, 2/27/08)

Talking to myself helps improve my '*speaking skill*'. It helps me practice '*express[ing]*' myself, my feelings, and my ideas. I speak more naturally, more fluently, more '*professional[ly]*', and with more confidence. It also helps enhance my '*presentation*' skill. ... I don't think I learn new things from speaking English to myself. It is more on skill practice. (M-Interv 2, 4/3/08)

Moreover, Malee reflected about using herself as a way to practice English in the Reflection Essay. She explained that speaking to herself is "the best, easiest, and most convenient way to practice English. We need nothing but ourselves" (M-FN 18, 4/11/08).

We don't have to depend on other factors and environments. We can use ourselves as a source for practicing English. If we want to practice speaking English, we can start by talking to ourselves. We can build up self-confidence by talking in front of the mirror or close friend. (M-Ref 7, 3/15/08)

Although Malee mentioned that talking to herself was convenient in that she did not require any external environments, she faced a problem in doing so.

There were many times that I was talking to myself while walking and people looked at me like I was insane. At first, I was embarrassed and I stopped talking to myself immediately when people looked at me. Now, I am used to those looks and do not care anymore. I think that if I want to practice English because I want to have '*perfect speaking skill*', I don't have to pay attention to what other people think of me. However, I believe that there are many people who feel embarrassed because of those looks, thus, stop practicing speaking to themselves. (M-Interv 3, 5/12/08)

Malee realized the potential problem that she had to face if she talked to herself.

However, she saw the gain from doing so. Therefore, she decided to continue using self as an essential English environment to practice her English.

Doing Internet Activities

Malee used the Internet a lot, both at the computer lab at school and at home. The Internet activities she participated in were IM chatting through MSN, e-mailing through Hotmail, and browsing Internet websites. First, MSN chatting is the activity that Malee did occasionally, two or three hours per week on average. Malee chatted with her Thai friends using both Thai and English depending on the chat partner. Usually, Malee would sign in the MSN and stay online while working on something else. She would chat with friends to whom she wanted to talk. In other words, Malee did not intend to MSN chat with her friends as a major activity in front of the computer.

Additionally, Malee wrote, read, and forwarded e-mail both in Thai and English depending on the situation and the receiver. Moreover, Malee subscribed to the daily horoscope website which sent her a short horoscope via e-mail every day. The Daily Horoscope was sent to the subscribers with two or three short informal English sentences every day. Figure 1 below is one of the e-mails that Malee got from the Daily Horoscope.

Dear Malee,

Here is your couple's love horoscope for Friday, January 5:
Something unexpected is going to challenge the way you think about your relationship. It shouldn't be a deal-breaker, or even close to it, and in fact it may very well bring you much closer together.

Will your love last? Find out with a free Psychic Love Reading. Call 800-648-2152. Check out your horoscopes for yesterday, tomorrow, or today's extended.

P.S. Find lost loves, old friends -- anyone! Millions are listed, just click here to start your search!

Warm Regards,
<http://www.astrology.com/>
<http://shop.astrology.com/>

Figure 1. Daily Horoscope e-mail message.

Retrieved through forwarded e-mail on January 5, 2007 (English language in original).

Malee spent about two to three minutes almost every day reading the horoscope, usually before working on her homework. Although from the example, the Daily Horoscope was relatively short, Malee definitely learned some new vocabulary and practiced reading.

I have subscribed to the 'daily horoscope' since when I was a freshman at first because I want to check my fortune. ... Sometimes, I don't understand the meaning of the forecast. I think the language used in the horoscope is usually difficult to understand and needs further 'interpret[ation]'. There are a lot of adjectives. I learn another type of writing style. The writing style is usually not very direct and straight to the point. It will not say black or white, for example.

Instead, it will say *'maybe black or black with some grey'*. I understand that the writer tries to leave some gaps for errors and variations. I learn many vocabulary and *'slang'* words. It is interesting to notice the choice of words the writer used. (M-Ref 3, 1/5/07)

In addition, Malee thought she practiced interpretive reading and developed a positive attitude toward reading from reading Daily Horoscope. Besides reading Daily Horoscope from e-mail, Malee used the Internet for various activities including joining the Hi5 network, downloading songs, watching music video, and browsing websites from search engine.

Malee joined Hi5 network website less than a year ago. One major reason for joining the Hi5 network website was "because all of [her] friends were into *'Hi5'* a long time ago. Therefore, [she does not] want to be left out (M-Interv 2, 4/3/08)." Yet, she did not use it extensively and obsessively. She checked her Hi5 network website to see if there was any new comment once every week or once every two weeks. Like Opal's Hi5 profile page, almost all of the comments from other people to Malee were in Thai. However, she told me that she usually posted comments to other people in English although some of her friends satirized her for using English language in Hi5 network website. Malee wrote everything in her Hi5 profile page in English including two short journals. In both of her journals, Malee used informal language and conversational style such as *'wanna'* and *'Mm...I'm thinking about getting a new account on multiply.com'* (M-Hi5, Aug. 20, 2008). Moreover, she used abbreviations such as *'lol'* for laugh out loud, *'coz'* for because, and *'net'* for Internet.

Most of Malee's friends including Opal and Namtip used Hi5 network website as a channel to give friends updates about her stories and to get updates about friends'

stories, news, and photos, to get in touch with each other, to meet with people and to build a social network. Malee also used Hi5 network website to get in touch with her friends. She felt that she needed to be active in Hi5 network because almost all of her friends were extremely active in Hi5 and spent hours reading different comments on their friends' profile page. Malee showed me her Hi5 profile page one day that we were in the computer lab in the Faculty of Education (M-FN 13, 2/27/08). While her profile page was loaded up, there was a song "Leaving on the Jet Plane" by one Thai female singer whom she said was her favorite singer. She seemed embarrassed by her Hi5 profile page since "it was not beautiful compare to her friends' including Opal's." In addition, Malee used the Internet to listen to English songs, download songs, search for the lyric of songs, and watch music video through YouTube (www.YouTube.com). She stated:

I use the '*Internet*' to listen to and download songs a lot. It is free and I don't have to buy the '*CD*', the whole '*album*', for only one particular song. I can find almost every song in all styles and from all singers from the '*[Inter]net*'. I also like to watch '*MV*' [or music video] to see how the '*MV*' links to the song so that I can sing it in the right emotion." (M-Interv 2, 4/3/08)

Malee downloaded songs from the Internet and put them in her MP3. She bookmarked many websites about songs. She reported that she also used the Internet to do the research for both academic and non-academic purposes.

Malee set her home page to Google search engine because she used this page most often. Malee informed that she '*google[d]*' for everything, for example, lyrics, traveling information, celebrity information, photographing techniques, information for assignment, English grammar, and language learning. She wrote in her reflection journal,

I '*search[ed]*' for '*esl*' and '*learning English*' from the '*Google*' and I found many good and useful '*website[s]*'. I used some of them as references for my teaching. When I have free time, I like to browse English learning and teaching

'web[sites]'. Sometimes, I 'save[d]' them so that I can revisit them whenever I want. (M-Ref 9, 4/18/08)

After Malee typed in keywords that she wanted to find in the Google search engine, I observed that she scanned through the search results. She explained that she first read the website's name and then read the given short description of the website to see if it related to what she wanted. She opened the website and browsed through the website very quickly. If she found that the website was a good one, she would read it again, this time in detail. She usually bookmarked the websites which she thought were interesting and useful. She once mentioned that she learned so many things from browsing Internet websites. She explained how useful the Internet was to her:

Not only can I practice my English skills from reading websites with skimming and scanning techniques, learn new vocabulary, and writing style, but I also learn new information about anything I want to know. I have to say that the Internet broadens my world. It is like the whole world is compiled as soon as my finger tips touch the keyboard. (M-FN 13, 2/28/08)

Malee continued talking about the Internet in the interview, "I think the 'Internet' is useful. We can search anything in the world from the '[Inter]net'. However, there are only a few students who use it cleverly and take advantage of this invention (M-Interv 2, 4/3/08)." She, moreover, commented that one reason that her friends did not use Internet much might be because "some of [her] friends did not have the 'Internet' access at their home (M-Interv 2, 4/3/08)." Malee also noticed that first most of her friends use Thai language in most of the Internet activities. Second, most of the activities in which many of her friends engaged were non-academic related. In other words, Malee said they engaged in Internet activities for fun. Malee explained that her friends did not use the Internet for academic purpose much and they did not read English language websites. In

sum, Internet access provided access to both academic and entertaining activities. She used both though she believed her friends did not use the Internet to enhance their English learning much.

Reading Posters, Signs, etc. and Listening to announcement

“I read everything: ‘*menu[s]*’, product labels, street signs, ‘*poster[s]*’, or even ‘*napkin[s]*’,” said Malee (M-Interv 0B, 1/18/07). She did not exaggerate because I observed her read almost read anything she came across. Malee, moreover, reported that she also read the product label in English when she went shopping. However, she said “I did not really take it seriously and look at the ‘*dic[tionary]*’ to find the definition of the words there. I read it roughly. Yet, at least I read it (M-Interv 0B, 1/18/07).” Furthermore, she reflected her reading habit:

I like to read English versions of product labels and compare them to the Thai versions. I would like to know how the Thai version was translated into the English version. ... I remember that I learn the word ‘*rinse off*’ from the shampoo bottle. I compared it to the Thai version. That is how to know its definition. (M-Ref 17, 7/10/08)

One day during lunch hour, Malee and I carried our lunch from the canteen to the student common area (M-FN 11, 1/12/07). We decided to sit at an available table. As soon as we sat down, Malee looked at an A4 size black and white flyer which was taped on the table. The flyer advertised the talk entitled ‘*Sufficiency Economy is more than having vegetable plots in the school back yard*’. Below the information of the talk, speakers, places, and time, there were four pictures of vegetables with English name of each vegetable: ‘*celery*’, ‘*asparagus*’, ‘*Swiss chard*’ and ‘*rhubarb*’. Malee looked at the pictures and vocabulary, pronounced the words in low voice. After that she pointed at the

word and asked me what the '*celery*' was. I told her that it was exactly like one of the Thai vegetables but bigger size especially the stem part. She also asked me about '*Swiss chard*' and '*rhubarb*'. It is interesting that Malee noticed this flyer right after we put our plate on the table and sat down, even before I saw it.

Another instance is when we went to the karaoke together with her friends. We walked pass the MBK and Siam Center shopping mall to the karaoke. We took the escalator to the second floor where there was an advertising poster of a vitamin on a stand placed near the beginning of the escalator. I noticed Malee read the word '*multivitamin*' to herself in her soft voice. Later on, when we walked pass the restaurant with a big poster of special menu at its window, I heard Malee repeated words to herself, '*Tuna King*', '*Grilled Salmon*' and '*Tuna steak*', (M-FN 12, 1/12/07). I think that Malee was not aware that I was watching her all the time because I was walking behind her and pretending to pay attention to her friends by walking and talking with them.

Malee did not only read the posters and labels, but she also paid attention to the public announcement. She wrote:

Besides singing and speaking to myself, one strange activity I like to do is criticize other people's English usage especially with speaking, pronunciation, and accent. When I go shopping in the mall, I always listen to the public announcement, for example, '*Attention please, ...*'. Sometimes, there are both Thai and English versions. I like to compare them. I also like to think what I would say in English from listening to the Thai version if I were the announcer. Another bad habit is I like to criticize the announcer's '*accent*'. If she has an '*ok*' accent, I will repeat after her. Yet, if she has a bad accent, '*soooooo Thai accent*', or mispronounces some words, I will usually pick on those mistakes. (M-Ref 3, 1/5/07)

Malee once mocked the announcer's bad accent when we were shopping in the mall one day (M-FN 21, 4/30/08). While we were walking, there was an announcement, '*Attention*

Mr..., please come to the customer service on the first floor. Thank you '. Malee stopped walking and smiled. Then, she repeated what the announcer had said in a mocking way. She admitted that this was a bad habit to make fun of people. However, she said she had never made fun with people to their face to make them embarrassed. She also concluded, "although it might look like I picked on someone's weak point; it was my way to practice English and to live my life in English contexts (M-FN 21, 4/30/08)."

Malee definitely thought that she learned much vocabulary from reading the posters, labels, and menus. She told me in the interview that "I think out-of-class environments affect English learning a lot. For example, we can learn many vocabulary words from the board on the aisles in the '*super[market]*' such as '*beverage[s]*', '*dairi[es]*', and '*detergent[s]*'" (M-Interv 3, 5/12/08). Furthermore, Malee gave me an example that at first she did not know that '*together*' must be used with the preposition '*with*'. After reading that napkin, she learned '*together with*'. She recalled seeing this phrase in English grammar textbooks; however, she could not remember it, not until she found this phrase, used in a meaningful way, printed on that napkin of [an American franchise fast food restaurant] (M-Interv 0B, 1/18/07).

Although posters, signs, and labels were useful for English learning in Malee's opinion, she found mistakes in many of them. For example, when we went shopping together at the Dunkin Donut store, Malee nudged me and asked me to look at the sign on the wall near the stairs. The sign said '*Please Beware Your Head*'. Malee read it out loud and asked me if it was correct. I asked her what she thought. She answered that she thought it should be '*mind your head*' instead of '*beware your head*'. She continued, "I think '*beware*' should be used with sentence like '*beware of dogs*' and not within this

context.” Malee finally commented that she felt bad knowing that people might learn wrong grammar from this sign (M-FN 17, 4/6/08). This excerpt along with the excerpts above, therefore, evidences that Malee opened her eyes and her ears to all English media she encountered: poster, advertisement, product label, restaurant name, and announcement.

Participant’s Perspectives on Out-of-class English Learning Activities

Learning English language from activities outside the classroom is very important for any English learners, in Malee’s opinion. She reflected very interesting opinion on English learning:

Many people still have a belief that learning English is studying grammar and reading a book about ‘*English usage*’. I do not agree with this. I think we can learn English not only from the books but also by using the language. We can learn eng from everything. The teacher can teach you something but we can learn from friends, songs, advertisements, websites, newspapers, comic books, etc. I want students to see that everything can be their teacher because you can learn so much from them. Everything can be a source of knowledge. It really depends on us whether or not we are ready to be a student and learn from it. (M-Ref 8, 4/10/08)

Not only did she think that out-of-class English learning was useful for English learning, but she also thought that “English knowledge from the classroom only is not enough for us to use in the real life” and learners need English knowledge from outside the classroom as well (M-Ref 4, 1/12/07). She, furthermore, stated:

English language from the classroom is full of ‘*pattern*’ and ‘*form*’ with very formal discourse. In normal life, people don’t use that type of language in the everyday conversation. If we use that formal pattern language in conversation with someone, he/she will think that we speak very strangely. I think the language from the classroom is good for writing. For me, I learn everyday use of English language from all media outside the classroom. I learn it from movies and songs. (M-Ref 4, 1/12/07)

In her opinion, out-of-class English environments provided another type of language discourse, different from the one she learned in the classroom. She valued English language she gained both from the classroom and outside the classroom with the restriction of appropriateness of usage in different contexts.

Case 4: Namtip

Description

Namtip was a pretty looking 20-year-old young woman with ivory beige skin, round face, big round eyes with 5.1 feet height and 105-110 pounds weight. She had medium long rich black hair which was always held in pony tail style with bangs. She liked to dress in a modern teenager style: baggy blouse, fitted pants, big belt, and pointed high heels. She wore light make up with natural look on overall but heavy smoky eyes style which was the trend for teenagers.

Namtip was an optimistic, vivacious, friendly, and outgoing person. She always appeared with a big bright smile even when she was busy working on the assignment. I found it is very easy to talk to Namtip as she was a chattering and responsive person. She liked to be critical of everything and exercise her brain through analytical thinking about what she saw or heard. She was smart and very mature especially in terms of her critical thinking ability, her viewpoint about English learning, society, and other Thai teenagers' way of life.

Namtip lived with her mother, father, and an older sister in a medium size Province in North Eastern part of Thailand until she went to Chulalongkorn University.

Her mother was a public high school English teacher. Her father was in the military. Namtip went to school in a public school in her hometown and graduated high school with the above 3.50 GPA. She passed the National University Entrance Examination to the Faculty of Education with above 80% English subject score. After that she lived in the semi-private university dormitory, located next to the university area. Namtip visited her family every holiday or long break. She had one aunt who lived in Bangkok and with whom her family stayed when they came to Bangkok.

Although the rent of her dormitory is two to three times more expensive than the university dormitory where Opal lives (yet cheaper than the private apartment where Benya lives); Namtip's room is bigger, nicer, and newer. She had one roommate, who was back to her hometown during the period that I observed her. In the room, Namtip had an air-conditioner, cable television, fan, Internet access, and dorm-size refrigerator in her room. All furniture was build-in type. She had a private bathroom which she had to share with her roommate only. In her room there was a stack of DVDs near the television and a bookshelf at one corner. The bookshelf was full with books: novels, fantasy fiction, handouts and course packages, a dictionary, and few textbooks.

Namtip was interested in dancing. She joined the same dance group at the College as Opal. Namtip was very physically active. She mentioned she had to play sports or dance at least three times a week. She regularly played sports, badminton, tennis, and volleyball, especially with her best friend, Nong who was studying at Kasetsart University (another big public university in Bangkok), and Nong's friends.

English Learning Experience

Namtip expressed her interest in and her positive attitude towards English language learning. She told me that she loved English language very much. She first had a formal English education when she was in grade five at a public school in Sisaket. However, she knew English before that time. She shared her English learning story with me. She mentioned that her mother forced her to learn English ever since she could remember. Moreover, Namtip reflected on her childhood life in her reflection journals which were in English. Note that Namtip was the only participants who wrote every reflection journal in English while Benya and Malee wrote one English journal and Opal wrote hers all in Thai. Namtip wrote:

'Apparently I've been raised extremely differently from kids my age. When I was in grade school, I have so many classes to take. After school, I had piano lesson till five. ... As well, I remember taking dance class, voice lessons, and extra English class. ... I wasn't allowed to watch Thai TV shows or any Thai channels. All I got to watch was Disney, Discovery channel, National Geographic, Cartoon Network, English only for sure, and some other channels that provide English. ...

When I was little, I had no idea what the kids at school talking about. It was very strange for me that they did not know anything about English. When I started to talk with them, they would think that I'm a weirdo because they don't know what HBO or Cinimax is. ... I felt left out. I didn't like it then. However, I love who I am now. Now I know why my parents treated me this way. All the opportunities they offered creates value in me'. (N-Ref 3, 4/17/08)

When Namtip was in school, she studied English grammar just like other public schools which emphasized grammar and memorization of the rules. She also noted that her school did not focus on English at all. Math and science were more important and got attention from teachers and students. In her opinion, English was taught due to the National curriculum which designated English as compulsory beginning in the fifth grade. However, based on her experience both in middle school and high school, English

was not the major concern in school. The teachers were Thai and taught in Thai based on the textbook and exercise book. She commented:

I feel I'm so lucky that my mom is an English teacher. Therefore, I can speak English to her. Otherwise, I will end up just like my other friends who have been studying English for six to ten years but still cannot speak English except for babbling rules. My mom made me think that English is very important and should not be neglected. (N-Interv 1, 3/4/08)

Namtip saw that to learn English was not only about being able to remember the rules and pass the exam. However, she focused on the ability to use the language meaningfully. She stated that her goal in learning English was to be able to use it naturally in her daily life. Moreover, she wrote in English in her reflection journal:

'From my view point, being able to listen and speak the language properly is considered the students' priority in learning a language. I mean, what's the point of learning it if a person cannot actually use it. I've seen a number of Thai students who are excellent at grammar and writing, however, when it comes to talking, they do not seem to come up with any words at all. Most of them, in my opinion, can only use it in certain exams in classes, not in real life which is not practical'.

'A successful language learner for me is someone who is able to communicate in that particular language. They do not have to always be correct at grammar. It is fine with me as long as they can truly understand what the speaker is saying. In addition, the accent doesn't have to sound like a native speaker. ... I think we need to focus on the meaning more than the accent and grammar. It doesn't make any good if a person has good accent but not being able to get to the point'. (N-Ref 2, 4/9/08)

From what Namtip wrote, it is not surprising hearing that she felt she learned English mostly from outside the classroom, through television, music, and everything around her. Namtip, furthermore, admitted during the interview, "I like English more than Thai. I like to do all activities in English more than in Thai (N-Interv 2, 4/18/08)."

In 2003 when she was in grade 12th, Namtip joined the AFS Intercultural Programs.¹³ She passed the exam and was selected to spend one year in Chicago as an exchange student. She mentioned that she had the best time and it was one of the most valuable and memorable times for her. She said during one year in the US, she learned so many things: English language, Western culture, Western ways of living and ways of thinking, how to live and survive in a foreign country, and friendship.

Namtip was now in the top ten students in every English class. However, she rated her English skills as 4 in all skills in 5-score scale where 5 means excellent. She explained to me later one day that the reason for doing so was because she felt that there was still some room for her to improve. Moreover, she said she was not a native speaker who could speak, read, and write perfectly. In addition, she noticed that the fact that she knew about Western culture and how to use English in different contexts, all of which she gained from watching television and movies, made her more outstanding than her friends in terms of English learning.

Overview of Namtip's Daily Routine and Out-of-class English Activities Involvement

Namtip took one course during summer session which met on every Tuesday and Thursday from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. It was the Introduction to Research Inquiry course. After class, she usually went back to her room to watch television or read a book. She sometimes went out for a dinner with her friends. On the days that she did not have class, Namtip usually woke up late, watched movies, browsed Internet websites, and read her

¹³ AFS Intercultural Program (originally the American Field Service) is an international exchange program. http://www.usa.afs.org/usa_en/home

book. In the late afternoon before dinner, she sometimes played tennis with her friends, jogged, or practiced dancing. In addition, Namtip sometimes went to the pub with her friends. She outlined her routine in the first interview:

I have to watch at least one movie every day. I also have to play sports and read books. Sometimes, I listened to the radio 'online'. Well, within one day if possible, I will have to watch a movie, read books, went 'online', and played sports. (N-Interv 1, 3/4/08)

She usually called her mother for 5-10 minutes every day. Most of the time, she spoke English with her mother. In addition, Namtip frequently went to the pub with her friends sometimes with her friends from Faculty of Education and sometimes with Nong's group.

Namtip was a very active person. She always kept herself busy doing something. She said her life depended on with English language more than Thai language, especially when talking about activities she did within a day. I noticed that almost all of the activities she did within one day were in English, except for speaking to Thai people. Namtip did not intend to use English environments to learn English language. As she mentioned earlier, out of all English activities, she preferred doing (and spent most time in) watching movies, reading books, and listening to the music. Moreover, she was in the student organization at the university, the English club. The following section illustrated some aspects of Namtip's out-of-class English activity participation: watching movies, reading books, listening to music, doing Internet activities, and reading posters, signs, and reading and listening to commercial.

Watching Movies

Watching movies was Namtip's favorite activity. As mentioned earlier, she had watched American movies every day since she was young as her mother permitted her to watch only English dubbed television, video, and DVD. Current days, Namtip continued watching movies and television program in English. Namtip admitted that "I have to watch movies every day, at least one movie a day no matter how busy I am" (N-Interv 1, 3/4/08). On the weekend, she sometimes spent up to 6 hours straight watching movies (no eating and no stopping, except for going to the bathroom). On her free day, she would watch television all day long from waking up to going to bed with some breaks for meals and some Internet activities.

Namtip hardly watched English programs in local television. She always watched cable television. 80% of what she always watched was movies, 10% was documentaries, and the last 10% was cartoons and music videos (N-Interv 2, 4/18/08). I noticed that she often repeated the actors, especially when the actors used interesting sentences. She explained that she wanted to imitate their intonation and pronunciation. Namtip did not use the subtitles when she watched DVD alone. However, when she watched movies from the cable television, she had no choice about the subtitles as they automatically came with the film. She mentioned that she did not read the subtitles unless she wanted to compare the translation of the Thai subtitles to the English dubbing (N-Interv 2, 4/18/08).

I observed Namtip at her room after her summer class one day (N-FN 10, 4/17/08). She turned on the television and browsed every channel using the remote control. Finally she stopped at the Cinemax channel which was showing "Pearl Harbor". She decided to watch this movie even though one third of the story of it had already over.

She said this was her third time seeing this movie, yet there was nothing else to watch at that moment. “I do not mind watching old already-seen movies as I always picked up new points every time I watched them”, mentioned Namtip. While watching the film, every once in a while she exclaimed short phrases and interjection such as ‘*What is he thinking?*’ and ‘*Aw, man!*’ Toward the end of the movie, she commented that she liked this movie very much and that she also learned world history, the way of living of people around that time, the way they dress, and the way of thinking and reasoning.

Namtip: I don’t watch movies just for fun. I always think along. I like to put myself into the actor’s position and think what I would do or how I would solve that problem.

Researcher: Really?

Namtip: I also enjoy criticizing the characters, settings, and theme of the movie. I always ask questions such as is there any character development or improvement, what motivated him/her to do so, and what is his/her attitude. (N-FN 10, 4/17/08)

Namtip sometimes watched DVDs, especially when she was at Nong’s apartment. She told me that her friends like to watch DVDs because the movies on DVD were newer than those on cable television. They frequently rented DVDs from a video and DVD rental store near the apartment.

We often rent some DVDs and watch them together with some other friends. We usually choose hit movies. However, my friends always picked the Thai dubbed with English ‘*subtitles*’. ...

