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Forward from the Conference Chair

Welcome to the Eighth LITU International Graduate Conference 2019 under the theme “The Journey to Publication”. As Conference Chair, I am very pleased to see this final online publication of the conference proceedings, which could never have been completed without substantial contribution and support from all our hard-working LITU staff and graduate students.

LITU International Graduate Conference is held annually in order to provide a platform where graduates of Master’s degree programs in Career English for International Communication and English Language Teaching can submit and present to the public their research papers based on their independent-study research projects and theses. This proceedings book thus includes the papers presented at the Eighth LITU International Graduate Conference 2019, covering various English-related disciplines, e.g. English linguistics, English language instruction and acquisition, translation, English and communication theories, as well as professional English, etc.

I do hope that all the articles published in this collection will considerably benefit those in the English-related fields. In addition, more international contributors, e.g. graduate students, university lecturers, and language researchers in general, are expected to join and publish with us in our next conference.

I am looking forward to meeting you during the next LITU conference in 2020 and to sharing a most pleasant, interesting and fruitful conference.

Pattama Sappapan

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LEARNER AUTONOMY IN THAI LAW STUDENTS

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Abstract
This study aimed to investigate the levels of learner autonomy of Thai law students learning in a Bangkok university. 403 Thai law students, 119 freshman students, 92 sophomore students, 94 junior students, and 98 senior students from the university, participated in the study. The research design was a sequential explanatory design. The learner autonomy questionnaire was used as a research instrument to collect the quantitative data. Moreover, a semi-structured interview was carried out in the study to get in-depth detail from the participants. The data analysis was carried out through quantitative analysis techniques (Mean and Standard Deviation).

The findings from the learner autonomy questionnaire show that the level of English language learning autonomy of Thai law students learning in the university was at the high level. The Mean (\(\bar{X}\)) and the Standard Deviation (SD) were 3.75 and 0.67 respectively. The sophomores ranked the highest (\(\bar{X} = 3.81\), SD = 0.65). The freshmen and juniors were slightly different and also in the high range (\(\bar{X} = 3.77\), SD = 0.66 and \(\bar{X} = 3.76\), SD = 0.72 respectively), whereas the senior subgroup was in the lowest range (\(\bar{X} = 3.64\), SD = 0.65). However, Thai law students in all subgroups had high levels of learner autonomy. The results also indicate that Thai law students are ready to be autonomous learners as they have high levels of both willingness and ability.

Keywords: learner autonomy, autonomous learning, autonomous learner, willingness, ability, Thai law students
1. Introduction

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Research on second and foreign language acquisition during the 1970s and 1980s generally focused more on pedagogy than on learning process. Since the 1990s, the research has shifted to center on the interaction between learner and teacher from the perspective of the learner (Brown, 2000). Researchers have identified factors contributing to learners’ English proficiency. Empirical research investigations about self-directed study in Thailand are also abundant. One common theme is that English learning autonomy is a key dimension in learners’ English performance.

Holec (1981) was the person who coined the term “learner autonomy” and defined it as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning”. In brief, students are encouraged to take a more active role in the learning process than in traditional approaches. Learner autonomy is considered as an important concept where students direct their learning in and out of the classroom. They are free to choose the ways of learning, select their own goals, decide on materials, and evaluate themselves.

English learning is a lifelong journey, not one that starts and finishes in a classroom. The notion of learner autonomy emphasizes the role which learners can play in their own learning. During the learning process, learners should be guided and taught to become autonomous learners and take the responsibility of their own learning. Being outside a classroom, learners are able to direct their own learning and choose learning activities they want, so it can enhance their opportunity to learn by themselves and also long-term profit.