I have to admit that I am so annoyed if I have to watch ‘*Hollywood*’ movies with Thai dubbing. I feel it is hilarious seeing ‘*Bruce Willis*’ or ‘*Angelina Jolie*’ speak Thai language in the film. However, I can do anything because I am the minority in the group. Most of my friends at Kasetsart University were in non-English language majors. They don’t like English at all. They don’t even watch English dubbed movies with English ‘*subtitles*’, not to mention English dubbed without ‘*subtitles*’. Since it was useless to complain, I have to follow the majority vote. ... I sometimes negotiated with them for Thai dubbed but English subtitles. In that way, I read the subtitles and compared the two languages. (N-FN 6, 4/8/08)

Besides movies from the cable television and DVD, Namtip always went to see movies at the theater. Namtip and I went to see a movie *Doomsday* at Siam Paragon. After the movie, Namtip told me, “I just know that they use ‘*quarantine people from the pandemic area*’. It is like when I ‘*scan virus*’ in my ‘*computer*’. If it find ‘*virus*’, it will ask me if I want to ‘*quarantine*’ that ‘*file*’. (Laugh)” We, then, talked about the accent of the actors and actresses in the movie. The movie took place in London and Scotland, yet people did not speak with strong British accents. Namtip commented, “The only one person whom I can hear British ‘*accent*’ is that soldier who drove the army car. I can’t identify where they are from by their accent. I can only tell that their accent is weird” (N-FN 4, 4/1/08). This excerpt indicates that Namtip not only watched a movie for fun, but she paid attention to many details about English language such as vocabulary and the actors’ pronunciation.

In Namtip’s opinion, “I am what I am right now because of the television, not speaking to my mom and dad,” she expressed. She continued explained to me, “I gained so many things and much knowledge from watching movies: English skills, Western culture, language discourse, different accents, history, philosophy, and ways of thinking (N-Interv 2, 4/18/08).” Namtip, moreover, wrote in her reflection journal (in English):

‘Watching movie is not only for fun, but for broaden our horizons too. It gives some new knowledge for us, for example, we learn about other cultures through the stories, novels, pictures, and so on. It’s all about communication between one society to another society’. (N-Ref 1, 3/20/08)

A movie is a multi-skill media which involves watching, listening, reading, discourse, and culture. Therefore, I learn language style, practice listening, practice translation, know new words, and learn culture and all new information that the movie is about. For example, I learn the history about the Titanic from the movie ‘*Titanic*’ or the information about the ‘*Pearl Harbor*’ war from the movie we watched together the other days. I also like to analyze the characters, ‘*plot[s]*’, story, and scene in the movie. Many times I asked questions such as why the actor

did this and that way, who and what motivated him or his action, what would have happened if he didn't do that way. (N-Interv 2, 4/18/08)

One important thing which Namtip learned from watching movies besides practicing English skills was Western culture. From the movies, she stated that she saw how Western teenagers learn, for example, they went to the library, searched for information outside the classroom, tried things for themselves, challenge friends in class, discussed and raised questions in class, studied in group with friends, etc., all of which were different from Thai learning culture. "It seems that I have continually developed a new learning culture influenced by the Western learning cultures that I saw from many movies for a long time," mentioned Namtip (N-Interv 2, 4/18/08). "I also imitate Western children's life, such as playing sports during their free time, working and collecting money for themselves, and being responsible in school work and chores (N-Interv 2, 4/18/08)."

Reading Books

Namtip loved reading very much. During her free time she always read English books besides watching television. When she was in my apartment alone having nothing to do, she would first check if there was any movie on the cable television. If there was no movie at that time, her second choice of activity was reading a book. On one corner of her room, there was a bookshelf. The top two shelves were full of English books. The rest three shelves were textbooks, dictionaries, and hand outs.

When I first met Namtip, she had a book in her hand. She answered me that she had been reading this book since the beginning of the summer break. It was *Mythology*

(Hamilton, 1998). She told me, "I took a class about Western mythology last semester. It is very interesting. I got this book last semester but I didn't have time to read it. Hence, I read it now. I really love this book, (N-Interv 1, 3/4/08)." Namtip read English books almost every day. "I always read a book whenever I have free time. If I have free time even half an hour, I'll read the book. ... I can read anywhere. I don't have to do to some specific places to read." said Namtip. She opened her bag, picked up a book, showed it to me and said, "I will have a book with me all the time. If I have to wait for someone, I will read a book (N-Interv 3, 5/9/08)." She read both non-fiction and fiction, but mostly fiction. She said she chose to read a book according to theme, usually children fiction such as *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *Harry Potter*, *Eragon*, and *The Amulet of Samarkand*, and a novel, *The Alchemist: A fable about following your dream*.

Namtip liked to go to the book store in the mall. Namtip walked directly Literature section and later to Mythology section and Mystery & Thrillers section. She said she liked to read poem. In each section, she picked up some books, read some pages of the books, and put them back to the shelf. "If I do not have any book to buy in my mind, I usually look around, pick the books randomly, read the synopsis, and flipped through them," said Namtip. She told me while walking to the other section, "I want to see if the story is interesting and how language is used: too difficult, too narrative, or too abstract. Many times, I read book reviews from the Internet to get the book's name before coming to the bookstore." Namtip finally bought a book after spending about 45 minutes in the bookstore. It was a Thai language book, translated from *The Amulet of Samarkand*. She said she had already read the English version and she translated some chapters to

Thai language. Therefore, she would like to compare her Thai version to the one done by the professional translator. (N-FN 14, 4/29/08)

For most of the books Namtip read, she bought them from the bookstore. She did not borrow from friends or library because she said she wanted to own it. She explained, “I feel happier to read my books than to read borrowed books. I can do anything with my book, I can write anything in it and I don’t have to worry about the library due date (N-Interv 3, 5/9/08).” (The library allow only 3 weeks for borrowing a book.) In addition to the hard copied books, Namtip read electronic books (e-books). She subscribed to an online library website (<http://www.questia.com>) where she could read many books online which cost her about \$100 per year. She read many books from this e-book website, for example, *Moby Dick*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *A Perfect Day for Bananafish*, and *I Hear America Reading*.

When reading books or e-books, I noticed that Namtip neither read out loud, nor repeated the sentence out loud. She did not open the dictionary to find out words she did not know; rather, she tried to guess the meaning from the context clues. She, furthermore, mentioned that she often laughed when reading a book. “I don’t put myself into certain character of the book. Instead, I like to view each character from the outside and ask such questions as why he/she did so, why the writer described it this way, and what I would do if I were he/she (N-Interv 3, 5/9/08).”

Namtip saw reading as having a similarity to the movies; both of them depicted stories of someone or something, yet in different modes, picture and sounds for movies and letters for books. She mentioned that she learned many things from reading books much as she did when watching movies.

I 'copi[ed]' many words that I have read to my writing. I often remember the English words, 'idiom[s]', and writing styles from what I read and try to use them. I think learning is knowing and being able to use it correctly. If we receive the knowledge but it is still stuck in our head or it is still be in the same form and we cannot use it meaningfully, we did not learn but we just know it. ... Sometime, I use it wrong, though. I saw the word 'study book' somewhere in a novel. I used it in my paper for my writing class. My professor said that it was wrong, thus, changed it to 'textbook'. (N-Interv 2, 4/18/08)

In addition, Namtip noted, "I like to compare the writing styles from different style of books. I like to see how the writer described things using different language style in fantasy books, romantic novels, and mystery books (N-Interv 2, 4/18/08)."

I observed Namtip read *A Perfect Day for Bananafish* on e-book website that she subscribed to (<http://www.questia.com>) and we discussed this e-book reading (N-FN 5, 4/5/08). Namtip told me that she used to be a person who could not read anything from the computer monitor. The first time when she read the e-book from the website, she did not like it as it gave "different feeling from holding a book in [her] hand and read it page by page." She now felt that reading the e-book was convenient since she could do other Internet activities while reading the e-book such as downloading songs and MSN IM chatting. According to Namtip, she could concentrate on reading the e-book more than reading the actual book if she had to do other Internet activities.

With regard to the e-book membership, Namtip realized that the subscription was expensive. However, she decided to be a member of the website because she could read many books from the website through the membership.

There are many good books that I would like to read which are not available in Thailand or are expensive to buy. I think if I read ten books from this website per year, I am in a good shape because English books are way more expensive than Thai books. Plus, I can read more than 6,000 books in all fields. I think it is worth every penny. (N-FN 5, 4/5/08)

She moreover explained that the only problem with reading the e-book was that she had to have a computer and Internet access to read it, unlike paper-based books that she could read and carry with her anywhere.

Listening to and Singing Songs

Like many other teenagers, Namtip enjoyed listening to English music. She usually listened to English songs through the Internet and MP3. She always listened to the live USA radio on the Internet. "I like to listen to the radio because it has many sections: songs, spots, short news, and DJ's talk," said Namtip. She continued, "I listen to 'America[n]' radio because I want to update myself. I want to know how the world is moving now, what topic they are concerning, and what music style and popular songs people are listening now" (N-Interv 2, 4/18/08).

When Namtip heard a song anywhere and she liked it, she would search through the Google website its lyric from the Internet using a phrase she could remember from the song. She would first read the whole lyric one or two rounds. Moreover, she searched for that song and downloaded it to her computer. She then sang along with the song using the lyric she found. "I want to know the lyric because I want to be able to sing along the song, 'rap' the song and I want to know what he/she is 'rap[ping]'," she explained (N-Interv 2, 4/18/08). Furthermore, I asked her if she opened the dictionary to look up any new words or pronunciation. She answered she did not use the dictionary for this matter at all.

Namtip occasionally listened to the music when she was working on her homework assignment. She would not listen to the music when she had to work on any

project or assignment which needed a lot of concentration. “I tend to sing a song when I hear it. It distracts me. Therefore, I will listen to it only when I am working on something which is not that important and doesn’t require a lot of brain work,” she replied while laughing. While working, Namtip sometimes downloaded songs from Internet websites. Furthermore, she often watched music videos from the YouTube website. She mentioned that she liked to see how the dancers dance in particular song, so that when she heard this song in the pub she could dance like them.

Going to the bar was one of the activities Namtip did that was associated with English music. She usually went there with her five to seven friends both male and female friends.

Namtip: I went to Nung-Len [which is a bar/bar in Bangkok] with my friends.

Researcher: How often do you go there?

Namtip: Once a week. I normally go there on Monday and Wednesday. I used to go there four nights a week last semester. This sounds like I am a ‘party girl’. A lot of people think that way. I don’t ‘care’ though.
(Laugh)

Researcher: What do you do at Nung-Len?

Namtip: We ate, listened to the music, sang along, danced, drank, and talked. Sometime, we just hung out there.

Researcher: Why do you go to a bar if you just want to hang out with friends? Why don’t you hang out at the restaurant or shopping mall?

Namtip: I like the atmosphere there. It is fun when you sing in the ‘pub’ with your friends, especially when you shout the hook part together. (N-Interv 2, 4/18/08)

I joined Namtip and her friends at Nung-Len bar one night (N-FN 12, 4/25/09).

We arrived there around 8 p.m. Because Namtip and her friends came to this place very often, they were very familiar with the place and all the waiters and waitresses there. We got a table which was a small round table and ordered some food. While eating, Namtip and her friends talked about several general and random topics: summer school, friends,

school, friends, movies they went to, celebrities, places and activities they did, and gossip. The DJ played medium fast hip-hop songs. Around 10:00 p.m. when there were more people in the place, the waitpersons came and cleared all the chairs. Then, the DJ played faster songs, mostly hip hop and rap songs (all in English). Namtip and her friends started to dance and sing songs at the table.

Namtip told me the day after we went to Nung-Len that when she first came here with her friends, she did not know any single song they played. After that night she looked them up on the Internet. She did not know the name of the songs but she could remember the 'hook' part of some songs; so, she 'googled' the lyric of songs from the 'hook' part. Then, she practiced singing and rapping those songs. She said:

I learn a lot from trying to sing those songs. In addition, I feel so good when I can sing the songs they play at Nung-Len. When I can sing along those songs, I feel that I am a part of the place and people there. Additionally, I enjoy dancing more when I can sing. (N-FN 13, 4/25/08)

Namtip gave her opinion about going to the bar and language learning. "Where and when can you listen to and sing along English songs non-stop for four or six hours?" she raised the question while looking at me. She continued:

Sometimes but not often, I went to karaoke. However, my friends and I sang both Thai and English songs and we usually stayed there for two or three hours 'max'. I listened to the music when I was working but not for long periods of time. Hence, NungLen [pub] is the only place that I can think of that I can stay with English songs the longest time. (N-FN 13, 4/25/08)

Namtip thought that listening to English music was a beneficial activity for language learning. She could practice her pronunciation and listening. "For me, it also helps increase my self-confidence in speaking English. I think I speak English with more confidence after I sing many English songs," she noted (N-Interv 2, 4/18/08). Moreover,

in her opinion, hip-hop and rap music was an excellent language learning source. She mentioned that she learned both language style and culture from hip-hop and rap music.

I like to read the lyrics of 'hip-hop' or 'rap' songs. It is different from many regular love songs. I like to see different ways to express the same thing. I mean song writers use totally different styles of language. Everything is different, not only language style. The perspective on things is different. For example, the explanation of love in 'jazz' songs is a sweet thing. Love in 'pop' songs is about perfect love, two people together, or sometimes sad love. But love in 'hip-hop' songs is direct, many times about physical involvement. ... I think listening to hip-hop or rap music can broaden children's mind. They can learn different ways of living, ways of thinking, and cultures from this medium, which in turn will develop creativity and critical thinking skill in them. (N-Interv 3, 5/9/08)

Songs for Namtip are media from which she could learn culture, perspectives, and self-confidence in speaking. Unlike Malee, who claimed she picked up sentence structure and practiced English sound pronunciation from listening to and singing songs, Namtip focused more on sentence level and stated that songs helped her intonation and fluency in speaking.

Reading Posters, Signs, Merchandises, Commercial, Etc.

Namtip did many activities outside classroom in English. She also read almost everything she saw daily that was in English. She had good habit of reading and noticing English environments around her.

I read everything in English. I like to interpret the hidden message of what I read. For example, the shopping bags of the Lotus, [a super-center,] say 'Always low price'. I first interpreted that this supermarket tried to promote their price not their product quality. The next question is why they promote their low price. It is because people like low prices.

Another example is the cosmetics advertisement on the commercial monitor screen at the 'BTS' sky train station, 'Pond flawless white'. When I first heard this I didn't think about it much but repeated the phrase to myself. Then, I asked questions, why 'flawless' and what it means. I later on opened the 'dictionary' to see its definition. (N-Interv 3, 5/9/08)

When we were in the shopping mall, Namtip nudged me and indirectly pointed to a man who was standing, talking on the phone. She asked me to look at his T-shirt, which is a black shirt with white printed, *'I'll stop wearing black when they invent a darker color'*.

- Namtip: Isn't it an interesting sentence?
Researcher: Yes. What do you think?
Namtip: Is there any color which is darker than black? Who would invent a darker color than black?
Researcher: Right.
(We both looked at some clothes. After a moment she nudged me.)
Namtip: I get it. Since there is no color that is darker than black, *'I'll stop wearing black when they invent a darker color'* this sentence means *'I will never stop wearing black'*. What do you think? (N-FN 8, 4/13/08)

From this excerpt, Namtip not only exercised her opportunity to learn English from out-of-class English environment, reading an English sentence from a t-shirt; but she also practiced her inference thinking skill in interpreting the sentence.

Namtip also read the menus, street signs, and product labels. She told me that she learned the word *'free radical'* on the label of a cosmetic.

I know the word *'radical'*. My native speaker friend also told me once that *'radical'* or *'rad'* is a slang for cool or fine. I now know two meanings of this word. I know that this *'radical'* has different meaning from what I knew. Because the *'free radical'* is something that is bad for the health and the *'antioxidant'* can help prevent this free radical damage to the body or something like that, according to the label. I add this as the third meaning of this word. Then, I try to think of different meanings of *'radical'* that I know, where I usually find this word, and when to use it. (N-Interv 3, 5/9/08)

Namtip emphasized the importance of environments outside the classroom, especially those children always see in their everyday lives yet usually did not pay attention to such as posters, signs, and labels. She realized that she "learned English from

looking, watching and seeing. For example, everywhere I go, I see things in English. I

learn from what I see (N-Interv 3, 5/9/08).” She continued:

I think ‘poster[s]’, ‘menu[s]’, street signs, etc. are the English learning source which is easiest to find. Actually, we don’t have to search them. They are available out there waiting for us to make use of them. It is strange that not a lot of learners consider them as a learning source. I don’t understand how and why learners neglect them. (N-Interv 3, 5/9/08)

In addition, Namtip explained that in most cases, especially street signs, menus, and labels, the English version came with Thai version. She admitted that sometimes she felt too lazy to read English version. “Many times I felt that it was so tempting to read the Thai version when there was no need and no force to read English version. I think many people feel that way and end up with reading the Thai version,” said Namtip (N-Interv 3, 5/9/08). However, she told me that she managed to read everything in English as much as possible. “My friends mocked me for thinking too much about everything. They don’t understand why I like to critical think about and interpret the phrase on the plastic shopping bag or the slogan of the advertisement on the poster,” she added (N-Interv 3, 5/9/08). “Some of them think that I am weird or will go crazy soon if I don’t stop thinking this much. Yet, I don’t care about their criticism. I think this is the way I will learn which will benefit me,” Namtip expressed (N-Interv 3, 5/9/08).

Doing Internet Activities

Namtip accessed the Internet wireless through the university since she lived in the semi-private university dormitory which had access to all university facilities. Once she turned on her computer, she would connect to the Internet. She stated:

I think I use the Internet a lot. I use it for many activities” reading ‘*online*’ e-book, ‘*[down]load[ing]*’ songs, listening to the live ‘*online*’ radio, watching ‘*music video[s]*’ and dance routines from ‘*YouTube*’, ‘*e-mail[ing]*’, ‘*MSN*’ IM chatting (sometimes), reading ‘*review[s]*’ of books and movies, visiting Hi5 network website, searching information, and reading ‘*website[s]*’. ... Ninety percent of the above activities that I do were in English language. I think this makes me different from many of my friends. They do not use English in Internet activities much at all. They use Thai language in ‘*e-mail*’, ‘*M[SN]*’ IM, ‘*Hi5*’, and search engine. (N-FN 5, 4/5/08)

She normally checked her e-mail (through Hotmail) once every day or at least once every **two** days. She sometimes e-mailed in Thai because her friends always sent her e-mails in **Thai**. The Internet activities that she always used in English language were searching **information** through search engines and using Hi5 network website.

The Internet search engine she used was Google which she also set as her **homepage**. I noticed that Namtip used Google to search for everything, especially lyrics **of the** songs, song download websites, movie reviews, book reviews, articles and data for **any** homework assignment, and any other information that she wanted to know at that **moment**. Furthermore, I observed Namtip searched information about the Trojan War (N-FN 5, 4/5/08). “I was working on ‘*Helen of Troy*’ for my ‘*summer*’ course ‘*project*’. I **read** some articles I searched from ‘*Google*’ and came across the ‘*Trojan War*’, so I want **to know** more about it,” Namtip said. She typed in keywords, ‘*Trojan War*’. After the **search** result came up, she browsed and skimmed through the description to see which **one** would relate to the topic she was searching for, she explained to me after she finished **working**. She clicked on some links that she thought might relate to the topic. She told me **that** she first skimmed through the article to see if it was interesting. If so, she then would **read** it again carefully, she stated.

Regarding Hi5 network website, Namtip checked her Hi5 profile page at least three times a week. She informed me that she used Hi5 mainly to update information about her friends. In her Hi5 profile page, she uploaded many of her pictures. Namtip wrote everything in English in her Hi5 profile page, personal information, location, interests, favorite quotes, photo albums' names, and journals. In her opinion, "the journal is like a short message I want to leave to everyone who visits my page. It is the place where I can complain, show my feeling and my thought just for fun," she mentioned (N-FN 5, 4/5/08). In each journal, Namtip used very informal language with colorful text and variety of fonts. The length of the journals was different, from 20 words to 150 words. Figure 2 includes some excerpts of Namtip's journals which are exactly copied from three different journals from her Hi5 journal page.

MIDTERM-ExaM Coming up!!!!
CRAM it, Man!!!

I'M noW getting older and Older!!
I 've never expected that I would be 21 years old !!
~Kinda funny!!,but it 's TRUE huh!
mIllions of thNx for All kinds of moraL supPorts n' cutie gifts!!!

BTW, once in the blue moon , I have plenty of time to drop at
this cherish journal so as to let all my stress* out!!! YippY!!!

Figure 2. Namtip's journals from Hi5 website.

Retrieved July 10, 2008, from <http://hi5.com/>. Used with permission of the author.

(English language and emphasis in original.)

Namtip read her friends' comments and sent comments to her friends both in Thai and in English. "If possible, I will send English comments. However, I have to send '[com]ment' in Thai to some friends since they would not read English comments," she explained (N-FN 5, 4/5/08). Namtip, furthermore, joined the ESL group (English as a Second Language group) in Hi5 network website. Sometimes, she posted some questions to the group. She told me that some members answered her questions and they began to have a group discussion. "It is good that we, who have something in common, interest in English language, can talk to the topic that we are all interested in," said Namtip (N-Interv 3, 5/9/08). She was also a member of Hip-hop Dance group, AFS Thailand, and Edu-Chula group (Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University group). According to Namtip, doing activities in Hi5 network website was fun and interactive, especially with the comment application. She could correspond with her friends as well as with her friends' response to her journal.

Besides Hi5, Namtip had the Facebook network website account (www.facebook.com). She informed me that she used to use Facebook network website as her international friends introduced it to her when she was in the US for the AFS exchange program. She used it for a while and had many international friends there. However, most of her Thai friends did not use Facebook network website but they addicted to Hi5 network website. "I need to contact with my Thai friends more as I am now in Thailand. Thus, I switched to Hi5 because it is more popular among Thais. It is like a fashion activity. I don't want to be left out," she accepted (N-FN 5, 4/5/08).

The Internet was one of the most educative environments in Namtip's opinion. Not only did she practice her English skills through reading websites, writing journals

and comments in Hi5 network website, and listening to songs from YouTube, for example, but she also learned about topics she searched for. Namtip continued discussing about the usefulness of the Internet:

I think you can find everything from the '*Internet*'. In the old days, if you wanted to find something, you had to open the '*encyclopedia*'. Nowadays, you can search the '*[Inter]net*'. It is even better than the '*encyclopedia*' because the Internet search results usually yield multiple sources. Therefore, we can read along and acquire information from various '*website[s]*'. Moreover, it is like a big '*bank*' that you can deposit and withdraw anything to and from. I can '*upload*' all '*file[s]*' and pictures. At the same time, I can '*download file[s]*' from it too.

Namtip usually did multiple tasks on her computer. While Namtip was working on her project, typing on MS Word, I observed she downloaded songs, opened her e-mail website, logged on the MSN IM, and opened her Hi5 profile (N-FN 14, 4/29/08). Although Namtip did not use the Internet search engine to look for English grammar learning websites like what Malee did, she researched both academic and non-academic related topics, all of which were in English language.

Participant's Perspectives on Out-of-class English Learning Activities

According to Namtip, out-of-class activities are very important and useful for her to learn English language. In her opinion:

A classroom is like a narrow world, too narrow. The lessons that we usually learn in class are not what we usually find in our daily lives. Moreover, it is boring since learning in class focuses on memorization. I want to learn to be able to use English, but not to be able to remember things and/or pass the exam.

I can practice using English through all these activities and then I remember. I think using out-of-class media are better than knowledge reading textbook which is so boring. I think these out-of-class activities enable me to face with and practice English in real situation with real language. (N-Interv 2, 4/18/08)

Namtip personally engaged in many English activities outside of classroom and she was satisfied with the degree to which she used out-of-class English environments right now (N-Interv 2, 4/18/08). She, furthermore, gave an insightful comment on out-of-class English activities:

I think all English activities are important and useful. However, it really depends on how much a learner can take these environments and use them usefully. For example, if I have '*cable TV*' at my home but I don't watch it, the '*cable*' TV is useless. For me, I think out-of-class environments are important because I like English and I want to learn more about English. These activities give me chances to learn and to know more about English language and culture. I don't have to go abroad to see people's way of life, I can watch it from the movie, for example. ...

I come from rural area. I went to my elementary and high school there. The first time that I entered Bangkok was when I got into the Faculty of Education. I think in the rural area, students have '*TV*', library, book store, radio, etc. I think it really depends on the students whether to take those opportunities and act on those English activities or not. It also depends on how much parents and teachers support the out-of-class English activities. (N-Interv 3, 5/9/08)

Therefore, in her opinion, out-of-class English activities were very important. One interesting point she made is that, more important than having access to those activities is actually participating in them.

Conclusion

This chapter followed my four participants' engagement in English activities during their free time as four students. I interpreted their routines from my participant observation and other gathered data sources in the light of five themes that upon close observing seemed to emerge from them as a group. In these next three chapters (chapter 4, 5, and 6), I look at a somewhat broader comparison and contrast of each theme that emerged across the four cases. These chapters will explore the more obvious similarities

and differences between the participants regarding their experience and their perception in English activities in the context of each of their lives in order to come to a deeper and more complex understanding of their engagement in out-of-class English activities. In other words, in chapter 4, 5, and 6, I focus on cross-case analysis to answer the following three research questions:

1. How do the participants perceive access and availability of out-of-class English activities in local environments?
2. How do the participants engage in out-of-class English activities in local environments?
3. What perspective do the participants have on out-of-class English activities?
What factors affect their participation in such activities?

CHAPTER 4

PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTION OF OUT-OF-CLASS ENGLISH ACTIVITIES IN LOCAL ENVIRONMENTS

In this chapter, I look at my first research question on affordances which the out-of-class English environment present to the participants as well as some problems that intervene with their use of English artifacts. I organize my chapter into three subsections according to my first research questions: What access to out-of-class English activities do the participants perceive they have in the Thai context? In order to answer this question, I further asked two questions: (a) What does the local environment afford in terms of English language use? and (b) How did participants perceive and utilize these affordances?

In the first section of this chapter, I start by examining the available out-of-class English activities and artifacts that exist in Bangkok and Chulalongkorn University (CU) contexts. In the second section, I discuss the access to English activities which the participants perceive they have. The relationship between the first and second section gave me better idea of the reason of why the participants do or do not perceive certain activities as English language affordances. Moreover, I examine some qualities of the out-of-class English activities which enhance participants' engagement. In the last section, I consider the factors that facilitate or hinder the participants' involvement in out-of-class English activities.

Introduction

Living in Bangkok, it is clear that the participants and other learners encountered English artifacts in their everyday lives. However, many scholars (e.g., Carr, 2000; Greeno, 1994; Norman, 1988) do not overgeneralize or conclude that learners will perceive all present English artifacts as language development sources. Norman (1988, as cited in Carr, 2000) elaborated on his explanation of the term “affordance” from Gibson’s (1979) original definition, to include both an individual’s perception of an action available of an object and the reality of actions available to an object. Simply put, an artifact will have two properties: its action “possible” properties and its “perceived” properties both of which are equally important.

To elaborate, movies in English have general properties of watchability and listenability. At the same time, they also have other possible properties as English language sources; read the subtitles; recognize vocabulary, grammar, English usage, and slang, and notice western culture. Its perceivable properties, however, may not be the same as its actual properties depending on each person and his/her background, capability, interest, purpose of use, etc. Different learners will perceive the same American movies differently. Some may recognize the possible opportunities to listen to English pronunciation and slang. At the same time, some may only perceive them as a good source of increasing vocabulary. There are also possibilities that some learners may not be able to perceive them with any English language affordances. This group of learners may only view an English movie as an artifact that they watch, listen to, and enjoy the story of but not as an artifact for them to use to develop English language skill or enhance their English exposure.

Living in the same environment, while some learners like my participants perceive many opportunities to use English artifacts, some do not. Indeed, Greeno (1994) notes that “[i]n any interaction involving an agent with some other system, conditions that enable that interaction include some properties of the agent along with some properties of the other system” (p. 338). He also suggests that we need to justify “whatever it is about the agent that contributes to the kind of interaction that occurs ... I prefer the term *ability*” (p. 338, emphasis in the original). Therefore, what is equally important as looking at the availability of English artifacts outside class in learner’s area is examining how learners perceive their access to out-of-class English artifact.

Possible Access of Out-of-Class English Activities in the Local Environment

In this section, I analyze the affordances which the out-of-class English environments present in Thailand. More specifically, I give an overview of the available or “possible” access to out-of-class English activities in Thailand, more specifically in Bangkok and around CU neighborhood, where all participants spent their everyday lives.

Bangkok

I now take Bangkok as the unit of analysis because all participants went to college in Bangkok and lived in Bangkok although some of their hometowns were outside Bangkok. Bangkok is the capital city of Thailand; therefore, it is the most developed and modern city though not the biggest city in terms of size and population density. The government has promoted Bangkok as one of the tourist attractions in Thailand. As a

result, English language appears everywhere to aid the tourists, including Tourist Information Center. Therefore, in this environment, there are many available English resources around the area in various forms, modes, and contexts, some of which are free and others are available at different cost.

The local television broadcasts some movies in English with choice of Thai dubbed or English soundtrack and Thai subtitles. There are some short programs (10-30 minutes) about English teaching and learning hosted by both English native speakers and Thai people. English local news is on air on one local channel every day by Thai reporters. Additionally, the cable television is also available via membership. The cable television offers American movies, series, documentaries, sports, BBC, NBC, etc. Some radio channels play English songs only, yet, the DJs are Thai and speak Thai. Moreover, there are more than 20 movie theaters around Bangkok which show both Thai and foreign movies both in sound track and Thai dubbed. Many bookstores are in shopping malls around the city.

Two major English newspapers, *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation*, are available in most bookstores. Furthermore, there are free English-Thai bilingual magazines offered at many big bookstores and Starbucks coffee shops. English music CDs and cassettes, as well as Western movie videos and video CDs and DVDs are very easy to find. Many shopping malls, department stores, supermarkets, restaurants, as well as other entertainment places, such as karaoke places, bars, and bowling alleys, play English hit music and offer bilingual signs and announcements. Likewise, almost all street signs in Bangkok are available in bilingual forms. Everything at the sky train stations (BTS) and subway stations (MRT) including signs, ticket vender machines, advertisements, maps, as

well as announcements are in Thai and English. A free English newspaper, *Daily Xpress*, is distributed at many BTS and MRT stations.

In addition, the English language is used in many media mostly along with the Thai language. It appears in names or brands of restaurants, products, companies, magazines, and music bands. Moreover, as mentioned earlier in chapter 2, Thai people borrow many English words and phrases and use them in Thai sentences such as “computer,” “e-mail,” “Internet,” “TV,” “tissue [paper],” “hello,” “bye-bye,” “Happy Birthday,” etc. Many teens’ language includes more English language such as “love,” “cool,” “in-trend,” and “fan club”. Thus, there are many advertisements that use English words or phrases to catch people’s interest.

When I looked closely at language style in each artifact, I found that there are both Standard and non-standard English. English language in the newspapers and street signs as well as other artifact, especially from the government sectors or mogul public companies such as in the BTS and MRT stations, are in Standard English, mostly in British style, for example, “Mind your step”. However, some of the posters, signs, advertisements, magazines, and announcements, especially in the malls and from private parties, are non-standard English and some are ungrammatical or misspelled. In chapter 3, Malee caught an error in the warning sign in the franchise restaurant, “Please beware your head”. Moreover, she liked to criticize the poor accent of the announcer in the shopping mall.

With the abundance of English language around people in their everyday lives in Bangkok, it can be said that learners will come across English language every day more or less. It is true that some learners may encounter with less English language than others

depending on their economic status (e.g., the non-free access such as cable television) and means of transportation (e.g., the uncontrollable music played in mass transportation), for instance. However, they have an average amount of English language input from street signs, signs, posters, public announcements, and other English words and phrases used in people's everyday lives. That is Bangkok environment affords the opportunities for learners to see English language enough to be familiar with it and not to think that it is an alien language. In addition, it offers a wide range of access for learners to get involved in English activities outside the classroom. These affordances of out-of-class English access, however, do not guarantee awareness of those opportunities.

Chulalongkorn University and its Neighborhood Area

As mentioned earlier, Opal, Benya, and Namtip lived in or close to the university campus. (See Appendix B for the map.) Although Malee did not live in the university area, she had to come to the university every day during the semester. She sometimes came to the university on the weekend and during the school break to meet with her friends for both academic and nonacademic purposes.

In CU area, there is the Internet wireless connection available for learners with the university identification number login and password. All learners, moreover, have 50-hour per month quota of Internet access outside CU area. There is one main library and a library in almost every Faculty including the Faculty of Education. The main library and the Faculty of Education library have both Thai and English, academic and non-academic books, newspapers, magazines, journals, as well as DVDs. The computer center located in most of the libraries has the Internet connection and other basic software programs

such as Microsoft, Internet Explorer, MSN IM, and Window Media Player (for watching videos and listening to music). In short, besides English courses, CU offers English learnability and usability for learners through all these resources.

CU is located near downtown and in one of the most developed areas in Bangkok. From the map, there are five big major shopping malls and one shopping center in walking distance from the university with the movie theaters, restaurants, bookstores, and other entertainment places. These places are famous among CU learners including the participants. Many CU learners spend time with friends after school or on weekend in these malls, eating, watching movies, shopping, singing in the karaoke place, bowling, etc. These shopping malls usually play English songs and offer both English and Thai language in almost everything because they have high rate of international tourists visiting the place. At the Siam Square (number 3 on the map in Figure A2 in Appendix B), there is a big screen projector on the building which broadcasts both Thai and English hit music videos and upcoming Thai and English movie trailers.

In sum, living in Bangkok and studying in CU, the participants were in the environment that had much available English access. This access was varied in terms of forms, media, and expense. Much English access was free and closer to the participants' lives. Street signs, posters, names of places, and product labels are free accesses that are everywhere and, most of the time, come in bilingual versions. Compared to many other provinces and other universities which are not located in the city area, Bangkok and CU afford much possible English language access that participants could find and use outside the classroom.

Perceived Accesses of Out-of-Class English Activities in the Local Environment

In this section, I first discuss out-of-class English activities that participants perceived as opportunities for English learning. Next, I analyze the qualities of the out-of-class English activities which enhance participants' engagement.

Perceived Access in Out-of-Class English Activities

Although environments in Bangkok and in CU area offer English language affordances, only some learners take advantages of them. Many of the participants' friends did not perceive any English exposure opportunities although the artifacts were out there everywhere. With regard to Norman's (1988) notion of affordances, English newspapers are no different than other Thai newspapers if learners do not perceive them as an English reading source in addition to reading them or understand them. In that case, an English learning affordance does not exist. Therefore, it is worth examining what access to English activities the participants perceived they had.

Unlike their friends, the participants perceived some affordances but not all opportunities presented in Bangkok environment. They were aware of many English learning opportunities around them. Although their goal of engaging in many English activities was not English learning intention, they were aware of the opportunities to pick up English. For example, Namtip read English fiction for pleasure, yet she recognized new vocabulary. Therefore, the book offers an affordance of vocabulary learnability to Namtip, as she perceived it that way. Furthermore, Malee, who lived around seven miles from the university, and who thus took more than half an hour in the traffic driving to school, listened to English music from the radio or CDs. While some of her friends, who

listened to same English songs as she did, did not perceive them as having the English practicability property, Malee saw the learning potential in listening to those songs.

In addition, the affordances of public signs and warning signs, for many people, are only for giving information, direction, and caution. Malee and Benya added another affordance to those signs as they could pick up English from them. Malee saw a good opportunity for her to pronounce signs to practice her English accent. I noticed Malee pronounced restaurants' English names and restaurants' window promotion posters such as '*Tuna king*', '*Tuna steak*', '*Grilled Salmon*', and '*Buffet Salad Bar*'. She repeated the word '*grilled*' three times tried to pay attention to her pronunciation on /gr/ sound (M-FN 12, 1/12/07). Furthermore, Benya wrote in her reflective journal about the signs in the women's room in Siam Paragon, MBK, and Siam Center. (See Figure A2 in Appendix B.)

Today I felt bored and didn't want to stay in my room so I went to '*Paragon*' with the only goal to get out of my room and (maybe) find something to eat. ... I went to the women's room and found the sign, '*Please check your belongings before leaving*'. Luckily, I had a notebook with me. So, I wrote this sentence down in it. I also found another sign over the washbowl area '*kindly keep the area clean*'. I started to enjoy this. I decided to walk to other places and find out if the signs in those places were similar. I think it is better than doing nothing and napping in my room. At Siam Center, I found '*Please check your belongings before leaving the restroom*'. I walked to '*MBK*' and found '*Do not litter*' which I first didn't know what it meant. There was also '*Improper use of sanitary Host Spray is Strictly Prohibited*' and '*Do not forget to check your personal belongings before you leave*'. ... I came back home and checked out the meaning of '*litter*'. I felt good that today I learned some new words and sentence structure. I now know that '*before + gerund*' as '*before leaving*' and word '*belonging*' often comes in plural form '*belongings*'. I learned this rule many times '*gerund*' is the '*verb*' that works as a noun by adding '*ing*' to the '*verb*'. Now I remember how to use it. (B-Ref 5, 4/8/08, emphasis in original)

From Benya's reflection and Malee's excerpt, both of them perceived public signs as an English language source. Benya took advantage of her free time while walking in the

mall and increased her language proficiency. She noticed some English signs in the restrooms, took note, and searched for the meaning of an unknown word. Additionally, Malee practiced her /gr/ pronunciation the promotion poster while her friends pointed to the pictures in the same poster and talked about how delicious the food looked. Not only did Malee exercise the available English learning opportunity as she perceived and made use of that poster, but she also used that opportunity to create another learning opportunity. Malee read and recited the English words in the poster. That she kept repeating the word “grilled” is the evidence of using the poster to create what Vygotsky (1986) called “private speech” as rehearsal.

As pointed out earlier, many CU learners and the participants usually went to these six malls nearby the campus. Opal’s, Benya’s, and Namtip’s lives were situated near these malls as well. They went to the mall at least three to five times a week. This may be because they lived very close to these malls and they could do many activities in these malls. Hence, many English exposure affordances were bounded in the shopping mall environment, tied to the culture and value of consumerism. It is also very interesting that although the participants went to the same mall, they perceived different English affordances within these same environments. For Opal, these malls, especially MBK, mainly afford a comfortable nice air-conditioning place for her to read an English novel or to pick up and read a free English newspaper, not a shopping place. Out of 193 entries of activities Opal recorded in the daily activity diary, more than half of all 64 entries of reading English books, newspapers, and magazines were done at the mall. During the observation period, the participants, especially Benya and Namtip, went to the soundtrack movies at these malls. After the movies, most of the time, the participants opened the

discussion with me either about the story, their feeling toward the movie, or some language points or vocabulary from the movie that they picked up or did not understand. In addition, although Malee did not live in the shopping mall community, all four times I went to the mall with her, she pronounced English posters, restaurant names, restaurant menus, and advertisements out loud to herself. She also repeated the English announcements at the mall. Therefore, within the same context, learners perceived a variety of artifacts, in differing amounts, and with different perceptions according to their history, interest, and motivation.

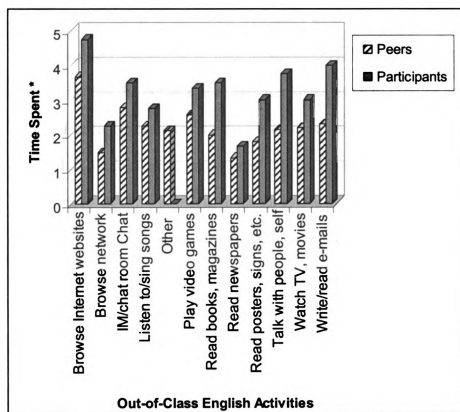


Figure 3. The amount of time spent in out-of-class English activities per week.

* Score of length of time spent on activities per week: 5 = more than 10 hours, 4 = 7–10 hours, 3 = 4–7 hours, 2 = 1–4 hours, 1 = less than 1 hour, and 0 = never

Figure 3 shows the average amount of time the participants and their friends reported they engaged in each English activity outside of class within a week. According to Figure 3, the participants reported they spent more time on out-of-class English activities than their peers did, especially in talking with people, e-mailing, and reading books and magazines. These three activities are activities that learners as well as participants have access to at CU area. Learners can speak English with friends, Native speaker professors, or talk to themselves. They have computer lab, Internet wireless, free Internet access that they can use at home for 50 hours per month, and e-mail account. In addition, they have full access to the library with many English books and magazines. Although others learners had almost as much access to English out-of-class artifacts as the participants did, they did not perceived and used these artifacts as much as the participants did. Hence, we can infer that the ability to perceive affordances which English out-of-class artifacts present as sources of language input matters for learners to perform the activities. In terms of language learning, if affordances are the linguistic potential at our disposal, a language learner is likely to notice and make use of an affordance in her use of language in a way comparable to an animal's knowledge of the jungle (van Lier, 2000, p. 252). In fact, linguistic affordances are implicitly afforded to us but we have to consciously notice, react, and exploit them. Some artifacts/actions are more enticing while others are not easily perceptible.

One set of questions I asked all participants was how they thought about the English out-of-class artifacts in Thailand. All participants answered that they perceived there were enough English artifacts available outside of class. Two of them said of the available artifacts, they made the greatest use of artifacts and to their greatest advantage

while two said they did not use them enough. When I asked them to speculate how other Thai learners such as their friends perceived the available artifacts and how they used them, two of them said their friends would think that they have enough artifacts and two of them said their friends would think we lack English environments. Moreover, they thought the main reasons for not using include (a) not knowing how to use them as English input, (b) not knowing that they are useful for English language, (c) not wanting to use them or having bad attitude towards English language. It is interesting that all participants agreed that their friends did not use the available artifacts appropriately. Although some learners bemoaned that they could not take advantage of environments due to limited access to the English environments, Malee did not quite agree with that claim.

I don't think that we lack English input. I think that we have quite a lot of English input; we have a lot of media, newspapers, 'TV', movies, songs, and much more. Everywhere, there are both Thai and English versions of things, signs, announcements, advertisements, brochures, and so forth. Yet, we don't use them much at all. So, I don't think that we have problems with inadequate input rather we have problems using the input. For example, we have some short English teaching programs on the 'TV'. These come with regular 'TV' not the 'cable TV'. If learners watch them, they at least learn something bit by bit. (M-Interv 0B, 1/18/07)

From these excerpts mentioned above, we can see that participants thought some of their friends as well as other learners in general could not see the possible affordance of English artifacts. These learners did not engage in English activities much because they did not perceive these available activities outside class as useful activities for their English proficiency and did not know how to use them.

It is also interesting to notice that although the university offers many English language resources such as books in the libraries, not all learners used these resources,

including the participants. The library did not afford out-of-class English activity engagability for the participants due to limited resources, strict policy, short period of circulation, and gloomy atmosphere, according to the participants. They, on the other hand, bought English books from the bookstores, sought English newspapers or magazines from other places, and rarely used the computer in the computer lab if not necessary.

Although in one context there are many possible accesses or affordances of English artifacts and English activities available in the outside class setting, different learners perceived these affordances differently and in various amounts. The amount of available artifacts is less significant than the amount of artifacts perceived by the learners. Only the perceived access to English artifacts is more likely to be used. Here I am not claiming that learners will engage in all out-of-class English artifacts and activities they perceived. In addition, I do not attempt to argue for the causal relationship between the length of time the participants spent and their language learning development. My focus is only on the different degree of perceivable affordances of English activities within the same environment which has the same amount of possible accesses. That is because the engagement of the perceived English activities is more complicated and relates to many other factors such as personalities and motivation which are not the focus of this section. This situation is schematically drawn in Figure 4.

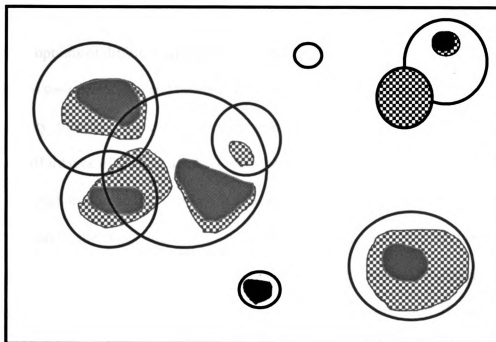


Figure 4. Possible and perceived access of English artifacts in one context.

From Figure 4, the rectangular frame represents a context (here Bangkok and CU area). Each circle represents each available access or English, some of which may link and intersect to others. For example, the English music may be linked to other artifacts such as Hi5 website. The size of the circle shows the different amount of accesses available in the context. The participants perceived only some parts of the access which is the checkered area in the circles. The amount that they were able to perceive varied depending on many conditions such as different natures or qualities of the artifacts and time. Out of the perceived access (the checkered area), the participants only involved themselves in some accesses or some activities which is represented by the grey area. Every element in this figure interrelates to each other and is equally important. The greater amount of English access available in the context may increase the likelihood that these artifacts get perceived as an English learning and practicing source. That is because

learners have more opportunities to be exposed to English artifacts. Furthermore, they have wider options of different artifacts which they may become aware of easily according to their preference and interest. This, however, did not guarantee learners' perceivability; therefore, there is some empty space outside the circles. Second, the perceived affordance of English artifacts may also lead to more involvement in such artifacts, though may depend on factors such as motivation (Greeno, 1994). Finally and most importantly, the engagement with English artifacts leads to development in English language. Van Lier (2000) strongly asserted that only when learners fully engage in the language activity, they are likely to learn or pick up language information. However, the amount of language information learners can pick up varies and depend on learners' awareness and noticing (more on which later in chapter 6), as well as other factors such as the quality of the artifact, which will be discussed below.

In this section, I looked at Bangkok as a big environment where all participants shared. I discussed what English language affordances was present in Bangkok and CU area. Later, I realized that not everybody perceived and used English language opportunities; therefore, I addressed the need to account for learners' perceivable affordances. I analyzed out-of-class English artifacts and activities the participants perceived they had access to as English language input source. At this point, I recognize that there are both gaps and overlaps of the "possible" accesses or "possible" affordances and the "perceived" accesses or "perceived" affordances of out-of-class English artifacts. My next concern is what affects these gaps and overlaps in the "possible" and "perceived" affordances, why some possible out-of-class English artifacts were and were not perceived as English language input source and whether there are some patterns

related to this or not. In the next section, I look across four participant cases in order to answer these questions.

The Affordances of Out-of-Class English Artifacts

From previous section, we can conclude three issues. First there are many affordances of English language activities outside the classroom for learners and the participants to engage in. Second, the participants perceived some of these affordances although they did more than many of their friends in their opinion. Each artifact used in the activity offers different language learning affordances which also depend on users' interpretation and perception: practice speaking, learning vocabulary and culture, practice reading, etc. Kirlik (2004) and van Lier (2000, p. 252) stated that an affordance offers further possible action. Third, out of these perceived affordances the participants were involved in some activities but not all available opportunities. It is interesting that while some artifacts are recognized by a learner or some learners, others are not perceived as English language input sources at all. All of these incidents lead me to consider the qualities or characteristics of the English artifacts or activities that lead to learners' perceivability and involvement. Here, in this section I try to discuss some characteristics of the perceived accesses or affordances of out-of-class English artifacts.

Studying the affordance of the technology in facilitating or hindering learning, Carr (2000) posited three categories of affordance found in the early childhood technological activities: transparency, challenge, and accessibility. Keeping Carr's categories in mind, I looked across the perceived access of English artifacts and those which the participants engaged in outside the classroom. I found four categories of

affordance for artifacts used in out-of-class English activities: transparency, usability, expense, and affectivity. In other words, I propose that there are patterns in the qualification of artifacts, which the participants perceived and used outside the classroom, that help trigger participants' involvement action. Similar to Carr's (2000) argument, I not only believe that each category is independent and may affect the others, but I also find that each perceived artifact or engaged activity may not consist of all properties.

Transparency

The first kind of affordance is whether the artifact or the activity is transparent to the learners or not. Transparency means that artifact/action does not merely have to be seen or visible but it has to be noticeable and understandable by the learners (Carr, 2000; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Thus, if artifacts are unfamiliar or lack transparency, the learners are more likely to focus on the artifacts themselves and less likely to focus or perceive the English language learnability in those artifacts (Roth et al, 1996, as cited in Carr, 2000). Since affordances are perceived properties, users are able to operate them by looking with no need to further instruction (Norman, 1988). In terms of language learning, the artifact needs to be transparent so that learners know what the artifact is for, its function, its goal, and how to use it to its greatest virtue which is to pick up language information. Hence, when an artifact becomes visible for English learning, learners will perceive it as a source or an activity from how they can learn or practice English both with and without learning intention.

For Namtip, everything seemed to be perceived as possible English learning sources. Printed text on plastic shopping bags, movies, and advertising posters, for instance, all afforded English language using and learning possibility. These artifacts, however, might not be visible for their language learning properties to some other learners. Although these learners watched American movies, they might not become aware of the possibility of language learning. Similarly, in Benya's case, the English warning signs in the mall or train station did not offer any other affordance besides warning or telling information. She had never perceived them as an artifact from which she could pick up any English content, not until she was scaffolded in how she could learn English from these signs. When Benya and I walked in the mall one day, I pointed out to Benya that warning signs are a good source of English learning. I showed her examples of several ways that she could learn English from the sign "Mind your step" that we saw at the MRT station, such as vocabulary, sentence structure, language culture, and pronunciation (B-FN 8, 3/27/08). Moreover, I demonstrated to her my strategy of how I practiced my English using that sign by pronouncing the phrase, analyzing its structure, linking its structure to the English grammar rule, and recalling other phrases I know that have the same structure. After that day that I scaffolded her English learning from English environments she saw every day such as signs, Benya reported she recognized many grammar structures used in many warning signs and menus. From this artifact, English signs, which Benya saw almost every day, became language learning source when she could perceive this learning affordance in the artifact. In other words, Benya started to take advantage of this artifact when its learning affordance property becomes transparent to her, here with the help and guidance of the researcher.

Learners might sometimes encounter difficulties when an artifact is not sufficiently transparent to access. However, learners can develop the ability to perceive language information from the artifact with the help of an expert or peer (Carr, 2000; Vygotsky, 1986). In the example above, the fact that Benya initially did not learn any English from the warning signs was not because of her lack of English proficiency. She was able to read the sign, understand it, and pronounce the phrase. However, she did not perceive that sign as a potential English learning source. In other words, the warning sign was not transparent to her as an English learning artifact. Therefore, an adult or an expert's guidance or demonstration helped scaffold Benya to see a language artifact as more transparent and to be able to interpret and perceive language learning message clearer as well as by drawing Benya's attention to another possible out-of-class English learning artifact.

In sum, when a language artifact is not transparent—when learners do not understand the feature or goal of the artifact or when they are not familiar with the artifact—it may not be perceived as a language learning source or may not be utilized (Carr, 2000). For example, recall from the questions I asked every participant in the last interview mentioned in the last section, that the participants stated one reason that their friends and other learners did not use some available out-of-class English artifacts was because they did not know that these artifacts would be useful for English language learning. This is evidence of the fact that when the artifacts are not transparent to the learners, learners are likely to perceive that they do not have those accesses or not to use them.

Usability

In this paper, usability refers to two aspects: access availability and capability. Learners can engage in English activities only when those activities are usable for them. For example, it is impossible for a learner to perceive and use an English artifact as an English language input source if that English artifact is not available in their environment (availability) or if that learner does not have enough English language background to use it (capability).

First, availability is whether learners have access to the artifact or not. This aspect of usability is close to the term accessibility, “which is the form of participation enabled, or afforded, by its use” coined by Carr (2000). The access availability is very important and has impact on how learners use the artifact. Opal, for example, was very active in Internet activities, especially in MSN IM. From her daily activity diary, she usually used the Internet either for MSN IM, Skype program, or online newspaper every day or at least once every other day. However, during March 22-28, 2008, she did not use any computer and Internet because her computer was broken. She complained to me during this week that she felt that “her life is in ‘*mysterious*’ because she cannot do any activity she wanted without her ‘*computer*’.” Moreover, Namtip, who subscribed to one online reading company, expressed the advantage of being a member of this reading company,

I’m glad that I subscribe to this. Although it is quite expensive, I think it is worth every penny. Now I have access to almost any books from 1950s or the best seller of this year. ... One problem in Thailand, I think, is there are not a lot of choices for English books in the bookstore or library. This online reading definitely ‘*work[s]*’ especially for a ‘*book lover*’ like me. (N-FN 18, 4/29/08)

Namtip found a way to have more access to English books through the online book reading membership. In this way, she extended her opportunity to acquire the books.