Nowadays, English language becomes more and more important in the EFL context. The empirical research reveals that most students have learned English since they were very young but they may improve English proficiency very little when they grow up, especially in communicating (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Normally, Thai traditional education encourages students to learn as much as possible and ignore the significance of the learning process. When talking about language learning, most people think about where to learn but are hardly concerned about how to learn. Consequently, promoting and developing autonomous learning is crucial as the goal of all education is to help students act, think, and learn independently in relevant areas of their lives.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Concerning English language learning, Thai students culturally seem to be obedient, respectful, and passive towards their teachers. This is because of the...
traditional classroom in Thailand, which is mostly focused on a teacher-centered approach. This approach provides students few opportunities to engage in their learning because the teacher always plays a role as a knowledge transmitter to students. Moreover, little interaction among teacher and students is involved. The teacher often spends much time explaining and speaking in the classroom while students have to listen to the teacher and sit quietly. So there is a very small chance for learners to ask for whatever they do not understand, and they have only a slight chance of conversing with other people using the target language.

However, since the communicative language teaching has appeared in Thailand, the role of teacher and students has been gradually changed. The focus is shifted from teacher to students. This approach offers students more possibilities to manage their own learning process, and teacher is not the main source of knowledge anymore. The teacher becomes less of an instructor and more of a facilitator (Benson, 2001).

With this concept, learner autonomy, Thai students are expected to take more responsibility to show a large amount of autonomy in their learning process in order to achieve success. English is required for communicating in a variety of professional fields including: business, science, aviation, information technology, medicine, and also law. A good command over English is required for a well-paid and interesting career. Autonomous learning offers more chance for students to take their opportunities.

However, most teachers have had groups of students who have failed to learn both inside and outside the classroom, who did not learn from their mistakes, who did not listen to anyone, who never did their homework, who were unwilling to use the target language in classroom activities, and so on. These examples reveal that students are not making enough effort in their learning, which leads to many educational problems as shown nowadays; the lack of a conspicuous talent or ability in children, the increment of stressfulness among children, and so on. Moreover, most of them are not likely to be aware of their roles in their learning process. Without learner autonomy, students make slow improvement in their learning and thus are affecting their accomplishment in English language learning.

There is a lot of research conducted on learner autonomy such as Rungwaraphong (2012), who described the state of the promotion of learner autonomy in Thailand from the perspectives and practices of university language lecturers. Na Chiangmai (2016) explored the dynamic relationship between teachers’ beliefs about motivation and autonomy, the strategies they used in their classrooms, and their students’ perceptions. In addition, some research has been conducted to investigate the autonomy learning readiness of Thai students, such as Swatevacharkul (2008). Nevertheless, there has been little research conducted on assessing learning autonomy in the Thai EFL context specifically with Thai law students. Law students nowadays
are expected to be able to work for or deal with international companies and organizations around the globe. There are a lot of law firms founded in Thailand that require proficiency in English from the lawyer. Unfortunately, the curriculum for law students does not provide enough courses or tools for fostering their language learning since it focuses most on law, and there are usually only the foundation English courses provided. Thus, the aim of the present work is to further the observation of learner autonomy among Thai EFL students learning law in higher education and to promote the learner autonomy.

According to the mentioned statement above, this present study leads to the objectives of the study as following.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aims to:
1. investigate the levels of learner autonomy of Thai law students learning in the university
2. examine the differences in learner autonomy among Thai law students learning in the university

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research question in this study is formulated as following:

1. What are the levels of English language learning autonomy of Thai law students learning in the university?
2. What are the differences in learner autonomy among Thai law students learning in the university?

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1. This study was carried out with one group of participants which was classified into four subgroups; freshman (first-year), sophomore (second-year), junior (third-year), and senior (fourth-year); all of them were doing a bachelor’s degree. The total samplings in this present study were randomly selected as 330 participants out of 1,661 law students at a public research university in Thailand. The size of the sample in each subgroup was taken in proportion to the size of the subgroup.
2. The research focuses on the level of learner autonomy of the participants. A learner autonomy questionnaire was used to observe the level of English language learning autonomy. Then an interview was carried out to get the in-depth information about their English language learning.
3. The English proficiency of the participants was random. Nonetheless, all the participants had to pass the foundation English exam and the General Aptitude Test (GAT) which consists of a logical reasoning test and English language.
skills assessment before entering the university. So, it can be assumed that their English proficiency is higher than intermediate level.

4. Some research findings indicate that there is no difference in the degree of autonomous learning readiness between male and female (Kulsirisawatdi, 1994; Tangsriphai, 1999). Since both male and female give importance to similar aspects related to responsibilities, abilities, and activities on learner autonomy (Yigit and Yildirim, 2018), gender of the students was not taken into consideration as a criterion in the sampling.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

1. The finding of the level of English language learning autonomy among Thai law students learning in the university will enable the lecturers, dean, and officers in academic affairs to be more aware of the degree of autonomy in language learners and to realize that the learner autonomy is very useful. Besides, it can help the learners acknowledge and appreciate autonomous learning as a powerful and efficient tool of learning.

2. The finding of the differences of learner autonomy among Thai law students learning in the university can also allow the relevant people to promote the missing components of learner autonomy which can fulfill the students’ English language proficiency.

3. The finding of this study will also be very beneficial for the curriculum development and an effective educational system. The faculty can use the result of this present study to provide the activities or tools that foster language learners and facilitate the learners to become more autonomous.

2. Literature Review

2.1 LEARNER AUTONOMY

This section provides the information about learner autonomy and related topic. It is divided into four main parts; definition, importance, its components, and its dimension. There are some relevant studies about the role of teachers and students to promote learner autonomy in this section.

2.1.1 Definition of Learner Autonomy

Historically in language learning, the definition of learner autonomy seems to be interpreted in many different ways, and a large literature on autonomy in language learning now exists. Holec (1981) was the first person who coined the term learner autonomy and defined this term as “the ability to take charge of one’s own direct
learning…to have and to hold the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning: determining the objectives; defining the contents and progressions; selecting methods and techniques to be used; monitoring the procedure of acquisition (rhythm, time, place, etc.); evaluating what has been acquired”.

Little (1991), in his turn, defines ‘learner autonomy’ as learners’ ability to “understand the purpose of their learning program, explicitly accept responsibility for their learning, share in the setting of learning goals, take initiatives in planning and executing learning activities, and regularly review their learning and evaluate its effectiveness”.

Dickinson (1995) characterized autonomous learners as those who have the capacity for being active and independent in the learning process, whereas Higgs (1988) viewed it as a process, “in which the learner works on a learning task or activity and largely independent of the teacher who acts as manager of the learning program and as resource person”. Some definitions (e.g. Dam, 1995) also include the notion of ‘willingness’ to emphasize the point that irrespective of their capacity, learners will not develop autonomy unless they are willing to take responsibility for their learning.

In fact, learners attaining autonomy depends on a variety of factors, including learners’ ability to take responsibility, availability and flexibility in the learning environment, teacher support, peer support, and personal constructs. Though there are slightly different interpretations of learner autonomy, those meanings above contribute to a working understanding of this term.

According to Benson and Voller (1997), there are five categories of the term learner autonomy, including situations in which learners study wholly on their own, the right of learners to decide the direction of their own learning, the exercise of learners’ responsibility for their own learning, an inborn capability which is suppressed by institutional education, and a set of skills which can be learned and applied in self-directed learning.

Nevertheless, there are some accounts of learner autonomy which start by defining what it is not. Esch (1996) thinks that autonomy is not self-instruction or learning without a teacher, does not mean that intervention or initiative on the part of a teacher is banned, is not something teachers do to learners, is not a single easily identifiable behavior, and is not a steady state achieved by learners once and for all.

To qualify the above claims, these understandings are generally accepted by academics and researchers working in the field of learner autonomy; the extent to which teachers also embrace such positions remains, however, unknown; there is actually some evidence that teachers may hold positions about learner autonomy which are at odds with those listed above.
2.1.2 Importance of Learner Autonomy

The cultivation of learner autonomy is actually a long process. One important thing is that teacher should support learners to develop gradually from teacher dependence to autonomy. “Give a man a fish, and you feed him a day; teach him how to fish, and feed him for a lifetime” is the saying of Scharle and Szabo (2000). Moreover, the saying “you can bring the horse to water, but you cannot make him drink” can clearly explain why we need learner autonomy in teaching learning process. In English language learning, a teacher can offer all the essential tools and input, but learning can only take place if learners are willing to get involved and participate. Scharle and Szabo (2000) indicated that learners are able to be successful in language learning when they have a responsible attitude. Consequently, learners need a great deal of responsibility and active involvement in participating in learning activities in order to complete achievement of their potential in language learning.