Moreover, the more access she had, the more she could use this artifact. From these two examples, both Opal's and Namtip's use of artifacts depended on the access availability of the media.

The second aspect of usability is whether learners are capable of using the artifact. This also includes having necessary background and language skill in order to perform the task. English newspaper is, of course, not usable for a learner who cannot read English or who does not have enough English competence. From the observation field note, when Namtip went to the bookstore to buy a book, she read the synopsis on the back cover of the book and the first three or four pages of the first chapter. She explained in the follow up interview that she wanted to see if the language used in that book was too difficult for her or not.

In addition, Malee tried to participate in Hi5 network. She had her account and her homepage set up. However, Malee wrote a short English message in her journal page as shown in Figure 5 below:

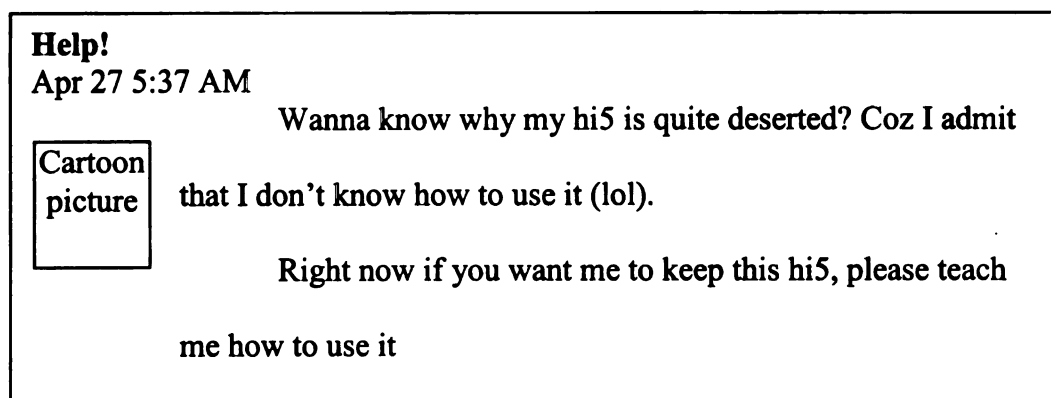


Figure 5. Malee's journal from Hi5 website.

Retrieved August 1, 2008, from <http://hi5.com/>. Used with permission of the author.

(English language and emphasis in original.)

Malee's inadequate computer skill affected her ability to participate in the Hi5 network. She wanted to use it and was willing to learn how to use it from any experts.

The last example of how learners' capability influences the perceivability and use of out-of-class English artifact is Benya's book reading activity. Benya was interested in taro reading and new age spirituality. She bought a book *The True Power of Water* by Masaru Emoto. She admitted that:

If I had not already bought it with my own allowance and if the story was not interesting, I would have thrown this book away. (Laugh) In fact, I did give up reading this book once. However, I realize that I should finish it because I don't want to waste my money and I want to know more about this 'topic'. ... The language in this book is way too difficult for me. I didn't have a chance to look at the inside of the book before I bought it since it was sealed. It took me longer time to read because it is so difficult to understand. Sometimes, I stopped reading it after two paragraphs because I could not understand it. There are a lot of 'vocabulary[ies]' and 'technical term[s]' that are new to me which makes this book more difficult. (B-FN 2, 3/15/08)

I noticed Benya made many notes while reading, circled the vocabulary and wrote its definition after opening the dictionary. Although Benya realized that she might learn many new words from this book because she had to open the dictionary all the time, she preferred reading an easier book which she could enjoy without any problem with English language.

In brief, usability is an important quality which affects learners' perception and use of out-of-class English artifacts. Artifacts which lack usability property tend to be unused, unperceived, and neglected. These include unavailable artifacts and artifacts that do not suit learner's proficiency and ability to use them, all of which can slow, impede, or discourage learners from utilizing the artifacts.

Expense

The expense of an environment suggests that the learners can afford to have the access to the artifact both in terms of money and time. One of the major concerns in using an English artifact for many participants is its high cost. Economic status was one among many topics which the participants always mentioned in conversations with me. All participants complained about how expensive English books, newspapers, and music CDs were compared to the Thai language media. The cable television membership which offers all American movies, series, and documentaries is too expensive for some learners. Opal commented that she could not watch as many movies in the theater as she wanted because they were not cheap and she wanted to save money for something else such as buying books. She had an interesting insight on how she would spend money on English artifacts. She told me while walking in the bookstore:

I would rather save my money from seeing two movies to buy one book. Seeing movies is fun but it lasts two hours. With the book, it lasts forever since I own it. I can read it again and again whenever I want. For me, it is a better investment. I wish I were a millionaire. I would do so many things. I would buy all English books, watch all movies, call Olin [from Holland] and Robert [from Netherlands] every day, go abroad, and do many other things that can improve my English. (O-FN 4, 3/13/08)

From this excerpt, one big factor for Opal to in choosing participate in certain activities over others (here reading books over watching movies) besides her own preference was the cost of the artifacts and how to get her money's worth.

The expense of out-of-class activities is very important since it can cause learners to not engage the artifact or not engaging in certain activity. Opal could not afford the expense of international calls. Opal mentioned:

I didn't have chance to talk to Rober much because the international phone call was very expensive for me. I had to ask him to call me but I hated doing so because I feel that I am so selfish. (O-FN 3, 3/10/08)

Later on, she found the Skype program which is free software that allows her to talk to anyone who has an account and is online with the Skype account through computer Internet access. She could then use it to talk to her friend without any worry about the costly international phone call rate. Therefore, expense can and may affect usability: learners cannot have the access to the artifact if they cannot afford it.

Although some English media are expensive in Bangkok, there are many sources that are available for free, such as newspapers, magazines, e-mail account, Internet access through CU account, and songs from some Internet public servers. For instance, Opal and Benya read the free English newspaper (*Daily Xpress*), distributed at the BTS stations or big coffee shops. Benya asserted discussed that she previously used to subscribe to the Bangkok post English newspaper. After she found out about *Daily Xpress*, she would never pay money for the subscription again, she said. Therefore, learners' economic status, as well as the price of the artifacts, plays a significant role in their use of those available out-of-class English artifacts.

Time is another major issue as well. It is necessary that learners must be able to spend their time to use the artifact. Malee claimed that her main reason for not using English artifacts enough is lack of time. She confessed that she did not have much time due to the heavy load of homework and assignments. Malee expressed that learners, including herself, "had to take too many courses which keep me too busy, so I don't have time left to learn or to do anything in English outside the classroom. I think that if I had more free time, I would do many things for myself, for my brain and for my knowledge".

Furthermore, the fact that Malee lived off campus and needed almost one hour and a half for daily commuting impacted her time for engaging in many English activities except for activities that she could do in the car. While driving, she did not have many choices of English activity available except for listening to news or music on the radio.

Affectivity

In this paper, the affectivity of an artifact refers to whether the artifact develops positive feeling and experience to the learners and/or fulfills learners' affective factors or not. Affective factors are things such as learners' enthusiasm, interest, motivation, self-confidence, self-esteem, attitude, emotion, and so forth. Laufer & Hulstijn (2001) stated:

All learners and teachers know that motivation promotes success and achievement in L2 learning and that learners who experience high amounts of an external or intrinsic drive or need to learn, will achieve higher levels of proficiency than learners with low levels of drive. (p. 1)

The appealing, fun, challenging, and motivating artifact, therefore, would promote learners' usage which in turn increases language exposure.

Of all English activities the participants did in their free time, most of them were non-academic, fun and entertaining activities, such as singing songs, watching movies, playing games, and browsing websites. This finding corresponds to findings from other studies. For example, Spratt, Humphreys, & Chan (2002) used a questionnaire to survey 508 learners and discovered that learners reported they mostly engaged in English activities related to entertainment such as using the Internet, watching movies and television, and reading books and magazines.

All participants reported the major reason for doing those activities was because they were fun and entertaining. Malee said, “I think for me I learn English the most from ‘*entertainment media*’ such as songs and ‘*TV*’ especially songs” (M-Interv A, 1/4/07). Both Opal and Namtip stated the first reason for reading books was because it was a fun activity, moreover. They mentioned that they did not read because they wanted to learn English. Furthermore, they picked the books according to their preference. Namtip said in the interview (N-Interv 2, 4/18/08):

Researcher: Do you like to read all kinds of books including textbooks?

Namtip: No. I don’t read textbooks or serious stuff such as newspapers.

Researcher: Why?

Namtip: I am not the ‘*nerdy*’ type of person who can read textbooks for hours. Actually, I am a bit lazy when it comes to homework and reading assignments. But reading fiction is a different story. I can read it every day, anytime, and anyplace that I feel like. It is fun.

Namtip admitted that she was not a person who could read everything. She did not read newspapers or grammar books and she did not like to read textbooks. Instead, she read novels, short stories, and fiction only because they were fun to read. Therefore, the affectivity determined her choice of participation in the activities.

Another good example of an artifact that offers affectivity is a video game. Warschauer & Healey (1998, p. 60) regarded games as “the fun factor” since they promote motivation and communicative process which are beneficial to language learning. Besides watching movies, Benya played video games almost every day. She thought playing games was the most entertaining activity that involved the English language for her. Benya, who could play games for five hours straight, described games as a “challenging, fun, and exciting” artifact (B-Ref 17, 8/26/08). Benya seemed to

embody herself into the game and the avatar and get very excited. She emotionally connected with games as she usually shouted, exclaimed, clapped, or moaned while playing. Benya commented:

If the activity is not fun, I wouldn't do it although I know that it would be useful for me. It is my bad habit. (Laugh) Who would do something boring or not interesting voluntarily during his/her free time? (Laugh) I watch movies or play 'game[s]' because it is fun. It is different from when I have to talk to Dr. Nancy because I have to tutor her, although I enjoy talking with her. I mean if I can choose I would choose to do only fun activities. I can play games or watch movies all day long non-stop. I can't do it that long with other [English] activities. (B-Interv 3, 5/13/08)

Similarly, when I asked Malee why she chose to listen to the music instead of using other English environments, she replied, "It was free and fun. I think we prefer learning from something that is fun than from serious text books. Therefore, songs are more attractive than textbooks" (M-Interv 3, 5/9/08).

To sum up, learners saw entertainment media as leisure activities which they use for having fun. When combined with English language, the participants might expect entertainment English activities to provide pleasure; and this positive expectation may lead to motivated and successful English activity engagement through an enjoyable L2 experience. Considering the participants were extremely motivated through rich, interesting, entertaining, and engaging language activities, their learning opportunity and their understanding of the English language is enhanced. Therefore, they were are likely to pay attention to English information that is presented in lively, congenial, and attractive ways from entertaining artifacts such as movies, songs, fictions, and video games.

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Another aspect of affectivity is flexibility. It refers to whether artifacts are flexible for learners in terms of language levels, learning styles, skill level, place and time to use, for example. The flexibility helps sustain learners' motivation for the learning material at hand (Strambi & Bouvet, 2003). As previously observed, many learners including the participants were full-time learners, thus, the need to balance school, family, social activity, and themselves. In order for them to use an artifact, it had to offer optimum levels of openness. Thus, they had have freedom to choose to exploit the suitable artifact according to their interest, skills, and their own pace. For example, Opal thought books afforded flexibility. During the observation period, I noticed Opal always had a pocket book in her purse almost everywhere we went. She explained that could read it at the coffee shop, her favorite place to read, or any place whenever she wanted.

Many English activities that the participants engaged in enhanced positive attitude both toward English language and toward themselves. Opal, for instance, admitted that she had a more positive attitude toward English after she engaged in the chat room communication and MSN IM chatting. Moreover, she felt more confident to speak and use English with her friends with less concern about making mistakes, she said. In addition, Benya accepted that she was proud of herself when she won the online scrabble game. She expressed, "I feel that I'm so '*cool*' when I use high-scored letters [e.g., letters x and z] to make a long word [in scrabble game]. It makes me want to know every single word in the world so I can always win" (B-FN 18, 4/16/08). From these examples, we can see that some English artifacts that the participants used improved their positive attitude towards English language learning which led to their motivation to learn which in

turn led to higher achievement (Ellis, 1994; Gardner, 1982). Furthermore, the participants developed self-confidence and self esteem from engaging in some English activities.

Many English artifacts and activities the participants associated in outside class offered the affordance of affectivity. They provided positive feeling: fun, enjoyment, and flexibility and positive attitude toward English language as well as toward themselves. Besides, participants developed some personal characteristics such as self confidence and risk-taking, which are important characteristics for good language learners (Ellis, 1994; Gan et al., 2004; Rubin, 1975).

Out-of-class English artifacts and activities that participants engaged in have some similar qualifications when compared to other artifacts that were not perceived nor used. These four qualifications are transparency, usability, expense, and affectivity. It may be likely that the artifacts or activities that have one or more qualifications I proposed will be perceived and used as English language input source. There are, however, other factors that affect learners' engagement in those English activities available outside of class which will be further discussed in chapter 6.

Summary

In this section, I responded to my initial research questions: (a) What does the local environment afford in terms of English language use? and (b) How did participants perceive and utilize these affordances? I firstly discussed the definition of an affordance and some major literatures in this field in relation to SLA. Then, I analyzed the affordances of out-of-class English artifacts in Bangkok and university area as well as the

relationship among affordances, artifacts, and participants in the out-of-class setting. I, furthermore, examined the affordances that the participants perceived in this context. After that, I categorized affordances of the English artifacts that the participants used in their routine: transparent, usability, expense, and affectivity. The next chapter supplies the answer to my second research question: How did the participants engage in the out-of-class English activities in their everyday lives?

CHAPTER 5

PARTICIPATION IN OUT-OF-CLASS ENGLISH ACTIVITIES

In this chapter I intend to analyze many aspects associated with my second research question: How do the participants engage in out-of-class English activities in local environments? I first give an overview of the type of out-of-class activities that the research participants and the four focal participants engaged in during the observation period as well as the amount of time they spent on those activities. Here, I base my analysis on data from two sources: (a) subject selection survey questionnaire which gives me a perspective across all the cases, as opposed to a source that focuses on a particular one and (b) participants' daily activity diaries which present a more focused picture of each participant. After that, I discuss the nature of the participants' engagement in out-of-class English activities including multimodal, non-face-to-face, receptive activities, and incidental English learning activities.

Types of Out-of-Class English Activities in Which the Participants Engaged

The types of out-of-class English activities that learners engaged in and the amount of time (in 5-point scale) spent in each activity in the past 3 months, which was the result from the participant selection survey questionnaire tallied from 42 students (44 total with 2 missing), are presented in Table A2 in Appendix F. From Table A2, we see that although there are a variety of English activities available, some activities are more popular among students than others. The activities that most learners mentioned doing

were browsing Internet websites (40 out of 42 learners), with watching TV and movies, reading posters and signs, and e-mailing in the second rank (38 learners). The third most popular out-of-class English activities with 37 learners said they did within the past 3 months is playing video games and joining the network website (Hi5) as well as Internet discussion (blog). Within the past 3 months learners spent the longest time on browsing Internet websites (scored 3.78) following by IM chatting (scored 2.87), and playing video games (scored 2.62). The activity that learners spent the least time on is reading newspapers.

In the daily activity diaries, the four focal participants recorded their activities and time spent in each activity within one day. Table A3 in Appendix G shows that the top three English activities that the participants on average recorded most often in their daily activity diaries are listening to and singing songs (18.85%), doing the Internet activities (16%), and talking to friends or self (13.13%). From Table A4 in Appendix G the top three English activities that the participants spent most time on are talking to friends or self (91 minutes), watching movies (48 minutes), and doing the Internet activities (44 minutes). Note that the standard deviation of the time spent in talking to friends or themselves is extremely high (148.29). During that observation period, Opal spent most of her day with her international friends who visited her almost everyday for 5 weeks. Within that same time frame, standard deviation of the time spent in watching movie (21.41) and doing Internet activities (28.00) are much lower than that of talking to friends. This data indicates that all of the participants spent time in these activities within the closer time difference.

From Table A2 as well as Table A3, we see the trend in out-of-class English activities that might appear in the participants' everyday lives. They did not suggest that one English activity is more significant than the others. Many activities were more difficult to record than others. For example, a quick glance at the English poster at the bus stop was likely to be ignored and thus was not reported as an English activity done within a day compared to a two-hour movie viewing. Furthermore, the time spent in different activities varied depending on the nature of the activity as well. Simply put, watching a movie will definitely outweigh reading and sending a text message through Short Message Service (SMS) from the cell phone in terms of time one can spend. Keeping these dynamics in mind, these findings are still interesting. First, it is worth noticing that learners spent more time on reading signs, posters, etc. than reading newspapers. According to the nature of each activity's participation time, reading signs, posters, etc. is an activity that takes very little time compared to other activities. Usually people spend less than 30 seconds reading a street sign or a warning sign and less than 2 minutes reading a movie poster. However, learners reported they spent more time on activities that included reading signs, posters, menus, and merchandise labels, etc. than on reading English newspapers. This implies that learners hardly read English newspapers (in hard copy version, at least).

Second, it shows that the Internet activities are a significant part of learners' lives. From Table A2, learners averagely spent minimal of 4 hours per day browsing the Internet website (scored 3.78, where score 3 means 4-7 hours) and one hour chatting with friends online (scored 2.87, where score 2 means 1 hour-4 hours). Table A4 also confirms this trend. The Internet activities category is ranked third on amount of time spent

(13.02%) which is approximately 40 minutes per day. Although it seems that the participants did not do Internet activities much compared to results in Table A2, there are at least two explanations for this. First, the survey questionnaires were filled out during the semester whereas the activity diaries were filled during the observation period, which was school break. Therefore, the patterns of routine may be different. For example, instead of IM chatting, Opal spent time with her international friends almost every day for 5 weeks total. Moreover, Benya spent time tutoring children 3 full days per week. Thus, the amount of time spent in each activity might vary according to routine changing. The second explanation relates to the different nature of the tools, 5-point scale in the survey questionnaire and exact number of hours and minutes in the activity diary. (See Appendix C for example of filled activity diary.) When I looked at the four participants' responses in the survey questionnaire, I found that Internet browsing was scored the highest with (scored 4.75) and e-mailing was scored the second highest (scored 4.0).

The fact that Internet activities are among the top three answers in all three tables: Table A2 in Appendix F and Table A3 and Table A4 in Appendix G in terms of average frequency and average of time spent in them indicates that learners have incorporated the Internet into their daily lives. The data gathered from the focal four participants gives at least one explanation for high scores associated with the Internet activities in both tables. They used Internet websites to enhance other activities they engaged in. The roles of Internet activities in the lives of the four participants are discussed in the following section.

Embeddedness of Internet Activities in Other Activities

The World Wide Web is a relatively recent invention. It offers its users services for searching, retrieving, and exchanging digital files. The highlight of the Internet is its extensive information worldwide. The large numbers of texts from such different sources, which are accessible within the computer monitor just a click away, combined with different formats of texts and other features such as sounds, videos, and pictures, can stimulate users' attention as well as afford opportunities for enhancing student access to up-to-date materials. All participants in the study agreed on the value of the Internet. Namtip mentioned in the interview, "The '*Internet*' is everything that you can '*imagine*' or you would like to learn" (N-Interv 3, 5/9/08)

We all agree that the Internet is an immense source of information about almost anything around the world. Researchers have studied the benefit of the Internet, especially in English language learning and teaching (Blake, 2000; Kern, 1995; Meskill & Mossop, 2000; Osuna & Meskill, 1998; Sotillo, 2000; Mark Warschauer, 1996, 2000). However, most studies have mainly focused on the Internet and its different separate functions, for example, synchronous and asynchronous communication (Sotillo, 2000) and Internet website usage (Osuna & Meskill, 1998), as well as its effect on language learning such as students' collaboration (Kern, 1995; Mark Warschauer, 1997) and students' interaction (Kern, 1995; Mark Warschauer, 1996). However, no prior work has addressed the Internet as the complement that fulfills and enhances other activities and which in turn promotes English language engagement. All of my participants both engaged in Internet activity such as e-mailing, MSN chatting, as well as browsing websites, and used the Internet as part of doing other activities such as watching movies,

reading books, and singing songs. In other words, the participants used Internet access for two major purposes: to involve themselves in the activities through the Internet and to use Internet access to enhance their other activities. I see these two categories as different from each other according to the role of the Internet activities. For instance, e-mailing to their friends, the participants' foci were on the e-mail activity itself. On the other hand, their browsing websites for song lyrics mainly focused on practicing singing songs. Therefore, Internet website reading served as the complement or enhancement to other main activities.

From the data, all participants used the Internet regularly and extensively with a variety of services including e-mailing, IM chatting, sending and retrieving files, searching for information, exchanging information through a social network, etc. Most of the time, the participants used English in Internet activities. They sometimes used Thai in some activities such as e-mailing, IM chatting, and Hi5 website posting usually depending on the receivers. In addition, one interesting pattern across all four cases is all participants use the Internet along with other activities. For example, Opal and Namtip often googled websites to read book reviews to help them decide which book to read before going book shopping. Opal often visited the NY Best Sellers website to get the list of the books, and then searched for the review of each book. Both Malee and Namtip liked to listen to and sing English songs. They went to the Internet, searched for the lyrics, downloaded the song, and listened to the song while practicing singing from the lyrics. Namtip sometimes watched music videos and imitated how the singer danced as she practiced singing. In addition, Benya read the movie reviews both in Thai and in English every week. Before going to the movie with me, she went online and checked the

movie's show time and sent me the movie trailer website's link. Some participants such as Benya and Opal used the online dictionary website to find the definition of the words they did not know when they read a book or a newspaper, watched a movie on cable television, and MSN chatted.

This Internet embeddedness in other activities is very significant. First, it enhances the quality and quantity of other activities which are the main ones. For instance, getting the lyrics and being able to download a song from the Internet helped students practice singing easily. Reading the movie review aided them in watching a movie more comprehensively and more meaningfully. When students achieved their goal in doing such English activities, they tended to do it again.

Second, because most of the Internet websites are in English or at least English-language-related in terms of content and culture, interacting with the Internet, students increase their opportunity to expose themselves to English language and culture. In order to participate in a wider community or access extra information from the Internet, students use English as a tool. Therefore, English is a vehicle to access the information, data, or files from Internet websites. Hence, they are likely to use English communicatively, meaningfully, and automatically without any concern that they are learning or using English language.

Finally, students automatically developed positive learning attitudes and learning strategies. Since students participated in this activity voluntarily, they exercised their enthusiasm in seeking knowledge and gradually developing their learning autonomy. Moreover, while searching for material from the Internet, students developed learning strategies such as information inquiry, keyword using, skimming and scanning, critical

reading and thinking, as well as questioning, all of which will be useful for them in their academic and non-academic lives.

Nature of Participants' Engagement in Out-of-Class English Activities

Although the participants were involved in various English activities outside school, there were some similarities across activities and artifacts associated with the activities. In this section, I discuss four aspects of learners' engagement in out-of-class English activities. From all sources of data, I notice that first they participated in activities which included multiple modalities and modes. Second, most activities they involved themselves in were non-face-to-face interaction activities. Third, the participants engaged in receptive activities more than productive activities. Finally, they engaged in out-of-class English activities without the intention of learning English from those activities.

Multimodal Activities

The participants spent much of their free time on multimodal English activities. The term multimodality in English refers to the activities that require participants to use more than one sense receptor to act on the activity and receive information, for example auditory (i.e., through the ears) and visual (i.e., through the eyes). These sense receptors can be for different modes of representation: verbal which includes both printed and spoken words, and non-verbal which includes both static graphic such as photos and graphs, and dynamic graphics such as video and animation (Paivio, 1986, as cited in Moreno & Mayer, 2007).

One example of a multimodal activity in this study is watching movies. Combining not only pictures and sound, but also visual subtitles, the participants needed to listen to what the actors said, watch the action, read the subtitles, and sometimes repeat what they heard or read. Benya reported her habit in watching movies:

I usually read subtitles in either Thai or English. I think the Thai subtitles make me understand the movie more. I admit that I read the subtitles all the time either when I watch movies from the 'TV' or movies in the theater. ... I really think I can practice listening from watching movies. Most of the time, the short conversation and expressions caught my ears, for example, '*That's very kind of you*', '*Long time no see*', and '*What's up?*' Although I didn't concentrate on listening to the movie all the time, I heard these sentences pass my ears which made me more familiar with the English language, its pronunciation and intonation. (B-Ref 14, 7/25/07)

The captions, when combined with picture and voice in the movies, enhanced Benya's language comprehension and listening skill. Her comment is consistent with many studies conducted in the past. Scholars agreed on the positive affect of subtitles (both in L1 and L2) on students' comprehension and/or language learning (Grgurovic & Hegelheimer, 2007; Guichon & McLornan, 2008; Guillory, 1998; Salaberry, 2001).

Another example of multimodal activity is using the Hi5 social networking website. The Hi5 website offers multimodality, visual and audio, in both verbal and non-verbal forms: pictures, symbols, texts, and songs. Unlike many other multimodal activities which normally offer only the receiver role to participants, Hi5 users are both receiver and creator or sender. Both Namtip and Opal took the creator role, having their own Hi5 account and webpage set up. They used the website's available multimodal features to create their Hi5 webpage. Namtip had English journals that she wrote about her feelings and experiences, photo albums that she took with her friends, and songs that

were automatically played after the page was finished downloading. Using the black and bright blue background with a lot of stars, Opal's Hi5 webpage was full of her photographs, slide shows, and some short paragraphs in English about herself and her favorite songs and books. Additionally, both Namtip and Opal received multimodal information from their friends' Hi5 webpage, some of which were in English. They regularly visited, read, and wrote messages or comments on their friends' pages.

The interviews revealed that Opal used Hi5 to present herself to prospective viewers. She mentioned that she used many features and the selection of background, song, graffiti, text font, as well as text wording to represent her identity in a way she wanted other people to see. Namtip said:

I wrote journals in the '*Hi5*'. I used it as a place I could complain about my life and express my feelings to my friends. ... It is different from writing in a '*diary*' to myself. [First,] it is '*public*' although I can set the people who I allow to view my page. ... [Second,] it is richer and more motivating than writing with pen on a book which is so boring. There, I have choices of font, color, picture, '*background*', etc., all of which can indicate my feelings and my thoughts. ... There are many times that I can tell how my friend is doing, from visiting her '*Hi5*' webpage, especially from the '*status*' she put down. [For example,] I saw my friend's status was '*Don't cry [her name]. You can find a better man*'. along with the choice of gloomy grey background and falling leaves. I can tell that she is sad with her heart broken and I should cheer her up. (N-Interv 2, 4/18/08)

For the participants, the multi-modes and multimodalities features helped motivate them and facilitate comprehension of the information. The combination of verbal texts and non-verbal images supplemented each other to convey message to receivers better than a single mode does separately (Gee, 2003). Thus, with additional features such as sounds and animation, the multimodal activities excel beyond a traditional approach and benefits the learning task (Gee, 2003; Moreno & Mayer, 2007).

Furthermore, many of the multimodal activities involve multiple language skills. For instance, Opal's and Namtip's participation in Hi5 network website is a multi-skill activity which require reading people's comments, writing profile, comments, and journals; and listening to songs embedded in the profile page. Hence, this type of activity allows learners to practice more than one English language skill. There are many situations in which we use more than one language skill to communicate in our everyday lives. The fact that learners involved themselves in any English activities outside the classroom which integrate the four skills emphasizes the use of these four skills together makes the use of language more authentic. In the same vein, it has been widely accepted that integrating the four skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing) can develop communicative competence, which is the main pursuit of teaching and learning in the modern society. Besides, there are other reasons why multimodal activities can benefit an EFL learner. Multimodal learning artifact is highly interactive and more flexible to accommodate learners' different learning styles (Moreno et al., 2001, as cited in Moreno & Mayer, 2007). This positive feature allows learners to willingly learn and participate in the style that they feel more comfortable.

Non-Face-to-Face Activities

Of all the English activities the participants did during their free time, they tended to engage in those activities which did not involve face-to-face interaction which also includes doing activities in the private domain instead of the public domain. For example, they read books, watched movies, listened to the songs, surfed the Internet, and chatted on MSN IM. There were only some activities which involved face-to-face interaction;

however, these were still fewer than the non-face-to-face type. For example, Benya tutored Thai language to Dr. Nancy who was an American, and Opal talked to friends who visited her in the summer.

In EFL contexts, there is often a lack of opportunity for face-to-face English activity, especially with English native speakers. Both Malee and Benya realized this limitation. Therefore, Malee tried to speak English with her Thai friends. However, she found it difficult to find someone who was willing to speak English with her and at the same time was someone with whom she felt comfortable to use English. She had only one friend who often talked to her in English when they met.

Benya, on the other hand, had almost never spoken English with anyone outside the classroom if not necessary. She once mentioned that she would be better at speaking skill if she were in an English-speaking country. Benya said that she did not have to use English with friends and people around her. "For me, I need to be forced by someone or something or else I would speak Thai all the time. I need to be in the situation where I have no choice but to speak English," said Benya (B-Interv 1, 3/1/08). Her response reflects a drawback that students in EFL context often face.

In addition, the interviews suggested that face-to-face interaction was confined to environments where there needs to be a second party present which is difficult to control. This corresponds to result of the survey questionnaire launched earlier of the project. In 42 completed questionnaires, the most often answered reason for not participating in English activities were because they had no one to talk to and/or do activities with (42.9%). Malee and Opal responded to the difficulties in finding people they could use English language with outside the classroom:

I don't think we have many opportunities to speak with Native speakers. I don't have any international friends; unlike Opal who has a lot of Western friends. ... [However,] I don't think that this is a disadvantage for me because I can do many other activities such as listening to the music, talking to myself, watching movies, e-mailing, and many more. I don't have to use English only with Native speakers. I always can practice English anytime. (M-Interv 2, 4/3/08)

If Olin and Robert did not visit me in Thailand, I would not have had any other chances to use English face-to-face with anyone. It is difficult and 'awkward' to go out into the '*mall*' to find someone to speak English with and I would not do it for '*sure*'. ... My friends won't speak English with me. They think I am overacting if I speak English with them. (O-Interv 2, 4/9/08)

While students in this study suggested the difficulty for engaging in out-of-school activities involving English face-to-face interaction, they did not feel discouraged in using English or regard it as a disadvantage. Rather, they found a way to compensate for this insufficiency. For example, Malee spoke English with her Thai friend and to herself and Namtip used English with her mother.

Moreno and Mayer (2007) defined interactive learning environments as those which enable "multidirectional communication" (p. 310). According to this definition, many out-of-class English activities that the participants engaged in, although they were of the non face-to-face type, such as MSN IM chatting, telephoning, and responding e-mails, as well as comment messages through Hi5 network website, were interactive activities since they allowed at least two-way communication. In the field of SLA, interaction is considered pivotal for language learning. For instance, the input-interaction hypothesis claimed that L2 development is facilitated by interactivity between learners and other speakers (Gass, 1997; Long, 1996; Pica, 1994). Through language modification, negotiations increase input comprehensibility which is beneficial for language development (Ellis, 1994; Gass, 1997; Long, 1996). Research on out-of-class

language learning by Yager (1998) found and that “greater interactive contact correlates with greater gain in beginners” and “greater non-interactive contact corresponds with less language gain in beginners” (p. 907) which is similar to Freed’s (1990) finding.

By applying Vygotsky’s sociocultural framework to SLA, many scholars (e.g., Lantolf, 2000; Swain, 2000) have supported the merits of collaborative learning in SLA as well as highlighted the importance of interaction among learners. Similarly, Long (1996) found that meaningful interactivity between learners facilitated second language development. Blake (2000) and Kern (1995) claimed that computer-based communication such as IM offers benefits attributed to the interaction hypothesis in that it facilitates negotiation among users. Through MSN IM chatting, Opal mentioned that she practiced communicating with her friends.

It is like speaking. Everything is like the regular verbal dialogue except that the dialog is through text and not the voice. ... I can interact with my friends as if we were talking. I see only text and not their face though if I don’t turn on the camcorder function. ... I usually don’t open the dictionary. Instead, I ask my chat partner what he meant. Usually, I won’t do it though unless it is a very important word that would make me understand the sentence. If I chat with Mark, Olin, or Robert, I ask them to explain the words and how to use them. Many times, I misunderstand them because I don’t know English well enough especially with ‘*slang*’ and ‘*idioms*’. They help explain English and ‘*grammar*’ to me. They are my English teachers, my ‘*MSN*’ English teachers. (O-Ref 2, 3/31/07)

Opal experienced the benefit of non-face-to-face feature in MSN IM. At the same time, MSN IM, which is a high interacting activity, offered her the opportunity to negotiate when communicating with her chat partner.

Receptive Activities

Based on the four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing; activity involving language use can be further classified into two dimensions: as receptive versus productive. Receptive activities are those which involve listening and reading skills that help learners obtain information as the input of language. Productive activities include speaking and writing skills that make language output possible and require sufficient language input as their basis. The study found that the participants tended to engage in receptive activities, rather than productive activities. They preferred to read books and newspapers, watch movies, listen to music, and browse Internet websites than to write a diary, or talk to people. This finding corresponds to many studies (Hyland, 2004; Pickard, 1996). Hyland (2004), Pickard (1996), and Yap (1998, as cited in Hyland, 2004) all found learners involved in listening and reading skill activities such as reading newspapers and novels and listening to the radio, watching TV, and going to movie theater more than speaking, related activities. Pickard speculated that this was principally due to the fact that in German the availability of English, speaking opportunities was limited. This is also applicable to Thailand which is a country in the expanding circle in the three '*circles*' of English proposed by Crystal (2003) mentioned earlier; therefore, it has very limited English-speaking input. Furthermore, the interviews suggested that many productive activities were confined to certain environments. For example, productive activities such as talking to people, MSN IM chatting, and e-mail corresponding all require a second party to be present which is difficult to control.

Incidental Learning Activities

In the survey questionnaire, the participants were asked the amount of time they spent in each activity and their reasons for doing each activity. Figure 6 represents the percentage of the reasons that the four participants engaged in out-of-class English activities. The participants reported the main reason for their engagement in out-of-class English activities was not English learning. The first three main reasons for their engaging in out-of-class English activities were for pleasure (36%), for information or research (15%), and for time management (14%). Practicing English language was ranked the fourth (13%).

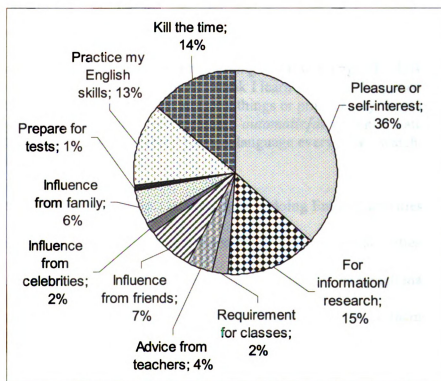


Figure 6. Reasons for engaging in out-of-class English activities.

It is interesting that although the participants did not have the intention of learning or practicing English through out-of-class English activities they participated in, they were aware of possible affordances of English learning and practicing while participating in those activities. Examples are revealed in Malee's and Namtip's interview:

The reason I engaged in English activities outside the classroom is not because I want to learn English. I think I don't really intend to learn it. Everything I did was not with the intention that I would learn English, at least not my priority in using environments. I didn't listen to the music because I planned to remember five new vocabulary words from the song. I didn't read an '*e-mail*' because I wanted to learn new '*sentence structure*' and writing '*style*'. ... I mean my preference in doing such activities came first not the intention to learn anything from those activities. Many people want to practice reading; thus, they read a newspaper. I did the activity first and then I realized how useful it is and how I can practice my English through the activity. ... For example, I like to listen to and sing along with English songs. Then, I figured why waste my opportunity to practice my English. Therefore, I paid more attention on how I '*pronounc[ed]*' the words and tried to imitate the native speakers' '*accent*' while singing along. (M-Interv 2, 4/3/08)

I don't have an intention to learn anything from watching '*TV*'. I like American movies and I always watch them. I think I learn from watching movies in English. Although I don't aim to learn any new things or practice any language skills, English language comes into my mind '*automatic[ally]*' while watching movies. I pick up new knowledge about English language every time I watch movies. (N-Interv 2, 4/18/08)

Both Malee's and Namtip's primary goal in doing English activities was not to learn English. However, both of them noticed the gain from these activities and did not let any learning opportunity pass them by without grasping it. Although many English environments they used were based on their preferences, they utilized them cleverly and resourcefully. This is similar to Opal's case with the reading mentioned in chapter 3. Opal stated that she read *Maximum Ride* because it was fun. She did not originally intend to learn any new vocabulary from the reading. However, she picked up many Western cultural points which were useful for language learners from that book.

Although the participants did not have intention to learn English while doing English activities outside the classroom, they learned English incidentally with attention and awareness in English learning. Roles of attention and awareness in language learning have been recognized and confirmed as significant for second/foreign language learning (R. Leow & Bowles, 2005; Robinson, 2003; Rosa & Leow, 2004). Schmidt (1994, as cited in Hulstijn, 2003, p. 361) argued that “there is no learning without attention and noticing.” Hulstijn further argued that both incidental and intentional learning require learners’ attention and noticing. After reviewing articles from many researchers (e.g., Ellis, 1993; Long, 1991; Schmidt, 1990, 1993, 1994, 1995; Sharwood Smith, 1991; Tomlin & Villa, 1994), Leow (1998) credited attention in SLA as a key factor for L2 learning acquired from L2 input exposure. Moreover, Leow cited Schmidt (1994) who highlights noticing as the initial step for L2 learning before subsequent action could be processed as shown “noticing is the necessary and sufficient condition for the conversion of input to intake for learning” (p. 17). In other words, according to Schmidt, an English artifact will be just an artifact if a learner is not aware; yet it will be transformed into a learning affordance and be taken in only when a learner is aware.

The participants lived in the same environments as many other learners and their friends: Bangkok and Chulalongkorn University. Many times they engaged in many activities similarly, such as listening to English music, watching movies, and visiting Websites. When I asked Namtip her opinion about the availability of English environments in Thailand, she answered:

I think we have enough English in the environment, especially for everyone to learn and practice English. I believe that most of my friends do as many English activities as I do. They go to the movies, listen to the same songs as I do, and browse ‘*Internet website[s]*’. I think many English activities are really blended

into our lives. If you have '*e-mail*', eventually there must be some English '*forward[ed] mail*' to you more or less. When you '*google*' for one topic even in Thai language, there usually will be some search results in an English language '*web[site]*' which you may visit. You see, what I am trying to say is there are many English activities around us, some of which we have already engaged in with or without intention. However, this does not mean that people will pick up any English from participating in those activities. I went to see a movie [English dubbed, Thai subtitle] with five of my friends. ... We talked after the movie. I noticed that none of them really got or remembered any English vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar or structure, not to mention something like cultural point. I don't understand why. It is not that they don't know English. It has to be something but I just don't know why. Maybe they don't pay enough attention to the English language, so they don't learn it. ... I strongly believe that we have enough English out-of-class artifacts to enhance Thai learners to learn and practice English outside school by themselves. But I don't think we know how to use them to their greatest advantage, not that I see from my friends' cases. (N-Interv 3, 5/9/08)

Even though Namtip and her friends did the same activity, for the same goal, which was for fun and not for the purpose of intentional English learning, they did not acquire English equally. Namtip suspected the role of noticing and awareness in English learning in enhancing her English learning, although her goal in watching movie was not to learn English differentiate her and her other friends in terms of English learning from out-of-class activities.

Moreover, the participants used English as the means for other activities. For example, they used the Internet search engine and websites for researching information. However, many search result websites are English-based. In order to gain information, they had to read English websites. Therefore, English was used in order to get to the information they needed from the websites. Moreover, many activities the participants engaged in come with English language. For instance, more than half of the video games that Benya had and played were English version. There were only two choices for Benya: to play those games and use English language or not to play them at all. As a

consequence, English language learning was not the main focus of the participants' involvement in most of out-of-class English activities; yet with their awareness of English language, English language learning became a byproduct of their doing those activities.

Summary

This chapter was intended to answer my second research question, how the participants engage in out-of-class English activities in local environments. Here, I discussed two sub-questions: (a) What types of out-of-class English activities did the participants engage in? and (b) What are the natures of the engagement in out-of-class English activities? An overview of the out-of-class English activities that the participants and their English major friends participated in was charted and analyzed. I also remarked on the role of the Internet in the participants' lives and other out-of-class English activities. I ended this chapter with my analysis of four aspects of the participants' engagement in out-of-class English activities including (a) multimodal activities, (b) non-face-to-face yet interactive activities, (c) receptive activities, and (d) incidental English-learning activities. The next chapter discusses the usefulness of the out-of-class English activities in the participants' opinion and factors that impact into their engagement.

CHAPTER 6

PARTICIPANTS' PERSPECTIVES AND FACTORS THAT AFFECT THEIR PARTICIPATIONS

In this chapter, I intend to answer my last research question: What perspective do the participants have on out-of-class English activities? What factors affect their participation in such activities? Therefore, I organized this chapter into two major sections: (a) the benefit the participants believed they gain from participating in out-of-class English activities and (b) the factors the participants believed affected their participation in out-of-class English activities.

The participants' perspective of the benefit of engagement in out-of-class English activities engagement on opportunities to potentially learn English language section is divided into two subsections. I first answer the question of what the most useful out-of-class English activity was by providing a chart of the participants' opinion on out-of-class activities in terms of the usefulness for them and for English learning in general. Second, I look more closely at how useful out-of-class English activities are in the participants' opinion. Here, I analyze what the participants perceived as the opportunity to potentially learn English from the out-of-class activities and as a way to enhance their exposure to English language. This includes communicative competence, fluency, motivation and attitude, learning strategies, as well as another knowledge. The factors that facilitated or hindered the participants' engagement in out-of-class English activities according to their opinion include both internal factors and external factors.

English Out-of-Class Activities and Learning Enhancement

This study does not try to find a direct causal relationship between the participants' use of English environments and their English achievement. It seeks rather the pattern of what successful language learners usually do in terms of participating in and using recruiting environments. It is a qualitative study which employs ethnographic data collection methods, i.e. participant observation and interview that cannot measure whether or not participants actually "learn" as many other studies do with assessment tests. The participants used the word "เรียน" ("Reain") very loosely and everywhere in the interview and reflection journals. The precise translation of "เรียน" ("Reain") is "study" and "learn" in English and is a different word from "memorize" and "discover". Therefore, the term "learn" in this section is loosely used to refer to the likelihood or potential that the participants will develop any knowledge or skills and not strictly to refer to the cognitive development assessment as already mentioned in chapter 1.

Activities for Improving English Learning Potential

The participants engaged in different types of activities with different purposes. Each activity had different characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses, all of which suited participants differently. When I asked the participants what out-of-class English activities were the most useful for them in terms of English learning, they answered me with a variety of activities, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Activities and Perception of Participants on Out-of-Class English Activities

	What activity that you do most often?	What activity that you think you learn English from the most or is the most useful learning source for you?	What artifact or activity that you think is the most useful for ESL/EFL learners in terms of English learning outside school?
Opal	Chatting on MSN	Chatting on MSN	Reading books
Benya	Playing video games	(a) Playing video games, (b) Talking to Dr. Nancy	(a) Watching movies, (b) Using the Internet
Malee	Listening to songs	Listening to songs	Reading newspapers
Namtip	Watching movies	Watching movies	(a) Watching movies, (b) Using the Internet

The most useful activity for the participants was actually the activity that they did most often. From the observation and the interview, there are two possibilities I can draw from the patterns of the relationship of their answers about the activity they did most often to the activity which was most useful for them. First, some participants did the activity because they believed that it was useful for them to advance their English language learning. Opal thought that chat room and MSN IM activity was a good way to practice speaking skill; therefore, she started doing this activity and she found it worked for her. Second, some participants did the activity and they were familiar with it; hence, they felt they learned the most from that activity. Examples are Benya who spent so much

time on video games and Namtip who watched movies every day. Both participants thought that they learned from games and movies more than from other activities.

The activity which the participants thought would help English learners the most was, however, somewhat different from what they found useful for them personally. According to Table 2, the Internet is the source of English input that participants thought to be the most useful artifact for learning English. Here, the Internet relates to two activities: MSN chat activity (in Opal's opinion) and reading or browsing Internet websites (in Benya's and Namtip's opinion). Benya prepared her English tutoring with the help of many English learning websites from the Internet. She selected many English exercises from various sources. When she did not understand or was not sure about an answer, I saw her search some grammar rules, vocabulary definition, and other relevant information from the Internet. For Benya, the Internet was the most useful source for English learning because there were many websites about language learning, including exercises, grammar rules, vocabulary, culture explanations, and learning tips and techniques (B-FN 5, 3/21/08). It is also worth noticing that none of them thought that academic, related activities such as reading grammar books or taking an English course at any tutor center were the most useful activity for learners, although Malee reported she sometimes read grammar books during her free time.

In addition, I asked the participants to elaborate the reason why they answered that way and what they meant by "learn" and "useful"; the explanations were to know something new, to practice English skills, to be able to use what they saw in different contexts, and to become more fluent and more accurate, for example. The elaboration of

how the participants experienced their English development in relation to engaging in out-of-class English activities is provided in the following section.

Perspective on Out-of-Class English Activities and Learning Enhancement

Although the academic Standard English from school and non-academic informal English from artifacts outside of school can be considered as different discourse genres, the participants believed that engaging in out-of-class English activities helped them improve their English proficiency in both academic and non-academic genres. Malee mentioned in her reflection journal about different types of English in different contexts. According to my interpretation from the interviews and self reflection journals, the participants realized that the language they used in the activities outside was less formal and sometimes in non-standard style compared to language they used in the classroom. However, they believed that there are some basic forms of language which are transferable between these two different genres. For example, Opal used some vocabulary she got from chatting MSN IM with her Australian friend in the classroom. Namtip claimed that her good reading skill was the result of reading books (fiction) during her free time. Furthermore, Malee's singing practice with her focus on sound pronunciation and intonation enhanced her English pronunciation, in her opinion. The participants believed that they developed not only English proficiency but also attitude, learning strategy, and other knowledge as discussed in the next section.

Out-of-Class English Activities Enhance English Proficiency

The participants' goals for learning English varied from having bilingual proficiency and being able to communicate with people meaningfully to studying abroad. However, ultimately all of them wanted to be successful language learners. In the field of SLA, successful L2 learning is a broad term and can be defined in many aspects. I only discuss three of them: (a) communicative competence, (b) fluency and accuracy, and (c) motivation and attitude toward English learning.

Communicative competence. One common goal for learning English for all participants was to be able to use and understand a language successfully and in situationally appropriate ways which requires multiple, authentic and situated experiences of language use. This raises the question of what "use" and "successfully" mean. SLA scholar all believes that learning a language involves more than learning linguistic rules. In 1967, Hymes first coined the term "communicative competence" as the basic knowledge learners need in order to master a language which included both linguistic and pragmatic aspects (Celce-Murcia, 2006). Progressing from Hymes' concept, Canale and Swain (1980) considered communicative competence as the backbone systems necessary for communication (Celce-Murcia, 2006; Ellis, 1994). They classified communicative competence into three components as follows:

1. Grammatical competence: know lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax, semantics, and phonology;
2. Sociolinguistic competence: know how to use language appropriately in different context (sociocultural competence) and know cohesion and coherence (discourse competence); and

3. Strategic competence: knowledge of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies (Celce-Murcia, 2006; Ellis, 1994).

These three elements are interrelated and are equally important. Lack of one facet will yield different problems in using the language. For instance, having grammatical competence but not sociolinguistic competence may result in inappropriate communication. Hence, learning a language does not mean to learn only its structures and vocabulary. In accordance with Canale and Swain's notion of communicative competence, all participants strongly believed that their participation in out-of-class English activities helped increase all grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence.

The participants reported that out-of-class English activities enhanced their knowledge and proficiency in vocabulary, sentence structure, and pronunciation. For example, Benya told me a story that one day her mom and she took her dad to the hospital. The nurse came and told them to "go and wait for the doctor in front of the *'Operating room'*" and then she walked away. "I felt so familiar with this word *'Operating room'* as I had seen it somewhere. Then, I remembered seeing it from the *'Theme Hospital game'*, so I could take my dad to see the doctor at the right place," she said. Moreover, the participants developed their grammatical competence through reading signs, posters, and merchandise. For instance, Malee picked up the expression *'together with'* from the napkin of the fast food restaurant while Benya practiced analyzing sentence structure from the warning sign in the restroom at the shopping mall, mentioned earlier in chapter 4. Movies and songs, furthermore, were a good source of input with which the participants reported they could practice their pronunciation. Malee

mentioned she got good pronunciation from English songs and not from her English teachers in junior school when she first studied English because they had thick Thai accents.

Swiderski (1993) pointed out that learning *about* a language is not the same as learning a language. As long as learners are learning the grammar rules of a language, they are learning *about* that language. Hence, learning a language is not only learning its structures and vocabulary and developing language skills, but also includes knowing how and when to use it as well by appreciating the cultural aspects attached to that language (Swiderski, 1993). Knowledge of language intrinsically differs from the ability to speak, read, and write. Similarly, Gee (1996) suggested that to be able to communicate with the knowledge of the culture of the language, or what is called sociocultural competence, includes not just the ability to speak a language but knowing *what, when, where, and how* to say it.

All participants, especially Opal, Malee, and Namtip, emphasized the importance of out-of-class activities in developing sociolinguistic competence including language culture knowledge, language appropriateness, language variety awareness, and language discourse in different genres. According to the participants, English classes in school, most of the time, focus heavily on Standard English register with academic discourse context. They acknowledged that besides the academic type there are other language registers, which are used in many contexts, which they acquired from participating in out-of-class activities. Malee noticed the differences in language style used in hip-hop music and in pop music. She gave some examples that hip-hop music usually included slang,

fast speech, informal language, swear words, and contractions, such as *'babe'*, *'ya'*, *'yo'*, *'ain't'*, and *'wanna'*. Malee also pointed out that:

English knowledge gained from the classroom is not enough for using English in the real everyday life. If we use the exact language from what we learned from class with English speaking foreigners, they will think that we speak a weird language with fixed *'pattern'* and *'form'* which is not normally used in informal talk. (M-Ref 4, 1/12/07)

Malee mentioned that she picked up language variation and language culture from songs and movies. She said, "I try to catch some of swear words or *'slang'* from the movies since they are real language that people normally use and are not taught in school." Moreover, she illustrated her point using the hook part of a song which is "It don't matter" and explained that although this sentence was ungrammatical for Standard English, it was acceptable among many groups of people (M-Ref 6, 3/2/08). From the interview and her reflection journal, she showed good understanding of language variation and she had the ability to apply it in the right and proper manner.