It is clearly presented that ‘responsibility’ is one significant factor in language learning. For the next part of this chapter, the components of learner autonomy which enable learners to take responsibility for their own learning will be discussed.

2.1.3 Components of Learner Autonomy

An autonomous person can be defined as one who has an independent capacity to carry out and make the choices which govern his or her actions. This capacity depends on two main components: willingness and ability (Wenden, 1991). Hence, a person may have the ability to make independent choices but feel no willingness to do so (e.g. because such behavior is not perceived as suitable to his or her role in a particular situation). Conversely, a person may be willing to exercise independent choices but not have the necessary ability to do so.

Willingness and ability can themselves each be divided into two elements. Willingness depends on having both the motivation and the confidence to take responsibility for the choices required. Ability depends on possessing both knowledge about the alternatives from which choices have to be made and the essential skills for fulfilling whatever choices seem most appropriate. If a person wants to be successful in acting autonomously, all of these four elements need to be presented together.

It is obvious that decision-making and making choices is the core of the learner autonomy. Holec’s (1981) study comments on the range of the autonomous learner’s control in terms of making the following decisions: determining objectives, defining the contents and progressions, selecting methods and techniques, monitoring procedures of acquisition, and evaluating what has been acquired. Oxford (2008) extends the list of possible decisions related to: (1) the language to be learned; (2) the purpose, general content, topics, and specific tasks of the foreign language learning; (3) the amount and type of directions the learner needs; (4) the kinds of learning strategies to be used; (5) the nature, frequency, and reporting format of assessment;
(6) formality or informality of the learning; (7) timing; and (8) location (e.g. at self-access center, on the phone or computer at home, or elsewhere).

For instance, a person may feel highly motivated to learn outside the classroom but lack the necessary knowledge or skills to manage his or her time productively; a person may have ample opportunities to develop knowledge and skills for systematizing learning, but not wish to do so since he or she sees this as the teacher’s role (as for example in the case described in Riley, 1988); a learner who is accustomed to a high degree of teacher support and control may lack the confidence to carry out whatever skills he or she is taught.

In order to develop autonomy, it is very useful to distinguish these elements. Practically, all of them are closely linked. Thus, the more knowledge and skills the learners possess, the more confident they are likely to feel when asked to perform independently; the more confident they feel, the more they are likely to be able to mobilize their skills and knowledge in order to perform efficiently; and so on (Littlewood, 1996).

The two main components of learner autonomy presented above are the framework of this present study. The questionnaire which was used to measure the level of learner autonomy of the participants is based on those components.

2.1.4 The Role of Teachers and Students to Promote Learner Autonomy

Even though there is a contradiction between the role of the teacher and the learner in promoting learner autonomy, the teacher-learner relationship is critical in strengthening learner autonomy. The trust and cooperation between the teacher and the learners make the learners feel secure and comfortable in the classroom; only then can the learners have the confidence to venture further in language learning. Benson and Voller’s (1997) study also stated that teachers have an important role to play in launching learners into self-access and in supporting them to stay afloat. In the investigation of this study, it was found that this requires a great change for both teachers and learners. Teachers are no longer in their traditional position as speakers in class while learners are not passive receivers any longer. However, it does not mean that teachers are less important. Conversely, the teachers’ duty is more challenging and demanding in assisting learners grow up as independent and creative learners. Teachers should focus on how to learn instead of how to teach. They must play different and various roles in the classroom as counselors, guides, and facilitators. Therefore, adjusting the teacher’s and learner’s roles and setting up the appropriate relationship between them are the keys to the achievement in promoting autonomous learning (Benson and Voller, 1997).
3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Since the study aimed to investigate learner autonomy, the sequential explanatory design was suitable for the research goal. This method was a two-phase design where the quantitative data was collected first followed by qualitative data collection. The objective was to use the qualitative results to further explain and interpret the findings from the quantitative phase. A five scale Likert questionnaire was used to collect data quantitatively. A questionnaire is objective, and the researcher could collect the data with a large number of respondents easily and economically. Although a questionnaire has many advantages, researchers might not get in-depth information in this case. Therefore, the semi-structured interview was manipulated in the study to get in-depth detail from autonomous participants. They could explain and offer insights into their survey answers.