Furthermore, both Opal and Namtip understood and were able to use language style appropriately in different discourse genres. Opal developed IM discourse, including conversational style with shorthand, emoticons, and fast speech, which she used only when IM chatting. Opal mentioned that the first time she chatted with people in the chat room:

I was not able to follow the chat conversation at all. There are so many abbreviations. At that time I didn't even know what *'lol'* or *'omg'* meant. I used full sentence structure and I chatted with formal language as that is what I have learned from school. It looks very funny when your friends typed in *'Hey, how r ya?'* and I typed back *'I am fine. Thank you and you?'* (Laugh) Later on, I started to pick up *'[IM] chat'* language and was able to chat with them in the same language style. However, I know the difference between *'chat'* language and the formal language that I have to use for my term paper. I don't mix them up. (O-Interv 2, 4/9/08)

Along the same line as Opal, Namtip was also able to use language appropriately. Her journals in her Hi5 network webpage, which are full of abbreviations, slang, swear words, punctuations, incomplete sentences, and fast speech, were different from her reflection journals submitted to me. Her reflection journals are somewhat formal with complete sentences, without slang, swear words, and abbreviations. In addition, Namtip pointed out the evidence that she picked up both linguistic and pragmatic aspect of English language in her reflection journal:

'[Hip-hop and rap music] usually has language specific use, full of slang and non-standard words. Many people are afraid that children will learn and remember this [vernacular] language from the song. I still think that it is valuable thing to know. To me, learning English language is not only learning Standard English but also knowing all style of language yet know when and how to use certain language style appropriately. Of course, it is not good if a student will say "Hey babe!" to a professor. ☺ Therefore, teachers and parents should teach them'. (N-Ref 2, 4/9/08)

Therefore, the participants realized that language which they learned from outside the classroom and the one they learned from school was different in terms of language context. Out-of-class English activities give them authentic language which is another discourse for them to adapt and use appropriately depending on the person and situation. Because most of the out-of-class English artifacts have been used for a communicative purpose in real life outside of the classroom, they present a variety of language genres which is important for language learning.

Additionally, the participants thought that in their daily life, they had seen many types of language discourse besides academic English. The knowledge of different discourse registers gave them tools to comprehend the language correctly in specific context (M-Interv 2, 4/3/08). Malee mentioned that she used a language register which

she picked up from the merchandise, such as shampoo bottle and manual, which is short, parallel, full of transition words, and in chronological order in her essay on how to take a picture of moving objects. Furthermore, Namtip added that knowledge and awareness of sociolinguistic competence helped her be able to select the appropriate websites for her report paper. She reported:

One criterion to select a good '*website*' for my paper is the language that is used in that '*website*'. I will not cite the website which is full of informal language for my report paper. However, if I want to read the website about '*hip-hop*' songs, I will look at those '*hip*' '*web[sites]*' which are full of slang and fast speech. (N-FN 5, 4/5/08)

The interview and the journal from the participants reflect the importance of practice for learning some aspects of language which often are not overtly instructed especially in classrooms in Thailand and which learners need a moderate amount of practice to acquire (Gee, 1996). Furthermore, the authentic context provides chances for learners to practice how to *use* language with the right person, at the right place, in the right time which is not just a matter of grammatical rules (ibid, emphasis in original). Many out-of-class English activities associated within learners' lives.

Besides, Opal mentioned that MSN IM chatting not only improved her speaking skill, but it also made her become more familiar with all communication strategies which is the strategic competence. Through MSN IM chat, Opal practiced how to negotiate meaning, and how to ask for meaning clarification, for example. This corresponds with many scholars who believe that one language benefit of IM is it provides a new ideal venue for learning the rules of interaction including turn-taking, interruption, appropriate greetings, leave taking, and appropriate approach for apologizing (Warschauer, 1997).

Fluency and accuracy. Another common goal for learning English for participants was to be able to communicate accurately and fluently. Many SLA scholars believe that accuracy and fluency are equally important and are not interchangeable. Simply mastering English grammar does not guarantee that one will be a fluent English speaker and vice versa. Out-of-class English activities provided a chance for learners to practice and to be accurate in English, according to the participants. One example is that Malee practiced her pronunciation through songs and posters at the restaurant. While practicing singing, Malee stopped the song once in a while and sometimes rewound, re-listened, and repeated the phrase verse by verse.

When I listen to songs, I listen carefully and try to imitate the singer's intonation, pronunciation and tone. I try to focus on the sounds such as 'th', 'z', and 'v'. I sometimes sing 'hip hop' songs. The result is that I speak English very fast. My friends always tease me that my accent is like as if I was a news reporter. I am so proud and I treat the teasing as a compliment. I think that this might be true since I usually repeat after the 'CNN' reporters from the radio. (M-Ref 2, 12/29/06)

I pay a lot of attention to pronunciation when I am singing. I work very hard to get the exact and perfect 'accent' and 'intonation' as the singer. If I made one mistake while I practice singing a song, I will start it over again. Therefore, I think singing songs helps improve my pronunciation to be closer to the native speaker's accent. (M-Ref 6, 03/02/08)

From these two excerpts, Malee practiced her accent, which helped her improve her language accuracy, by listening to and singing songs. Recall that one of her English learning goals was having a native or near native accent; it is not surprising to find evidence that Malee focused closely on getting her pronunciation close to the singer's as much as possible.

In the participants' point of view, English formal education offered them language accuracy but not very much fluency. Out-of-class English activities, they thought,

enhanced the opportunity for them to practice using English which yielded language fluency. Opal mentioned, “I don’t think I learn a lot of new vocabulary from reading a book. I think I gain fluency from using English artifacts. For example, I learned to read faster from reading books.” She also believed in “the more you do or practice, the better you will get or the more fluent you will be in terms of language learning.” She added:

I remember the first time I talked with Mike [an Australian man whom Opal claimed liked her]. I did not speak much and used many ‘*Umm*’s and ‘*Err*’s. He called me every day, three to five times a day. We talked about everything, what I was doing, what I ate, my routine, etc. ... After a while I could speak very fluently compared to the first few times I talked to him. It seems that I don’t have to translate Thai to English in my head before I speak anymore. (O-Interv 1, 3/3/08)

According to the interview, Opal gained fluency from talking on the phone with Mike every day. Although one might suppose that the more they talked, the more they became familiar with each other which in turn led to more fluent, friendlier, and more confident, the fact that Opal noticed herself stop translating Thai to English before speaking led us to believe that she became more fluent and more familiar with English language.

Benya felt the same way that the more she used the language, the more skillful she became. She gave examples of her faster reading speed after she read *Daily Xpress* almost every day for one month and her increased fluency in speaking with Dr. Nancy. The fact that Benya became more familiar with Dr. Nancy that led to her being more comfortable to talk to her; it might also be that Benya could speak English more fluently because she practiced speaking with Dr. Nancy. Malee also shared her experience in her reflection journal, “I believe the ‘*Law of use and disuse*’. You tend to be familiar and can remember a language if you use it often” (M-Ref 18, 7/27/08). Malee felt that her use of English in both in- and out-of-class environments helped her become more familiar with

and fluent in English language. English fluency is equally important to accuracy. Successful language learners need to have communicative competence with language fluency but still be accurate. Malee's concerns included both accuracy on pronunciation which she tried to practice when singing and fluency which she hoped to gain after using the language as often as she possibly could.

Motivation and Attitude toward English Learning

Scholars and researchers believe that learners' motivation and attitude play an important role in L2 learning (Dörnyei, 1998; Ellis, 1993, 1994; Gan et al., 2004; Sanz, 2005). Many studies had reported the correlation between out-of-class activities and learner's motivation and attitudes toward language learning, especially on computer assisted language learning (CALL). For example, Donaldson & Kotter (1999), Jarrell & Freiermuth (2005), and Warschauer (1996) reported the positive impacts of MSN IM on L2 learning and stimulating learners' learning motivation and attitude. Similar results were found in other out-of-class activities such as playing games (Gee, 2003; M. Warschauer & Healey, 1998) and voluntary reading (Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999 as cited in Nippold et al., 2005).

Namtip was into the journal writing in the Hi5 website. She wrote eight English journals, some short and some long. She explained that she enjoyed writing them as a way to express herself to her friends and many times complain to her friends. She mentioned that the Hi5 journal was the place where she could try on using slang, swear words, and expressions she heard from the movies she watched or remembered from the book she read. Elbow (1997) named the situation in which learners have more latitude to

write as “low stakes writing”. Under such conditions, learners tend to be more motivated to involve themselves in activities. With this low stakes writing setting, Namtip was very motivated to write journals in very informal style in her Hi5 website. Namtip’s motivation and positive attitude toward English writing also showed in her reflection journals. Namtip was the only participant who wrote every reflection journal in English although with informal language whereas the other participants wrote them in Thai with only a very few journals in English. In addition, similar to Namtip, other participants were motivated to exercise English language they acquired from their out-of-class English activities or to further their opportunity to expose to English language. Playing games, especially crossword game, motivated Benya to look up words in the dictionary for the definition as well as the synonyms and antonyms. From the observation, interviews, and reflection journals, I am led to believe that out-of-class English activities both motivated the participants to use English language as well as to further their knowledge about English language and increased their positive attitude towards English language and English learning.

Learning Strategies

Learning strategies were seen as steps that learners take (Oxford, 1990) and “the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use” (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 1) to facilitate their learning, acquisition, storage, and recall information. Bremner (1998) and Green and Oxford (1995) added that strategies can also assist learners in promoting their own achievement in language proficiency. Therefore, the appropriate strategies augment “good” learner characteristics (e.g., autonomy and self-direction) and then facilitate

efficient transformation of comprehensible input into comprehensible intake (Nyikos & Oxford, 1993). Learning strategies, therefore, not only help learners become efficient in learning and using a language, but also contribute to increasing learners' self-directed learning.

In this study, there is much evidence that all participants both developed as well as practiced using learning strategies from participating in out-of-class English activities. Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning Test¹⁴ questionnaire, which was used for indicating English as a second/foreign language learning strategies, included repeating new words several times, practicing English with peers, and not translating word-for-word while reading, for example. After reviewing the SILL, I found that the participants employed many learning strategies while engaging in out-of-class English activities. For example, all participants practiced English with other learners and Native speakers. Opal and Benya asked native speakers (Olin for Opal and Dr. Nancy for Benya) to correct their English and tried to learn expressions and cultural points from them.

Moreover, Opal practiced her reading strategy by skimming an English passage in a newspaper and then going back for more careful reading. Not only Opal, but all participants also liked to read for pleasure. They, moreover, read from various sources such as books, newspapers, e-mails, signs, posters, and menus. In accordance with language learning strategy in the SILL questionnaire, the participants read without stopping to look up every new word they did not know in the dictionary. Another strategy in the SILL that relates to reading which all participants did is skimming before carefully

¹⁴ Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL): Version for speakers of Other Languages Learning English, version 7.0 from Oxford (1990). SILL is the survey which collects information about the strategies learners use to learn a second language.

reading. I observed Malee and Namtip do this when they browsed the Internet websites through Google search engine. Opal and Benya reported that they skimmed through the news column first and then they came back and read it again more carefully.

In addition, Malee and Namtip noticed errors from artifacts. Malee monitored the accuracy of her pronunciation and tried to self correct when she sang. All of these behaviors and habits are credited as another behavior for successful language learning (e.g., Benson, 2001; Michael P. Breen, 2001; Ellis, 1994; Krashen, 1982; Rubin & Thompson, 1982; Saville-Troike, 2006). According to these researchers, learners who often monitor people's and their own speech, seek their errors, try to understand their causes, and identify the ways to avoid making them again tend to be more successful than those who do not do so.

Furthermore, when Namtip and Malee saw new English words from the songs, movies, posters, or books, they tried to use them either in sentences or in different contexts so that they could remember them. Additionally, Malee mentioned in the MSN IM that she compared all English learning to a bookcase which had many shelves. When she saw new vocabulary, she would first guess their meanings from the contexts around them before sorting them into categories. She explained that she put words that she thought she would use them more often in the lower shelf from which she could pick them and use them frequently in order to memorize them. As for the words that she hardly used, Malee said, she kept them in the top shelf to which she would pay less attention. This shows that Malee employed several language learning strategies: word guessing, context clue using, categorizing, and mapping.

In summary, all participants used and/or developed many language learning strategies while they engaged in out-of-class English activities. Although the participants did have some learning strategies prior to their action on some out-of-class activities, they still benefited from having chances to practice using those strategies. In doing so they would become keener in strategy using which in turn would lead to more successful language learners.

Another Knowledge

Besides gaining language proficiency, accuracy, fluency, and positive attitudes toward English learning, the participants felt that they got tremendous knowledge from out-of-class activities. This knowledge includes general knowledge, news, Western culture, and ways of life, etc., all of which can be divided into two types: direct and indirect information. The direct information is when the participants can access new information through artifacts directly without any other further interpretation. For instance, Namtip knew about history of the United States at the time of the Pearl Harbor attack from watching *Pearl Harbor* movie. Moreover, Benya and Opal knew about local news from reading a free newspaper. On the other hand, the indirect information is the piece that the participants got indirectly from the artifact with their own further interpretation and thinking. Namtip, for example, informed me that she liked to critique the actors and the story of any movies and books she watched and read which helped her understand logic of living, ways of thinking, and the push to do certain actions, all of which benefited her in her own life. Furthermore, Opal picked up one cultural topic in the United State, racial discrimination, from watching movies. She stated in the interview:

During the last two weeks I saw the '*Step up [2]*' which is a story in Baltimore, Maryland. I have questions about the teenagers' lifestyle. I see '*street danc[ing]*' is very popular among teens nowadays. Then, I compared it to the dancing in the movie '*Hairspray*' which happened in '*Baltimore*' sometime about 40 or 50 years ago. I see a lot of differences about culture in these two movies, especially between black and white people. In the old days, there was a line between black and white people. When dancing, there was a clear cut in style, dress, and dance area between races. (She elaborated what she was saying using her hands as the dancers.) ... In '*Step up*' which is in present time, there is no line; both black and white teens dance together shoulder by shoulder in the same song. This is what I gained from watching the movie which I believe my other friends would not see or pay much attention to. (O-Interv 2, 4/9/08)

Although both *Hairspray* and *Step up 2* are movies about dancing; Opal not only appreciated different dance styles and routines from the movies, but she also identified important information hidden in the movies and compared them to one another. Namtip's and Opal's samples are good evidence that the participants practiced critical thinking and meta-cognition skill while using the out-of-class artifacts.

Summary

In this first part of the chapter, I focused on answering the question, how might the English out-of-class activities provide the opportunity to potentially learn English in the opinion of the participants? I first addressed the type of out-of-class English activities that the participants thought were the most useful for them and for language learning. After that, I illustrated benefits that my participants perceived and gained from engaging in the out-of-class English activities. The participants advanced their English communicative competence, fluency, learning attitude and motivation, learning strategies, Western culture, and other knowledge, all of which helped elevate them to better English proficiency. There are, however, factors that impact participants'

engagement in those English activities available outside of classroom which will be further discussed in the following sections which is the second part of this chapter.

Factors Impacting Participants' Patterns of Out-of-Class English Activity

Based on the observation field notes, interview transcriptions, activity diaries, and reflection journals, there are some factors that influence participants' patterns of using out-of-class English environments to enhance their English learning and practicing. In this section, I discuss the role of internal factors and external factors in relation to L2 learning and practicing through English activities outside the classroom based on data from the study.

Internal Factors

Theoretically, whether participants used or did not use the available environments is partly dependent upon the individual self. The field of SLA overwhelmingly accepts that individual differences have an impact on language learning (Dörnyei, 1998; Dörnyei & Skehan, 2002; Ellis, 1994; Sanz, 2005). Besides age, gender, mother language, need and interest, learning style, and aptitude, other individual differences that affect L2 learning included personality, identity, attitude, and motivation.

Personality and Identity

Many SLA theorists have looked at the relationship among individual and identity and learners' L2 learning. For example, Krashen (1982) hypothesized an "affective filter"

including learners' anxiety and self-confidence that affects their L2 acquisition. Ellis (1994) reviewed studies from many SLA scholars who regarded individual learner differences as one major variable which influences learning outcome, such individual factors as age, learning styles, and personality. Ellis also concluded that personality is a key factor for explaining individuality; thus, a variety of personal characteristics have been analyzed including risk-taking, self-esteem, and extrovert. From the study, the participants' personalities and identities affect their choice of English activities they do outside of school as well as their language practice.

Opal projected herself as a modern, independent, self-confident person. She liked to be the center of attention and liked when people looked highly on her English proficiency. Moreover, Opal expressed her interest in Western men. While having an informal conversation about men during the lunch one day, Opal admitted that she did not find a Thai man interesting. She explained that most of the Thai men she met, who were the same age as she was, were a little childish compared to her Western friends such as Mark, Robert, and Olin (O-FN 12, 3/31/08). Because of Opal's attraction to Western men, her self-confidence, and desire to get attention, along with her outgoing and chatty personality, it is not surprising that Opal tended to engage in English activities that involved social acts such as MSN IM chatting, talking with men through Skype program, and hanging out with friends who visited her from Europe. She was "addicted to the MSN IM" as she had many friends to talk to. "I had almost a hundred of MSN International friends. ... I will choose who to talk to which means that I would never lack a person to 'chat' to at all," Opal explained (O-Interv 3, 5/8/08).

Unlike Opal, who was an extrovert, self-confident, and sociable person and thus enjoyed talking with foreigners, Benya was shy and could not articulate well. She saw herself as lacking in confidence, especially with English speaking. The only activity Benya did that involved English speaking was tutoring Dr. Nancy during which she had no choice but to talk to Dr. Nancy. However, I observed that Benya was very limited in her speech and always was the listener rather than the speaker in conversation with Dr. Nancy. Although Benya listened to English songs, I have never seen her sing. With her personality traits, Benya chose to engage in receptive English activities rather than productive ones.

Regarding identity, Bonny Norton mentioned in the interview with *The Language Teacher* that “identity and language learning are inextricably intertwined. ... How learners perceive themselves, their histories, and their desires for the future determine, to some extent, what they speak about, to whom, and for what purposes” (Churchill, 2002, p. 3). Parallel to what Norton mentioned, my data reveal the interrelationship between the participants’ identity, their language practices and their choices of English activities as their L2 learning context.

The connection between participants’ identities and their English language use are presented in many activities they engaged in especially through the Hi5 network webpage, MSN, and e-mails. For instance, Opal wrote about herself and her interest in fashion, make up, and dance along with her pictures in her Hi5 page, which is totally in a public setting that everybody can view and read. Her identity reflects on her choices of words, topics, and language style she used in Hi5 page as well as her e-mails. She commented on the purpose of her joining Hi5 network:

I make the 'Hi5' page just to present myself and sent the 'link' to boys so that they could see my pictures. ... It seems that I play 'Hi5' because of the 'fashion' and for the specific purpose, to build a good impression to guys. I 'posted' only my best pictures, with beautiful dress, and 'sexy' post. (O-Interv 3, 5/8/08)

She wrote in her Hi5 profile page, *'People say, apart from my great self-confidence, a pretty face with beautiful make-up and sexy look is another thing that they can recognize when they think about me'* (O-Hi5 profile page). Given that the identity is who we think we are and who we want other people to see us as, it is reasonable to conclude that Opal projected her identity to her friends as a self-confident, fashionable, sexy, modern, and international person.

Their personality affects the way they use English in some activities as well. According to the amount of time spent with me Malee should be more familiar with me more than Opal because I have known Malee since my Pilot Study period in 2006. Therefore, I would assume that she would talk to me with less formal language. Malee, who is more formal when compare to other participants, neat, and quiet, who claimed herself as a "‘perfectionist’ and ‘serious’ person," however wrote an e-mail to me in a very structured way with formal language, including letter-like e-mail with 'Sincerely' closing. Unlike Malee, Opal's e-mails to me were somewhat informal. Although she did not use slang and shorthand, she mixed English sentences with some Thai words in English karaoke style (e.g., she wrote 'na ka' and 'ka').¹⁵ Opal usually ended her e-mails to me with 'Bye-bye Naka' or 'See ya'.

¹⁵ In Thai language "Na ka" and "Ka" (pronounced as /na ka/ and /ka/ with very short /a/ vowel) are polite words for women. Thai women usually end sentences with these two words to show their politeness.

Figure A10 in Appendix H shows that when Opal wrote an e-mail to her friends, like Robert, she used many abbreviations (e.g., *'btw'*, *'coz'*, and *'tmrw'*), emotion signals and exclamation words (e.g., *'hehe'* for laugh, *:-)* for smiley face, *'Damn'*, *'Oh!'*, *'Wow!!!'*), informal language (e.g., *'gonna'* and *'wanna'*), and Thai karaoke words (e.g., *'na ka'* and *'ka'*). She, furthermore, ended her e-mail to Robert with *'Kissy Kissy and loads of love'*. This e-mail closing represents different meanings: feeling of affection, a signal for flirting, sexiness, or playfulness. Her personality and identity, which showed in the choice of activity she engaged in (e.g., talking with her International friends) and the way she did the activities (e.g., writing about herself in the Hi5 profile page), were noticeable to her friends as well. She mentioned:

Some of my friends thought that I am a coquette who likes to flirt and go out with foreign men. Some of them asked me how many men I have in my *'stock'*. (Laugh) I overheard these bad criticisms about me many times. I think I don't care anymore. Talking to foreign friends can improve my English. That's all I need. (O-Interv 2, 4/9/08)

One interesting point from this interview excerpt is that Opal dismissed negative critiques from her friends about her attempt to use English language outside the classroom, her speaking with foreigners, her habit of reading in the coffee shops, and her routine on MSN IM chat with men. She, furthermore, developed a thick skin with respect to the negative criticism from some of her friends about her behavior hanging out with foreign men. Rather, she involved herself in many possible out-of-school English activities including socializing with foreigners which she admitted as “a little *'flirt'* with them” (O-FN 8, 3/31/08). Opal formed and reformed her identity in those contexts and finally claimed herself as a person who has many foreign men friends, who is attractive to

foreign men, and who has competence in English communication and confidence in using English language.

This evidence is similar to Lam's (2000) study of a Chinese high school teenager who was beset with many negative identities and was put in a marginal position because of his inability to use Standard English which is acceptable in classroom discourse. He, however, engaged in Internet network communication, developed English Internet discourse, and claimed himself as a knowledgeable person in Japanese pop music. Example from Opal's case and Lam's participants suggest that learners' identity and agency play an important role in their language practice, language learning, and language activities they perform outside school.

From the above instances, how participants participated in out-of-school English activities resulted from the negotiation of personality, identity, and social context. Although the majority of the society did not use English as the major language, the participants chose to claim their identities as English language users in the non English speaking context. They chose to engage in some activities because they can meet people and use their English language for real communicative and social purposes. Most of these activities were situated in the cyber-environment such as e-mailing, MSN IM chatting, chat room chatting, and Hi5 social network participating. This cyber-environment was used because it fulfills a real function: to meet people, present certain parts of themselves that they want to cultivate, and be social. Besides the anonymity feature some of these cyber-activities could be controlled by a single person. That is to say that the participants could control whether or not to appear online, start chatting in chat rooms, start the conversation in MSN IM, reply to the e-mails or Hi5 page posting. This feature is

different from telephoning or face-to-face conversation where they have no choice but to enter in the conversation. They cannot hold up the conversation and find good words in the dictionary as they can do in the cyber-environment. Therefore, I was not surprised to find that the participants prefer cyber-communication to other face-to-face communication. It presents less of a threat to their identity, less chance to lose their face in making mistakes, and more self-selected participation. The participants can be extremely social, at the same time, control the interaction by choosing to talk or not to talk (chat/write) to someone or even not to use the computer.

In sum, the participants chose to engage in different types of English out-of-school activities. Whether they were book reading, movie watching, singing, talking with friends, chat room chatting with fake name, e-mailing, MSN IM chatting, video game playing, etc., these activities were chosen based on students' preference which reflected their personalities and identities.

Motivation and Attitude

Motivation and attitude are two major aspects for investigating individual differences. The score from participant selection survey questionnaire on attitude toward English section and the data from interviews reaffirmed that all four participants have high motivation in and positive attitude toward English language learning. The participants were scored higher than mean score among their peers in Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) adapted from Gardner (2004). The participants all agreed that motivation and attitude affected their choice of out-of-class activities. For instance, the fact that Opal could not speak with her American professor motivated her to practice

speaking and she chose to do so via chat rooms and MSN IM. In the case of Malee, she wanted to have native or near-native pronunciation proficiency. This motive inspired her to practice her pronunciation through singing, listening to and repeating BBC news, and speaking to friends and self. Moreover, Malee recited and pronounced words and sentences when she did many activities that were not related to listening and speaking. For example, she read and recited the word “grilled” three times at one restaurant. In addition, Benya admitted that conversation with Dr. Nancy about the US catalyzed her to improve her English proficiency and pursue her graduate study abroad. Similarly, Opal said that after absorbing US culture through watching movies and reading book, she had a better attitude toward the US and wished to have such experiences by going there (O-Interv 2, 4/9/08).

From the participants’ perspective, two of the main reasons why Thai students did not engage in out-of-class activities much are also lack of motivation and negative attitude toward English language.

I don’t think that Thai students will try hard to learn English. That is because they don’t think that it is necessary for them to know English since they have never met any English speaking person in their hometown. There is no incentive and motivation for them to learn English. ... I think people around the students have a lot to do with students’ motivation. I have friends who are in English majors and some of them like English. I saw my friends speak English fluently; therefore, I would like to be like them. (O-Interv 3, 5/8/08)

[That my friends do not engage in out-of-class English activities] maybe because they have bad attitude towards English or even neutral feeling, or they may think that learning English from school in class is enough and they do not have to find the outside classroom learning source. (M-Interv 2, 4/3/08)

As noted from the above excerpts, contrary to other learners, positive attitude toward English language and high motivation to learn English both in and outside classroom are

prime characteristics that drove participants to engage in out-of-class English activities. Considering Thailand, in which the format of learning English is EFL setting, learners do not have immediate need to use or practice English outside classroom.

The data from the study pointed out one interesting point that although all participants were highly motivated, they did not engage in all English activities available for them. It is easier to claim that with overall high English learning motivation, the participants may nevertheless not motivate to learn English at certain times depending on many factors such as time, preference, interest, etc. For example, Malee and Benya were both motivated to learn English from songs and games (respectively). They, however, were not motivated to use English language with foreigners in face-to-face interactions due to their personality as a shy and non-sociable learner.

The point here is most of the time, when a language learner is motivated to learn L2, this learner is labeled as a “motivated learner” and vice versa with the “unmotivated learner”. Scholars believe that motivated learners tend to be successful learners and unmotivated learners are less likely to succeed. However, many hardly reckon that a motivated language learner sometimes might be not very motivated. Malee once wrote an e-mail in English to me during her midterm exam week in Figure 7.

In this e-mail excerpt, Malee admitted that during her exam week, she participated in out-of-class activities less than she normally did because she wanted to focus on studying. During that time, Malee was not motivated to use any environments outside the classroom.