The participants of the present study comprised 403 Thai law students who were doing a bachelor’s degree in law (LLB) at a public research university in Thailand. This university is entering into the 85th year after its establishment, and it is remarkable for its disciplines of social sciences, especially in law and political science. Participants were in a bachelor’s degree program and the students were divided into four subgroups to be the participants of the study.

According to Yamane’s (1967) sample calculation, more than 323 participants out of the total population of 1,661 were selected as the participants in the study. The margin of error is less than or equal to 0.05, and the study maintains a 95% confident interval. Hence, 330 participants out of 1,661 law students were the participants in this study.

The participants of the present study represented various years. Thus, a stratified sampling technique was used to divide the elements of the population into smaller subgroups (strata) based on the similarity in such a way that the elements within the group were homogeneous and heterogeneous among the other subgroups formed. They were classified into four subgroups; freshman (first-year), sophomore (second-year), junior (third-year), and senior (fourth-year), all of them are doing a bachelor’s degree. For proportional allocation strategy, the size of the sample in each subgroup was taken in proportion to the size of the subgroup. And then the samples in each subgroup were randomly selected based on availability as a convenience sampling technique.

3.2 Data Collection

A mixed-method research design was employed in the present study, drawing on different data sources.
3.2.1 Quantitative Data Collection for Research Question
Since all the participants use Thai language as a mother tongue, learner autonomy questionnaires written in English and translated into a Thai version were administered to the law students to eliminate any language barrier. Back translation procedure was used to ensure the accuracy of the translated version. The learner autonomy questionnaire was administered to the participants to observe the level of English language learning autonomy.

3.2.2 Qualitative Data Collection for Research Question
Semi-structured interview questions were conducted with 4 participants. Two participants came from the highest learner autonomy level subgroup and another two participants came from the lowest (after being classified by the learner autonomy questionnaires). Two participants from each year were randomly invited to have an interview about their English language learning.

3.3 Data Analysis
There were two types of data which were acquired in this present study.

3.3.1 Quantitative analysis: Learner Autonomy Questionnaire
The quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires of the present study were statistically analyzed through descriptive analysis. The research question aimed to investigate the level of English language learning autonomy of the participants by using a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire. After gathering the data, it was computed to find Mean ($\bar{X}$) and Standard Deviation (SD).

3.3.2 Qualitative analysis: Semi-structured Interview
Four participants who represented two groups of students - highest score and lowest score - were selected to have a semi-structured interview. Descriptive analysis technique was used to present and analyze participants’ opinion and thought. Participants’ responses from the interviews were coded and classified by the main points. In addition, this interview enabled researcher to get the in-depth information and collect the declarative data from the participants which enhanced the data from the questionnaire and made it more reliable.

4. Findings and Discussion
4.1 RESULTS
4.1.1 The Investigation of Learner Autonomy Level
According to the research question 1: *What are the levels of English language learning autonomy of Thai law students learning in the university?*, the results of the five Likert scale questionnaire were analyzed by descriptive statistics in SPSS (IBM SPSS Statistics 24 Commuter License) to find Mean ($\bar{X}$) and Standard Deviation (SD).
In order to obtain more information, the descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to analyze each domain in the learner autonomy questionnaire. The results are presented in Table 4.1 with the interpretation of the level of learner autonomy.

Table 4.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants Domains</th>
<th>Thai Law Students (N = 403)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean ((\bar{x}))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LA Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability</td>
<td>Mean ((\bar{x}))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LA Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Mean ((\bar{x}))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LA Level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 Mean and Standard Deviation of each Domain and the Level of Learner Autonomy

The analyzed data show that the grand Mean (\(\bar{x}\)) was 3.75 and the Standard Deviation (SD) was 0.67. According to the criteria of the questionnaire, the range from 3.41 to 4.20 means the level of learner autonomy was ‘high’. Therefore, on average, the level of English language learning autonomy of the participants was at the high level.