Dear Aj. Ruedeerath,

I'm sorry. I don't think I can write the journal to you this week. I didn't do anything in English at all except for studying for my exams. Too busy. And I just don't want to watch TV, MSN, or even listen to the songs. I just want to study hard and get good grade on my exams. Sorry again and hope you understand.

Sincerely,
[Malee]

Figure 7. E-mail from Malee.

Retrieved through forwarded e-mail on December 22, 2006. (English language in original.)

Had this research study been conducted during her exam period, Malee would have been identified as an unmotivated learner who did not engage in any out-of-school English activities based on my participant selection questionnaire.

Norton mentioned in the interview:

I have known students to be sometimes motivated and sometimes unmotivated; in one context to be motivated, in another unmotivated. ... Frequently, to say that a student is unmotivated is to fail to do justice to the complexity of a student's life, history, and desires. In this view, there is a tendency to blame the victim rather than seek a more comprehensive understanding of an apparent lack of motivation. (Churchill, 2002, pp. 3-4)

Therefore, there are no absolute motivated learners and no absolute unmotivated learners. In my study, a motivated participant could turn out to be an unmotivated learner due to time, personal preference, interest, and social influence. This study leads us to first

rethink how we identify our learners. Instead of labeling them as motivated learners or unmotivated learners, we should try to understand their varying degrees of participation. In sum, a focus on language learning and language learning context should be complemented with an attention to learners' individual differences and identity as well as their motivation and learning attitude.

In this section, I tried to illustrate how motivation, attitude, and participants' involvement in out-of-class English activities are interrelated. Evidence reveals that motivation and attitude influence personal behavior and thus induce learners to perform or not to perform any activities. However, there is no resolution to answer the issue of whether it is, in fact, high motivation that makes some people engage in English activities or the English activities engagement that creates motivation.

External Factors

Based on the observation field notes, interview transcriptions, daily activity diaries, and reflection journals, I found many external factors that affect participants' patterns of using English artifacts or engaging in English activity outside of classroom; some were more significant than others. Many factors related to family and friends, teachers, time, and social norm.

Family, Friends, and Social Network

People in students' social network were very important since they could either enhance or hinder students' performance in any English activities. In its simplest form, social network, in this paper, refers to the social construct composed of an individual and

other people whose relationships tie them together. The relationship can be varied such as a family member, a friend, a co-worker, a friend of a friend, a person in the neighborhood, and an accustomed newspaper seller. They are people whom students live with, talk to, and spend their time with; thus, they can influence students' way of living and way of thinking and vice versa.

In the third interview, I asked the participants, "besides yourself, what are three main factors that hinder their engagement in out-of-school English activities and how so." According to the interview, family and friends issue was ranked the first at 37.5%, lack of guidance was the second at 25.0%, and lack of time and financial problem were tied in the third at 12.5%, respectively. Other factors mentioned were such as insufficient English artifacts, and security as well as convenience. It is interesting that all participants answered family and friends, yet in different order of importance. At the same time, participants reported family and friends as one of the top three factors which had positive impact on their engagement in out-of-class English activities.

There were some cases in which participants' family and friends supported their use of English artifacts and participation in out-of-school activities. For example, Namtip's parents allowed her to watch only English television programs from the cable television and Malee's close friend spoke English with her outside the classroom regularly. Moreover, one main reason which pushed Malee and Namtip to engage in Hi5 network website was that their friends did so and they did not want to be left out. However, in many cases, the participants regarded these people as hinderers of their English activities. Most of the time, this was due to the inefficient English language proficiency of participants' family and friends and the social affiliation reason

(e.g., wanting to go along with the group). Opal and Benya could not watch movie from DVD with English soundtrack when they were with their family members because their parents would not understand it, which was the same for Namtip with her friends at another university. Moreover, Malee's choice of karaoke songs changed according to the group of friends who accompanied her. Malee went to sing karaoke with her non-English major friends on her friend's birthday. Malee did not sing as many English songs as she told me she usually did when she went out with her English major friends (M-FN 12, 1/12/07). From these episodes, it seems that the participants' family and friends pulled them away from the potential to learn.

Teachers

Developing from the Buddhist values, beliefs, and culture, teachers in Thailand are regarded with very high hierarchy by both students and parents (Foley, 2005). They are expected to be the "givers of knowledge" (Baker, 2008) and the person whom students will rely on for both moral support and knowledge as well as wisdom (Mulder, 1996 as cited in Foley, 2005). Therefore, it is not surprising that all participants thought that teachers played an important role in their English environments usage outside the classroom. Malee asserted the importance of teachers as role models in using environments. She said:

The teacher should be a good model for students in finding or using English in the environment outside the classroom. If he/she tells the students something that he/she found while searching the '*Internet*' or uses examples from outside the classroom such as street signs to teach English, the students will be more enthusiastic in learning from things around them. (M-Interv 0B, 1/18/07).

Consequently, the teacher's role was significant for Malee's use of English environments. On the one hand, teachers can support, encourage, and/or provide extensive opportunities for participants to seek out English input sources outside the classroom. On the other hand, one major problem which three out of four participants mentioned that affected their engagement in English activities outside the classroom is the lack of guidance, inspiration, and encouragement from people around them.

Malee complained that she almost had no one to show her how she could learn English from activities such as listening to English music, watching movies, and reading Internet websites. She even stated, "I don't think someone ever told me or '*advised*' me to speak English to myself or to read English posters in order to practice English."

Moreover, Benya mentioned in the interview (B-Interv 3, 5/9/08):

Benya: I think I lack someone to guide and introduce to me to the fact that this certain environment is useful or how to use this certain environment to enhance my English language and someone to induce and draw my attention to do something that is useful.

Researcher: What do you mean by that? Could you say more about this?

Benya: I don't think that I use the existing out-of-school English environment wisely and make the most of it. ... I also think I don't know how to create the opportunity to learn. I am not a person who can see everything as a learning opportunity. ... Speaking of creating opportunity to learn, I think I need someone to guide me and help me so that I know how to create the opportunity to learn, or else, I will only use the English environment that I can see.

Both Malee and Benya realized that they lacked guidance. Namtip, on the other hand, did not think insufficient support was her problem because she fully received support, encouragement and advice from her mother who was an English teacher. However, she recognized that many students did not have such opportunities as she did, which in turn affected the use of available English artifacts in the environment.

Sociocultural scholars, especially Vygotsky (1986) had emphasized the importance of guidance, help, advice, and demonstration from more capable peers or experts. As mentioned earlier in the previous section, an artifact which is not transparent or not accessible due to insufficient skill may become transparent and accessible with help, demonstration, and scaffolding from a more skilled person. The participants experienced this lack as an important factor which had hindered or might hinder them as well as other language learners in Thailand from participating in out-of-school English activities.

Time

Time is one of the important factors that substantially affect the use of environments. Malee claimed that her main reason for not doing English activities outside the classroom enough is lack of time. She confessed that during the semester she did not have much time due to the heavy load of homework and assignments. Malee also expressed that students including herself had to take too many courses which kept her busy, so she did not have time left to learn or to do anything in English outside the classroom. “I think that if I had more free time, I would do many things for myself, for my brain and for my knowledge” continued Malee (M-Interv 0B, 1/18/07). Furthermore, unlike the other participants who lived near the campus, Malee lived off campus and needed at least two hours for daily commuting which impacted her time for using environments. While driving, Malee did not have many choices of English environments available except for listening to news or music on the radio.

Additionally, Benya, who tutored English to four students three full days within a week and tutored Thai to Dr. Nancy 2 hours a week, found she lacked time for herself. Besides the time she spent on teaching, she had to prepare for the lesson and commute to the tutor center. Although tutoring English to students was one English-related activity that Benya did outside classroom, she felt that it took much of her free time from doing other English activities such as playing video games. Benya's English tutor routine would change from three days per week to one day after school started which meant that she would spend less time participating in English activities outside the classroom.

Social Norm and Social Attitude

As mentioned earlier, English in many Asian countries has become a measuring tool for university entrance examinations, job applications, and promotions in business. On the one hand, English language proficiency is regarded as a necessary, positive, and special skill which advantages a person in education, job, business, as well as other opportunities. On the other hand, it is sometimes viewed negatively by some people. For example, in some situations, people who use English language may be considered an arrogant person who has forgotten their native culture or has overvalued Western culture over native culture, or viewed as a scholar who does not belong to their community. Many times these negative opinions come from the fear of some consequences that result from being skillful in English language such as forgetting their native way of life and people in the community and losing their identity. In other words, the more English a person learns, the less Thai they may become (at least in the eyes of some people).

Hyland (2004) surveyed and interviewed Chinese students in Hong Kpng and found that besides individual factors, social/political factors impacted her students' preference for out-of-class activities. Her participants commented that they preferred non face-to-face activities because they wanted to avoid speaking in English since they did not want to be seen as "showing off" and being "arrogant" or "superior" (Hyland, 2004, pp. 187-188). In addition, one participant mentioned that political change from being an England colony to becoming part of China made her less comfortable in speaking English (Hyland).

All participants in my study realized that society affected their participation in out-of-class English activities as well. Opal confessed that she was negatively criticized by her friends and people around her for having many Western friends.

They condemn me for feeling attracted to Western guys. This hurts my feelings very much. I do not want to speak English so that I can flirt with some guys or vice versa. I will speak English to anyone who will speak with me. I think I like everything that relates to English language: culture, people, songs, movies, and language itself. (O-Interv 2, 4/9/08)

Opal also complained that many of her friends always thought that she went to the coffee shop to read books with hidden purposes such as finding some Western men. That is because it is very normal to find many Western people sitting in coffee shops, especially those in Western style such as Starbucks, Coffee World, etc., drinking coffee and reading. Moreover, from my own observation, Thai people usually view a coffee shop as a place for drink, and not for reading, working, or meeting friends as it is in Western countries. When Opal, who goes to a coffee shop to read as many people in Western countries do, spent hours in coffee shop reading, which is uncommon among her Thai friends, she was painted negatively. Opal admitted these insults hurt her feeling. However, she finally

overcame these offenses and continued her routine, as she thought she would do everything if it could improve her English.

Furthermore, similar to Hyland's (2004) interview result, all the participants noted the negative opinion from peers or people in society towards someone who spoke English other Thai people. Such negative opinions (in their Thai language) that the participants mentioned are “เวอร์” (pronounce “Ver” from “over”), which means doing something unnecessary, exaggerated, or overacting; “กระแดะ” (“Kra-Dae”) implies unnatural or insincere acting, or unashameness, and usually is used in satiric way; and “ดัดจริต” (“Dud-Ja-Rid”) refers to a hypocrite or being affected. These lead to, in many cases, students being afraid to speak English with intonation, stress, and Western accent as some of their peers may feel that they are overacting, or “Kra-Dae”, for example.

While Malee and I were chitchatting about school, a group of students (freshman year) who sat near us were talking about coffee. While sipping the coffee, one of them loudly said with correct intonation and stress, *‘Oh! It IS deLIcious’*. All her friends looked at her, laughed, and some shouted “Ver” and some cried out “Kra-Dae”. Overhearing the conversation, I asked Malee how she felt about the influence of this social opinion about English learning. Malee stated that many people might also think the same way about her speaking English with her close friend (Lerd) outside the classroom and many times at this common area. She said, “I don’t think that it affects me much. I still do it as long as Lerd and I are happy to do so.”

Similarly, Benya addressed that her friends upset her a few years ago by calling her “Dud-Ja-Rid” when she code-switched and used some English words in Thai

sentence and she pronounced those English words in a too native-like accent. Having been insulted many times, she stopped and instead pronounced those code-switching words with Thai accent. In addition, she mentioned in the third interview that recently her friends mocked her for reading English newspapers instead of Thai version. However, she said she did not care about those who mocked her, and she would continue reading *Daily Xpress* because she realized that she could learn many things from reading it.

It is worth mentioning here that all participants experienced these negative opinions from people around them and peers. Although some participants found that these opinions discouraged them or upset them at some points, all of them did not totally quit engaging themselves in English activities. It seems that these negative norms do not have any effect on their engagement in English activities, especially after they realized how useful the English activities they have done are in terms of enhancing their English exposure. However, these negative norms might influence many students especially in their beginning period.

Summary

In this section, I discussed some factors that impact participants' engagement in out-of-class English activities by dividing them into internal factors and external factors. I firstly discussed and gave examples of how internal factors such as personality, identity, motivation, and attitude affect participants' pattern of engagement in activities. After that I turned the major external factors that influenced the participants' engagement in out-of-school English activities which mainly associated with family, friends, teachers, time, and social norm.

CHAPTER 7

REFLECTION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

Role of Out-of-Class English Activities in the Language Classroom and Curriculum

After spending twelve weeks with the participants, I realized how much these learners are tied in closely with out-of-class English activities. Although this qualitative case study investigated college level learners, we can infer some findings to other learners at the high school level whose ages are close to the participants'. The findings represent how learners spend their life outside the academic world, which they believed help enhance their academic proficiency. Therefore, I see the benefit of bridging these two worlds together, namely the learners' world outside of school and the world inside academia.

In the 1999 Reform National Educational Act (NEA), life-long education for self and social development is emphasized along with cognitive, emotional, moral, ethical and cultural growth. At the higher education level, the emphases are on learner's independent projects, autonomous learning, innovations and new technology assisted teaching and learning, and self-access learning as well as English for academic and specific purposes. The findings from this study, which provide extensive pictures of a group of college learners' lives outside the classroom, suggest that learners associated with many English activities outside the classroom with or without intention.

The findings have other two major implications. First, knowing what learners usually do outside the classroom is useful for teachers to implement out-of-class activities

that learners are interested in or prefer in their classroom activities which would increase learners' learning motivation, for example using MSN IM in the discussion activity, using American movies or songs for the listening lessons and letting learners. The other way is to let learners engage in English language related organizations provided by community or school, or founded among learners. Some examples are English book club, English movie club, or other learners' English affiliate group or project, MSN IM chatting, sports, traveling and tour guiding, singing, and fashion. In this case, teachers need to implement some criteria to assess learners to make sure that they meet a certain requirement when engaging in these activities.

Second, knowing what learners usually do not do outside the classroom helps educators and teachers see what types of activities or language skills they need to supplement to the learners. The study found that the participants usually did not engage in productive activities outside the classroom as mentioned in chapter 5. This finding suggests educators and teachers add more productive activities such as writing and speaking activities into formal education as much as possible.

I am aware that many schools and universities may have more limitations than others to bridge out-of-class English activities into the formal lesson in terms of access to the English artifacts, financial support, and professional support, for example. Many places in Thailand, especially in the rural area, may not have access to out-of-class English artifacts as many as those in Bangkok area. Many schools have only one teacher for all grade levels. Some schools do not have a library or even electricity. The learners in these contexts may be different as well. In many cases, learners are in poverty and have to work part time to support their family. These learners may not have time to do other

activities outside school which relate to the English language, except for any activities that can make money for them. Many learners are not allowed to use English outside school according to their family personal belief. Some families only allow their learners to go to school because of the law; therefore, they do not give any support to their children's education. These problems are real and are currently a concern for many Thai educators, curriculum planners, and other people concerned about education. Keeping these limitations in my mind I still hope that English teachers and educators start to realize the importance of out-of-class English activities, the need of using English artifacts outside their classrooms, and all the benefits learners may gain from engaging in out-of-class English activities. Implementing out-of-class English activities in regular classroom teaching and supporting learners to exercise these available opportunities would increase learners' awareness and engagement in English activities, with which they encounter in their every day lives.

Role of Explicit Guidance on Out-of-Class English Activities Engagement

Many learners need a mentor or someone to guide them in out-of-class English activities. This guidance includes information on how to make use of the activities and how to participate in them. Several studies were conducted to investigate the benefits of explicit instruction. For instance, Norris and Ortega (2001) and Svalberg (2007) report benefits of explicit guidance on raising learners' language awareness.

Benya wrote in her reflection journal in English about the need of guidance from a more experienced person or in her words an "advisor" or a "pointer." (See Appendix D for the full essay.)

'People can learn something well if they have a good advisor or pointer to point out some good and bad things. ... In my case, I [would like to] have her as a good pointer, advisor and teacher to lead me into a good way to learn English from an environment'. (B-Ref 17, 9/13/08)

Similarly, Malee and Namtip agreed on the importance of a person who can provide guidance about how to use English artifacts which are available outside of school to them and other learners. This person does not have to be an English teacher. It can be a mentor, a guide, an expert, a friend, a parent, a book writer, or anyone. For Malee, she mentioned that her teachers did not do this work but her friend did instead.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the participants all recognized the lack of guidance from teachers about how learners can make use of the English artifacts available outside of the classroom. Malee said, "I don't think I have anyone to guide me about [engaging myself in English activities], except for my friend, Lerd" (M-Interv 2, 4/3/08). When I asked her how Lerd guided her, I found that not only did Lerd always make suggestions about how certain artifacts were useful, but he also invited and actually used the artifacts with her. This reminds me of Benya's case when she started to read public signs and recognize how she could learn English from these artifacts because I pointed it out to her. I read the sign out loud and ask her what she could learn from this sign. Then, I showed her several bits of English contents she could gain from reading a public sign, such as vocabulary, pronunciation, sentence structure, language culture, and language style. Finally, I encouraged her to be aware of all English artifacts available around her, most of which she usually overlooked. Benya wrote in her reflective journal and mentioned in the interview that before she met me, no one had never explicitly taught

her how learn English from the public signs and how my guidance influenced her on using available English artifacts more effectively.

When I said students need explicit guidance from teachers, or teachers should advise student and scaffold students to do out-of-class English activities effectively, I did not mean that teachers would follow students everywhere and point out to them every time the students encounter the English activities. What I meant is teachers should guide them how to learn or using learning strategies. From my own experience as a faculty member in the Foreign Language Division of the Faculty of Education, I know that English major, learners are introduced to many language learning strategies. The participants also confirmed this as they mentioned in the interview that they had learned skimming, scanning, context-clue using, idea generating techniques such as free writing, clustering, listing, mind mapping, and sentence structure analyzing. Moreover, all participants stated that their teachers mentioned in class that out-of-class artifacts were useful and encouraged them to read English newspapers and listen to the BBC or CNN news. According to what the participants told me and from my experience working with many English teachers in Thailand, many teachers suggested to students, “Students, newspapers are useful, read them. American movies are useful, watch them. Listen to the BBC news for your good accent.” However, how many times that the teachers actually do those activities with the students and demonstrate how they can learn English from those activities? Benya’s MSN chat, which was translated from MSN IM history chat log, illustrated this point (B-MSN, 10/02/08):

Benya: My teachers said all the time that out-of-class artifacts are important and useful. They told us that we should not stop studying in the classroom, that we should continue studying on our own as well.

Researcher: Do you follow your teachers’ words? Do your friends?

- Benya: No, not that much. But I think I am better than my friends.
- Researcher: Why don't you?
- Benya: I don't know. My teachers told us that we should watch American movies. They are useful. We can practice listening and we can learn so many things from movies in English. I don't think that my friends and I care much about what the teachers told us.
- Researcher: Why so?
- Benya: Well, they told us that it is useful. However, they had never showed us how we can learn from it. I think you are the first person who showed me how I can learn from these out-of-class artifacts.
- Researcher: What do you mean by "show"?
- Benya: You did watch the movie with me and you pointed out many things I should pay attention to. You read the sign with me and you guided me about how I can make use of those signs in terms of English language learning not just getting the information. I think if the teachers did exactly as what you did to me in the class to all my friends, my friends and I would use more English artifacts available outside classroom. I should use the word "demonstrate".
- Researcher: But your teachers taught you many '*learning strategies*' such as '*skimming, sentence analyzing*', etc. Right? Why don't you use those strategies to enhance your using English artifacts?
- Benya: Right. (Surprised or frightening face emoticon) They taught '*strategi[es]*' but they have never showed us how we can use those strategies with other media except for exercise books. Do you know what I mean? I think they are different. I think we need this demonstration. (Smiling face emoticon)

According to Benya, although she had learned many learning strategies, she also needed a person who could explicitly guide or demonstrate how those strategies work in out-of-class English contexts. The only difference between my guidance or Lerd's guidance in Malee's case and other teachers' guidance is I (and Lerd) demonstrated and did the activities along with learners and explicitly guided to see how they could possibly learn from doing such activities.

In O'Malley & Chamot's (1990) study on the influence of training in language improvement, the group with explicit training in learning strategies improved more than the control group in the speaking task. Similar to learners in O'Malley & Chamot's study,

Benya and Malee in my study needed explicit instruction on how to apply language strategies for engaging in out-of-class English activities. My analogy is that the learners' ability and background knowledge are like dots that are scattered everywhere. They may or may not be able to exercise those dots of knowledge efficiently. Explicit guidance will help learners organize and connect those dots together into a line. Learners now can use this line by itself or connect this line with other lines. They may need more explicit guidance to help them connect lines together to form a picture. Therefore, with explicit guidance (either from teachers, adults, or peers), learners are able to exercise their proficiency, their knowledge, and available learning sources to engage in those activities successfully and effectively.

Therefore, the explicit guidance is not only that teachers suggest some English learning sources or activities that learners can do to enhance their language proficiency outside the classroom, but also that teachers scaffold how learners can learn or pick up from those activities. Benya told me that before she met me, her teachers told her many times that English is around you, you should read everything, newspapers are good. However, she did not care because she did not know how those artifacts can help her improve her English. We walked in the shopping mall one day and I pointed it out for her that she can learn English from everything. I took the warning sign as the example. I demonstrated to her ways to learn or practice English from that short phrase, "Mind your step." I showed her that she can practice her pronunciation from this sign. I also pointed out that she should notice the grammar structure from this. I played a word game with her using the word "mind." I asked her to recall anything that relate to this word and where else she saw this word and in what context. She enjoyed it. She admitted to me that she

felt that she now know how to learn English from reading the signs. Teachers should suggest possible strategies that learners can use, learn, or practice from using certain artifacts and make the learning sources or English activities transparency as much as possible. As previously stated in the chapter 4, transparency is a major key that leads to learners to perceive the affordance of and to use certain out-of-class English artifacts. Therefore, it is this type of guidance that teachers should give to students, so that they have this strategy with them and they can use it anywhere they go and anytime and with any activity they do.

Clearly, from the interview, participants viewed an activity in English as part of life (e.g., participants wrote English e-mails and read signs as a mean of communication) and for English learning (e.g., Benya tried to read English newspapers to practice her English reading skill). They credited English activities which they personally like and consider as useful for learning while some activities are not perceived by participants as ways of practicing English (e.g., Namtip watched movies because of her personal preference and not because she could learn English from them). In addition, the study indicates that there are some particular out-of-class English activities in which the participants and other learners engaged yet were not perceived as English learning and practicing sources, especially e-mail writing, singing, and movie watching. In fact, the role of teachers is to assist learners to exploit available opportunities/situations for learning English. For example, writing in the Hi5 network in English could accrue language comprehension through communication with native speakers and simultaneously enhance practicing computer skill. Another important lesson to learn from this research is learners' learning is far beyond teachers' teaching; thus, teachers should

avoid prescribing activities but should rather encourage learners to individualize ways to learn and share those experiences with colleagues.

Learning as Value Out-of-Class English Activities

These research findings helped me see many things that I have never seen or imagined before. I saw another aspect of learners' lives that I would never seen standing in front of the classroom. This helps me understand them, and understand their lives, what they like to do or do not like to do, what kind of songs they listen to, what are the trends they are interested in. This helps me be able to conduct my class more effectively. Instead of asking students to practice their pronunciation from the Beatles, I should use the songs from Red Hot Chili Peppers. Instead of teaching argumentation and critical writing with dry lecture, I can move the whole class into the Internet discussion board with a topic and let them discuss just as what they like to write.

More importantly, I have become more open to the choice the learners make for their learning. I am more open to many out-of-class English activities such as playing games, spending hours in Hi5 or Facebook, or singing karaoke. I think I see more potential in learning from many activities. I am not saying that I think that all my learners will learn English from using Hi5 or playing video games. However, I am saying that I have less prejudice about these activities. I see these activities as they have English learning affordances as well.

According to the participants, the criticism and prejudice on out-of-class activities affect their out-of-class activities engagement more or less according to different individual's attitude and types of activities. While Benya's parents allowed her to see

individual's attitude and types of activities. While Benya's parents allowed her to see movie, her father, especially her aunt, was not very happy with her game playing habit, Benya mention. She, moreover, wrote in her reflection journal:

Every time her aunt saw her playing a '*crossword*' game or other '*game[s]*', her aunt would complain that she was doing "non-intellectual activities again". She blamed her for not reading text books during her free time. ... I don't understand why adults see my '*crossword*' game as a '*nonsense*' activity. I think I learned more English '*vocab[ulary]*' from this game than I did from the classroom. (B-Ref 1, 3/13/08)

Here, Benya had a conflict with her aunt's attitude on her crossword playing. Similarly, Namtip faced with problem of the prejudice that people usually have in the bar and her going to the bar. Namtip explained that she did not go to the club with the intention on learning English. Yet, she saw an opportunity to learn when she was at NungLen through English songs that the DJ played for the whole night. However, she commented that generally people had bad attitudes toward the bar and the person who went to this place:

For me the '*pub*' [or bar] is one source of learning environment as well as an entertainment place. For all adults, it is a place where people go and have fun, drink, and dance. Some adults see '*pub*' as a bad place where their children can do bad things such as using drugs, flirting with guys or girls, wasting time, drinking till drunk, etc. Others see it as an '*okay*' place to go under supervision. Adults may see many media as learning environments such as '*TV*', books, or even the '*Internet*'. However, no one would see a bar as a place where children can learn English. This is way beyond their thinking and imagination. (N-Interv 3, 5/9/08)

Although other people around her might have negative ideas about bars, she added that her parents did not prohibit her going to NungLen when she told them that she went there to sing songs, eat, dance, talk with friends; yet they advised her how to take care of herself and warned her about the danger that could happen with her in the bar. Her mother always supported her on every activity she did which related to English language;

therefore, she “gave the green light on going out to listen to and sing English songs as long as I am aware of myself and the possible dangers around me,” said Namtip (N-Interv 3, 5/9/08).