The table 4.1 also presents that, on average, the participants had high levels in both domains, which were willingness and ability. However, their willingness was rated at a higher level (\(\bar{x} = 3.85\), SD = 0.68) than the ability (\(\bar{x} = 3.64\), SD = 0.73).

According to the research question 2: *What are the differences in learner autonomy among Thai law students learning in the university?*, the results of the five Likert scale questionnaire were analyzed by descriptive statistics in SPSS (IBM SPSS Statistics 24 Commuter License) to find Mean (\(\bar{x}\)) and Standard Deviation (SD).
Table 4.4 Mean and Standard Deviation of each Subgroup and the Level of Learner Autonomy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learner Autonomy</th>
<th>Freshman (N = 119)</th>
<th>Sophomore (N = 92)</th>
<th>Junior (N = 94)</th>
<th>Senior (N = 98)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Willingness</td>
<td>Mean ($\bar{x}$)</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>3.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LA Level</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability</td>
<td>Mean ($\bar{x}$)</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>3.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LA Level</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Mean ($\bar{x}$)</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>3.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LA Level</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analyzed data show that the grand mean ($\bar{x}$) of the sophomore ranked the highest level ($\bar{x} = 3.81$, $SD = 0.65$). The freshman and junior students were slightly different and also in the high range ($\bar{x} = 3.77$, $SD = 0.66$ and $\bar{x} = 3.76$, $SD = 0.72$ respectively). From Table 4.4, the senior subgroup was in the lowest range ($\bar{x} = 3.64$, $SD = 0.65$). According to the criteria of the questionnaire, the range from 3.41 to 4.20 means the level of learner autonomy was ‘high’. Therefore, on average, the level of English language learning autonomy of the participants in all subgroups was at the high level.

The table 4.4 also presents that, on average, the participants in all subgroups had high levels in both the domains of willingness and ability. However, their willingness ranked higher than the ability.

4.1.2 Interview

Semi-structured interviews of 4 interviewees were conducted in order to explore the aspects related to responsibilities, abilities, and activities on learner autonomy. Two participants from the sophomore subgroup which had the highest score and two participants from the senior subgroup which had the lowest score from the questionnaires were asked to have an interview for more indepth details. Two participants from the sophomore subgroup were interviewee 1 and 2, and two participants from the senior subgroup were interviewee 3 and 4. There were two main questions provided in the interviews. The first question was about their willingness in learning English, which depends on having both the motivation and the confidence to take responsibility for their own learning. Then, the interviewees were asked about their ability for fulfilling whatever choices seem most appropriate for their own
learning. The findings from the interviews are presented according to those main questions as follows.

### 4.2 DISCUSSION

The discussion of the results is presented in accordance with the research questions, mentioned in Chapter 1. The questions are recapped here for convenience as following:

1. What are the levels of English language learning autonomy of Thai law students learning in the university?
2. What are the differences in learner autonomy among Thai law students learning in the university?

#### 4.2.1 The Findings of Learner Autonomy Level

The findings of learner autonomy level among the Thai law students learning in the targeted university were on average at the high level. The two main components of learner autonomy, which are willingness to take charge of their responsibility and ability to learn autonomously, were on average at the high level among Thai law students in all subgroups. The results of the high level of willingness and ability among the participants support what Wenden has stated – that students should be confident and trust in their ability to learn or monitor their own learning (Wenden, 1991). Wenden also stated that a learner who wants to have learner autonomy should have the willingness and ability to take charge of his or her learning. These two factors are the main components of learner autonomy.

Although all subgroups were rated at the high level, the sophomores ranked the highest ($\bar{x} = 3.81$, SD = 0.65) so this subgroup had the highest learner autonomy level. The results also clearly showed that the sophomore was highly willing to take charge of their own learning ($\bar{x} = 3.93$, SD = 0.67). This is probably because the learners realize that their further education and high-paying jobs in the legal field require very high English proficiency.