Benya further wrote in her 17th reflection journal about seven things she would like to tell adults about children’s out-of-class English activities’ engagement. Here is the excerpt of her reflection journal:

I would like to tell all parents that [MSN IM] ‘*chat[ting]*’ with English native speakers, listening to English music, watching movies are all useful activities. There is much knowledge that learners cannot learn from the classroom but they can experience from outside the classroom. ... [Moreover,] I would like to tell adults that no game is nonsensical, no activity is nonsensical. There is no such thing that is nonsensical. It depends on the purposes of the action. ... Adults should let their children learn from ‘*English Environments*’ more than sitting in the library and reading text books all day. (B-Ref 17, 9/13/08)

The above excerpts are only some examples of the reflections that the participants have on the gaps between adults and them on the out-of-class English activities they did as well as some bad experiences due to these gaps. They suggest that there are many people, especially adults, who have prejudice on many English language related activities, in which learners participate outside school, regardless of their reasons of participation and language advantage they gain.

This research study reflects another aspect of lives outside the classroom of a group of undergraduate students who were interested in English language and English language learning. It opens teachers’ eyes to see different ways that some learners in this generation learn language, through some activities which are considered as had by many people. While I am convinced that out-of-class English activities are useful and promote learners’ English proficiency and thus teachers, educators, and parents should encourage

learners to participate in these activities more, I am aware of some problem with these activities as mentioned in the next section.

Potential Risks of Out-of-Class English Activity Participation

Out-of-class English activities sometimes could be futile or even produce negative effects if not employed appropriately. The issues vary from problems regarding language use to problems regarding time management or problems about learners' safety. The first issue relates to the English language presented in out-of-class English activities or in English artifacts.

While most of the government public signs, announcements, and posters are in Standard British English style, there are many times that English language in the artifacts is ungrammatical, misspelled, or inaccurate. For example, Malee noticed an error on the warning sign '*Please Beware Your Head*'. Moreover, Namtip mentioned she found many grammar errors and misspellings in one bilingual magazine she used to read such as '*6 million pound*' instead of '*6 million pounds*'. Due to the fact that Thailand is the EFL country with limited English native-like human resources, it is often that English artifacts may have errors in terms of grammar, spelling, pronunciation, usage, etc. This usually happens with private or non-international sectors such as local restaurants, private companies, and home businesses. This can be dangerous to learners, especially who do not have much English proficiency background, as they can easily remember those errors. Within the same language error sign, some learners may mistakenly remember ungrammatical English from those errors in the artifacts whereas some learners, such as Malee and Namtip, may use these errors in the educative and intuitive way. Malee

recognized the error and used this error to recall the sentence structure that related to the context. She brainstormed some words that she knew that can be used in the warning context including *'beware'*, *'mind'*, *'watch out'*, and *'be careful'* (M-FN 17, 4/6/08). While we cannot control English errors from the artifacts, we can educate and cultivate our students to be skeptical about what they see, read, and hear and suggest them sources that they can find help if they have question and problem about English language.

Another language issue, which many English teachers, linguists, and researchers are concerned about, is the transfer of Internet discourse and chat room or IM discourse into academic discourse. The participants also pointed out some specific discourse registers such as vernacular language in the hip-hop songs, slang and colloquial in some movies, as well as shorthand and emoticons in MSN IM chatting. Namtip agreed that the Internet "has everything that you can imagine. It also has everything that you would like it to have and you would like to know" (N-FN 5, 4/5/08). She expressed her concern, however, on the variety of language style in the Internet included slang, informal language, non-standard, and sometimes errors, all of which may harm learners who did not have enough language background competence. Furthermore, the participants demonstrated the use of abbreviations and specific discourse register when participated in some activities. In chapter 3, I talked about Namtip's use of shorthand abbreviations in her journals in her Hi5 webpage such as *'thNx'*, *'n''*, and *'BTW'*. Opal also mentioned she normally did not use a lot of shorthand while IM chatting except for some such as *'thanx'*, *'tmrw'*, *'ppl'*, and *'btw'*. Although the participants realized the appropriateness of when to use this IM or cyber discourse; they noticed that many of their friends mixed

shorthand and IM discourse in writing in other more formal context such as a note to a professor.

Scholars have continually debated on the impact of specific discourse registers on some out-of-class artifacts on learners' academic discourse, especially the IM activity. On the one hand, English teachers and scholars were worried that learners will mix the symbolic abbreviations (such as u, ur, and b4) in their academic writing which would likely deconstruct verifiable grammatical rules (Lee, 2002; O'Connor, 2005). Craig (2003) reported the interview of a teacher in *The New York Times* that her learners put a smiley face (☺) in the end of the paper when they tried to make a point. Furthermore, learners were likely to use shortened words and ungrammatical capitalization and punctuation, and characters like &, \$, and @ as a result of MSN IM (Lee, 2002). However, some linguists and scholars argued that IM discourse does not harm learners' language. That is each of us is a member of many discourse registers each of which are similar and different to some extents; thus we should search appropriate discourse for given situation (e.g., Gee, 1996).

On the one hand, some learners benefited from MSN IM or chat rooms communication. For example, Opal claimed she could speak English because she practiced communicate with friends through MSN IM. Some learners gained other advantages from these different discourse registers. Malee, for instance, became to understand one perspective on Western culture through hip-hop songs or Namtip had chance to practice writing in the Hi5 journal though using many Internet discourse of shorthand and abbreviations. On the other hand, many learners might inappropriately use Internet and IM discourse in their report paper for an English course or use slang, swear

words, and informal language they heard from hip-hop songs to professors or other people.

From the interviews, Opal and Namtip both stated that they would not mix the register they used in the MSN IM or Hi5 page in the academic writings as they knew the discourse different and they were aware of the language appropriateness. Malee agreed that learners should learn to use appropriate language within each discourse community, school, friends, and family. Hence, specific discourse from IM or hip-hop songs can be treated as another discourse community where shorthand, slang, fast speech phenomenon, etc. are common. Therefore, in my opinion, the concern is when learners use non-standard English in other discourse communities such as school and academic writing. My participants also suggested that English teachers should educate learners on the importance of language appropriateness. Learners should be aware that the shorthand, emoticons, slang, and fast speech are specific discourses and they make no sense outside of its discourse community and thus, they should not transfer to academic writing discourse.

There are other concerns which may cause harmful effects to learners. Many media and artifacts nowadays are varied. Namtip mentioned about her friends' imitation of an underage sexual relationship from western culture from the movies they saw. Benya also pointed out the violence issue learners might absorb from video games especially with younger learners. Furthermore, Opal experienced the sexual related IM chat topic that some chat partners tried to drive her to. In addition, Namtip discussed the possible dangers from going to the pub or entertainment place. Although she went to the pub to listen to English music, sang songs, and hung out with friends, at the same time she was

aware of the risk she and other learners might encounter or might be tricked or persuaded including drugs, alcohol, gambling, sexual activity, etc. All these risks may be dangerous for learners. Without good adult guidance and supervision, learners may access inappropriate media full of violence, sexuality, and misbehavior and easily develop unwanted behavior or imitate inapt manor or even be lead astray.

The last problem from engaging in the out-of-class activities is the time management problem. I found at least two arguments to this time management issue. On the other hand, engaging in English activities is a productive way learners exercise their free time. Therefore, the fact that learners spend five or six hours doing English activities is better than doing nothing educative at all. On the other hand, many people afraid that learners do not spend enough time for their homework or study for the exam because they spend too much time on out-of-class English activities. Due to the fact that most out-of-class activities are fun, non-academic, and responsive to learners' interests, many learners are willing to participate in them more than academic activities. An example of this issue is when Benya's aunt complained to her for playing crossword games instead of reading the textbook. Opal, moreover, mentioned in the interview that she usually stayed up late spending more than ten hours on MSN and felt tired during the school day. Hence, the fact that learners are unable to manage their time or balance in- and out-of-class activities can become problem to learners.

From these tensions, we should pay attention to is what it means be too long or too much and what the standard for measuring is. To illustrate, two hours of browsing Internet websites can be too long in parents' opinion who aim for their children to study and to achieve academic excellence. The same amount of time in same activity can be

either useful or useless in language teachers' or SLA scholars' opinion depending on how much learners notice and pick up language content from those website as well as the language input quality from the websites. At the same time, four hours of Internet English websites browsing may not be too long in many other people's opinion if the learners do this activity instead of sitting in the room doing nothing. Within this same amount of time, learners can at least practice skimming, scanning, and reading English websites or engaging in English language activities instead of letting the time pass by. Hence, there is no absolute answer to the issue of time management. Out-of-class English activities can be useful and they can be dangerous in terms of the time learners spend on the activities.

In conclusion, according to the participants, out-of-class English activities were very useful for them in terms of English language improvement. For example, Opal felt that MSN IM was more practical for speaking skill practice than taking English classes. Moreover, Benya said she learned a lot of new vocabulary from playing games. Malee could listen to and sing English songs and said she learned many cultural points from hip-hop songs. Lastly, Namtip mentioned that singing songs was a way to practice English intonation and the pub was a place for her to listen to and sing English songs. The research findings lead me to believe that out-of-class English activities help enhance participants' English learning. However, I also would like to point out that although out-of-class English activities provide great benefits to English learners, failing to utilize them correctly, cleverly, and appropriately may mar the advantages or may become counterproductive activities.

Conclusion

This study aimed to understand how learners engage in English activities outside the classroom on a daily basis in relation to English language practice. The study, first, explored both the possible access and perceived access in out-of-class English activities available in local environments as well as affordances of out-of-class English activities. Second, this research enlarged the understanding of types of and time spent in out-of-class English activities, including the nature of their participation. Third, this study has broadened the significance of out-of-class English activities in terms of potential learning opportunity enhancement and factors that have an impact on their participation.

This study employed a qualitative multiple case study approach portraying four female participants who were in their third or fourth year of English major in the Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand. The data were gathered from multiple sources using ethnographic research data collection method such as participant observation, interviews, self reflection journals, and self-report daily activity diaries.

The findings about out-of-school English activities illustrate that learners are routinely involved in a range of activities such as watching movies, listening to and singing songs, and doing Internet activities. The study found that learners did not perceive every English activity that is available outside of classroom as English learning source. The activities they perceived, thus participated in, share at least one of these four characteristics: transparency, usability, expense, and affectivity. Learners participated in a large amount of out-of-class English activities within various types of activities and in different spans of time. The study also found that the activities learners usually engaged in are multimodal activities, non-face-to-face activities (yet interactive type), receptive

activities, and incidental learning activities. Learners experienced that out-of-class English activities help them develop English proficiency, including communicative competence as well as accuracy and fluency, motivation and attitude toward English learning, learning strategies, and other knowledge. Moreover, many factors that impact learners' pattern of participating in out-of-class English activities consist of internal factors such as personality, identity, motivation, and attitude toward English learning; and external factors such as social network, family, friends, teachers, time, and social norms. However, out-of-class English activities may be dangerous to learners if misused or are bereft of more expert guidance.

Furthermore, while attempting to draw a solid pattern of the type of out-of-school English activities the participants engaged in outside school, I found it difficult as well as somewhat worthless to pinpoint a list of the top three English activities they did outside school. I did find, however, that first there is no absolute pattern of activity list and second the choice of their engagement in activities relates to many factors, such as personality, identity, motivation, social network, teachers, and time. This study is a confirmation to many works in SLA that show individual differences, social influence, and language practice are all interwoven.

In addition, this study gives only some examples of a group of learners who conduct out-of-class English activities in creative way. It shows that in certain out-of-class activities such as playing games and watching movies, which were viewed by many people as a waste of time, could be beneficial for language learning if proper learning strategies were chosen and deployed. In fact, every activity has pros and cons; it mainly depends on objectives and purposes. I am also aware that there are also many cases that

misused of out-of-class artifacts or inappropriate engagement in out-of-class English activities can also cause threats and danger. Therefore, parents should open their minds, judiciously exercise their opinions, and provide constructive guidance to learners on the out-of-classroom activities. In summary, this study reveals the implications of many existing English environments and technologies which are familiar to students and useful for English learning. Some of these activities are used in the classroom by some teachers; yet many are out of teacher's attention. English teachers and other relevant parties, therefore, should consider support learners' engagement in out-of-class English activities and incorporating English activities which students use outside school regularly into other classroom teaching activities.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

DESCRIPTIVE OF SCORE OF POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS

Table A1

Descriptive Summary of Nine Potential Participants Classified by Categories

Participant No.	Out-of-class		Remark
	activity score (Mean = 20.23)	Attitude score (Mean = 165.12)	
29	37.00	171	
31	36.50	169	Kulda (dropped case)
28	36.00	185	Opal
7	33.00	183	Benya
27	32.73	184	Malee
23	31.36	178	
14	30.00	167	
9	29.09	179	Namtip
2	26.50	173	
20	26.00	184	
13	25.00	169	
17	23.50	171	
12	22.00	175	
36	22.00	175	
11	22.00	170	

APPENDIX B

MAP OF THE PARTICIPANTS' RESIDENCE AND CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY NEIGHBORHOOD AREA

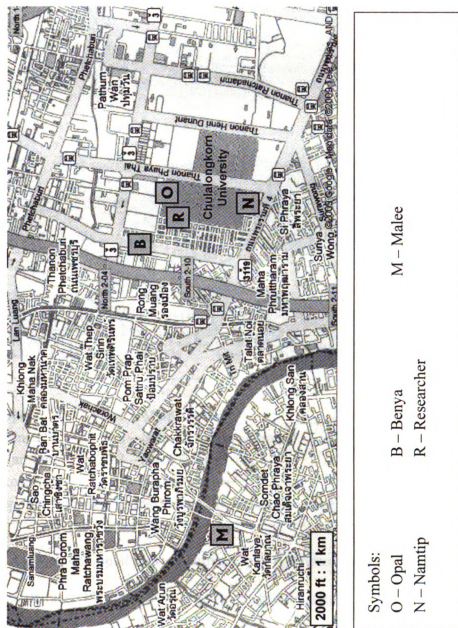
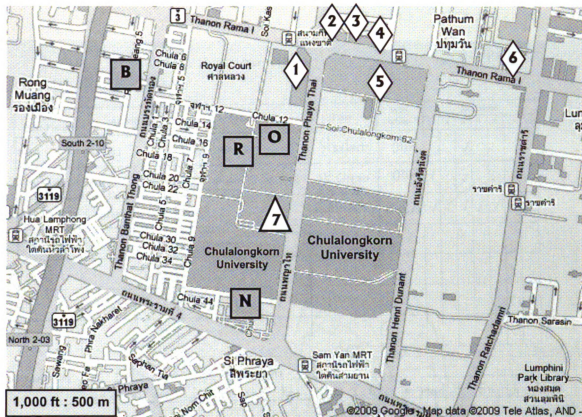


Figure A1. Map of participants' residence in Bangkok.

Retrieved January 10, 2009, from <http://maps.google.com/maps>. Copy right 2009 by google.com. (Symbols are added.)



Symbols:

O – Opal	1 – MBK Center*	5 – Siam Square*
B – Benya	2 – Siam Discovery Center*	6 – Central World*
N – Namtip	3 – Siam Center*	7 – Faculty of Education, CU
R – Researcher	4 – Siam Paragon*	

* Shopping Complex: include shopping center, restaurants, movie theaters, etc.

Figure A1. Map of Chulalongkorn University neighborhood area.

Retrieved January 10, 2009, from <http://maps.google.com/maps>. Copy right 2009 by google.com. (Symbols are added.)

APPENDIX C

EXAMPLE OF DAILY ACTIVITY DIARY

Diary Checklist

Today's Date: 10th April 2008

Name: Opal

Time Start-Finish	Activity	Detail	Place	With whom	Eng skills						
					L	S	R	W	Pr	Gr	Cu
11 am - 1 pm	Reading	Daily Express	Starbucks	Olin			✓				✓
1 pm - 3 pm	Movie	<u>The art of devil 3</u>	SF Cinema	Olin	✓		✓			✓	✓
10 pm - 4 am	Chatting	Skype	Bo Dorm	Robert	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Free Writing: - with Olin 11 am - 9 pm

- The art of devil is a Thai movie ka -- but I like to read its English subtitle
to see how they translate the movie script
fr. Thai to English

Figure A3. Sample of filled daily activity diary from Opal (Hand written).

Note: All names have been changed to correspond with pseudonyms used through out the paper.

APPENDIX D

EXAMPLE OF REFLECTION JOURNAL

Figure A4. Example of Benya's reflection journal (B-Ref 18, 9/13/08) (Hand written).

④ When I was young, in Secondary School I knew I like English, an English subject, more than others. But I didn't know how to improve my english and didn't know how important it is. Until now, I have to study English almost everyday, I have a chance to talk to a foreigner and I like ~~to~~ to see a movie. I know English is important for me ^{the} at present and in the future. Every day I have seen English ⁱⁿ every where but I don't notice the words or the sentence. I just ^{see} ~~know~~ that they are English language. I think some ^{people} can learn something well if they have a good adviser or pointer to point out some good and bad things. In my case, I have her as a good pointer,

advisor and teacher → to lead me into
a good way to learn English from ^{an} environment.

The important of the advisor depends on the advisor.

Some learners think the advisor is not necessary because

they can learn by themselves and they do not want anyone

to blame when they do something wrong. In my opinion,

the role of the advisor is like a mirror to reflect

the learners' action and give a feedback to them

for the improvement. I sometimes want her to go

with me everywhere and teach me everything that I

have seen. Because there are a lot of things I don't

know and when I have a question in my mind,

nobody can answer it. The characteristics of the

advisor are a good psychologist that means he

or she should choose some good words to comment

his/her learners, give them an attractive advice
to make them interested and do follow your advice
first to be a good model.

From the past until now, many teachers told me
to observe the English in every day life. I know and

understand the important of English but I didn't do

anything. ^{Miss B} (pseudonym) is different from other teachers, she
^{important} shows how english environment is by doing, not just

telling. Another reason that I follow her advice is

we are close. It makes me trust in her and believe

that she is doing a good thing and she really wants me
to be good at English.

At the present, I learn English more in my
environment. I try to observe the sign, the label, and
the brochure. Moreover, I learn many things from

the movie such as their language, accent, their thoughts, and life, the culture, and new vocabularies. I know the news by reading a newspaper almost every day and wordsearch helps me know some vocabularies more.

The environment is important to me to improve my English. The point is English is everywhere but I never observe it and let it go. Now, I hope it is not too late to learn it and turn into something that important but I never interest in. [I have to say thank you to my English teachers who make me like English so much and thanks a million for

Miss B (pseudonym)

that help me open my mind to learn English in my environment.]

APPENDIX E

VIDEO GAMES INTERFACE

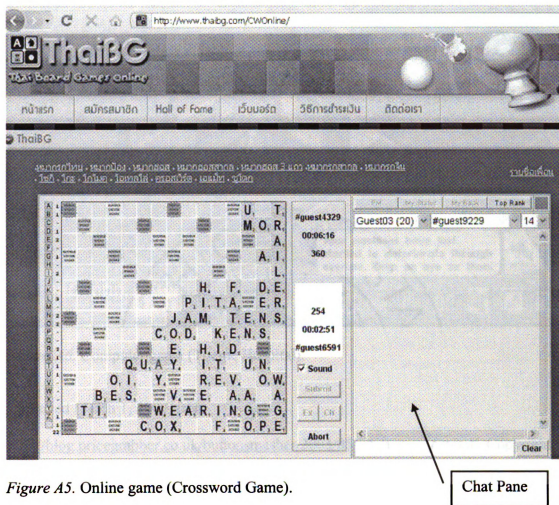


Figure A5. Online game (Crossword Game).

Retrieved March 1, 2009, from <http://www.thaibg.com/CWOnline/>. Copyright 2002-2009 www.ThaiBG.com (Thailand). All Rights Reserved.



Figure A6. Computer game (Theme Hospital).

Retrieved March 1, 2009, from

<http://blog.pricegrabber.co.uk/buttonsmasher/2008/05/17/theme-hospital/>. Copyright ©

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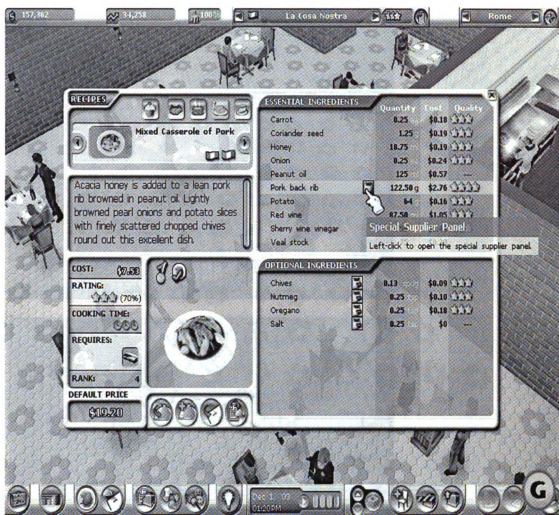


Figure A7. Computer game (Restaurant Empire).

Retrieved March 1, 2009, from http://reviews.cnet.com/pc-games/restaurant-empire-pc/4528-9696_7-30797877-1.html. Used with permission from CBS Interactive, Inc.,

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Figure A8. PlayStation II game (Resident Evil 4).

Retrieved March 1, 2009, from

<http://www.gamespot.com/ps2/adventure/residentevil4/index.html>. Used with permission from CBS Interactive, Inc., Copyright © 2009. All rights reserved.



Figure A9. PlayStation II game (FIFA 2006).

Retrieved March 1, 2009, from <http://www.gamespot.com/ps2/sports/fifa2006/>. Used with permission from CBS Interactive, Inc., Copyright © 2009. All rights reserved

APPENDIX F

Table A2

Respondent and Average Amount of Time Spent in Out-of-Class English Activities.

Out-of-Class English Activities	Number of Participants (N=42)	Average Amount of Time*
Browse Internet websites	40	3.78
Read posters, signs, etc.	38	1.92
Watch TV, movies	38	2.28
Write/read e-mails	38	2.47
Browse network websites, blog	37	1.84
Play video games	37	2.62
Listen to/sing songs	36	2.31
Read books, magazines	33	2.18
Talk with people, self	31	2.35
IM Chat	30	2.87
Read newspapers	30	1.37
Other	8	2.13

* Based on 5-point scale of length of time spent on activities per week: 5 = more than 10 hours, 4 = 7–10 hours, 3 = 4–7 hours, 2 = 1–4 hours, 1 = less than 1 hour, and 0 = never

APPENDIX G

FREQUENCY AND TIME SPENT IN OUT-OF-CLASS ENGLISH ACTIVITIES FROM DAILY ACTIVITY DIARIES

Table A3

*Frequency of Out-of-Class English Activities from Participants' Activity Diaries**

Out-of-Class English Activities	Frequency (%)				Average	SD
	Opal	Benya	Malee	Namtip		
Listen to/sing songs	9.33%	10.05%	33.65%	22.38%	18.85%	11.54
Do the Internet activities	12.44%	5.03%	28.91%	17.62%	16.00%	10.04
Talk to friends/self	31.61%	0%	10.43%	10.48%	13.13%	13.27
Watch movies	6.22%	11.06%	9.00%	24.29%	12.64%	8.01
Read books/magazines	22.28%	7.54%	4.27%	14.29%	12.09%	7.97
Read posters, signs, etc.	0%	15.58%	9.95%	7.14%	8.17%	6.48
Read newspapers	14.51%	15.58%	0%	0%	7.52%	8.70
English/Thai tutor	3.11%	18.59%	2.84%	0%	6.14%	8.42
Play video games	0%	14.07%	0%	1.43%	3.87%	6.83
Send/read SMS	0%	2.51%	0.95%	1.43%	1.22%	1.05
Write a diary	0.52%	0%	0%	0.48%	0.25%	0.29
Join English club	0%	0%	0%	0.48%	0.12%	0.24

*Total number of daily activity diaries from all four participants is 246 days with 770 entries (frequency).

Table A4

*Time Spent in Out-of-Class English Activities from Participants' Activity Diaries**

Out-of-Class English Activities	Time Spent (Minutes)**				Average	SD
	Opal	Benya	Malee	Namtip		
Talk to friends/self	312	0	30	21	91	148.29
Watch movies	30	36	48	78	48	21.41
Do the Internet activities	71	5	53	47	44	28.00
Listen to/sing songs	26	16	76	54	43	27.15
English/Thai tutor	15	131	14	0	40	60.98
Read books/magazines	77	7	15	40	35	31.54
Read newspapers	69	8	0	0	19	33.14
Play video games	0	42	0	5	12	20.23
Read posters, signs, etc.	0	6	8	7	5	3.62
Write a diary	2	0	0	3	1	1.57
Join English club	0	0	0	1	0	0.58
Send/read SMS	0	1	0	1	0	0.47
	602	251	244	257	339	175.75***

* Total number of daily activity diaries from all four participants is 246 days with 770 entries.

** The numbers of minutes presented were rounded.

*** SD of average minutes.

APPENDIX H

OPAL'S E-MAIL

[Robert,]

Good luck for encouraging ppl to work in your apartment na ka; hope it's gonna be fine. Why did many people leave your department? And you told me you wanted to leave as well, didn't you?

Btw, I like the picture that you attached. Don't forget to bring a dvd of our pictures this time na ka. I really want to see!! I will call a person who can fix my computer today. I told you before, I need to get it fixed before 12 nd. I hope it's gonna be okay and doesn't cost me much for the fixing hehe. For my mobile, I already asked my cousin (not the one you met before) to take a look at it. She has her own mobile shop. It's strange coz I didn't think about her when we decided to buy the mobile.

So, tonight is gonna be the last day of us chatting on the net? coz tmrw night you will be on the plane? or I miscalculate? Damn...I totally forgot to ask you when you will reach the airport? Tell me about it tonight na ka. I'm looking forward to seeing you again.

Kissy Kissy and loads of love

[Opal]

Figure A10. Opal's e-mail.

Retrieved through forwarded e-mail on May 15, 2008 (English language in original).

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