The statements of willingness in the questionnaire “Studying English can be important for me since I need it for my future education,” and “Studying English can be important for me because it will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people,” have shown clearly the instrumental motivation (language learning for immediate or practical goals) and integrative motivation (language learning for personal growth and cultural enrichment through contact with speakers of the other language) which are identified by learner’s orientation to the target language and community. There is the relationship of the learner’s motivation towards the foreign or second language achievement (Gardner, 1993). If learners have positive motivation, they will enjoy learning language and progress rapidly. Integrative
learners show that they are interested in learning a foreign or second language in order to conceive the culture, tradition, and community of speakers of that language, whereas with an instrumental motivation, learners acquire a foreign or second language for practical goals such as passing examinations, fulfilling university requirements, increasing job opportunities and salary potential, or for further education overseas.

From the interviews, both second year students concluded that it is necessary to obtain professional skills in English in order to gain access to their higher education, and most importantly they will become competitive in the job market where people with advanced English knowledge are preferred. “It can also come in handy for traveling and getting close to new people and cultures,” claimed Interviewee 1. Thus, motivation is a key factor that contributes to the sophomores to the high level of learner autonomy. If learners are aware of the significance of motivation, they will be more likely to complete their goals.

On the contrary, from the results, the senior subgroup had the lowest learner autonomy level ($\bar{x} = 3.64$, $SD = 0.65$). What seems to be the problem is that the learners in this subgroup lacked a little confidence as they got the lowest score from the statements “I can learn on my own without a supporter,” and “I am confident that I can manage my time well for learning.” Moreover, two interviewees from this subgroup preferred to be assisted by an expert in the learning process, describing how it makes it much simpler and faster. The interviewee then added that having someone with good English skills and being able to talk to that person constantly is the optimum way; misunderstandings will be corrected instantly, and verbal skills will also be improved intuitively.

These results clearly show that the senior problem is a lack of confidence. This may be due to the problem that the learners are accustomed to a high degree of teacher support and control and may lack the confidence to carry out whatever skills they were taught. Self-confidence in ability plays a very important role in learning. To Wenden (1991), the learners should be confident and believe in their ability to learn or observe their own learning. If learners trust in their ability to learn and follow the path of self-instruction, they will achieve a high degree of autonomy and be able to cope with any obstacles they face. The trust and cooperation between the teacher and the learners make the learners feel secure and comfortable in the classroom; only then can the learners have the confidence to venture further into language learning.

According to Branden (2001), “self-esteem is the sum of self-confidence (a feeling of personal capacity) and self-respect (a feeling of personal worth).” If learners have a high self-esteem, they may compete highly in their learning process. Furthermore, the learners in the senior subgroup had the lowest score from another statement of ability in the questionnaire “I make good use of my free time in English
study.” This means the seniors had the greatest challenges with time management. It might be because the learners in this subgroup were in the midst of the overwhelming stress of deciding what to do with their future, and sometimes they were cracking under the pressure. This factor might make them less autonomous in learning. According to Hedge (2000), we can characterize autonomous learners as those who manage and divide the time in learning properly.

Scharle and Szabo (2000) stated that to be the successful learners does not depend on how much of an educational degree they have got, but it is indicated when the learners would like to learn more. In the results of this research, the sophomores had a higher level of learner autonomy compared with the senior subgroup. Learner autonomy level does not depend on the learners’ degree or stage of learning, but it depends on how much willingness and ability the learners have got.

5. Conclusion

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The summary related to the two research objectives is as follows.

5.1.1 The findings show that the level of English language learning autonomy of Thai law students learning in the target university was at the high level. Thai law students learning in the university are autonomous learners. The Mean ($\bar{X}$) and the Standard Deviation (SD) were 3.75 and 0.67 respectively. It is obviously seen that Thai law students learning in the university have high levels of learner autonomy.

5.1.2 From the results, on average, the level of English language learning autonomy of Thai law students in all subgroups was at the high level. The sophomores ranked the highest ($\bar{X} = 3.81$, SD = 0.65). The freshman and junior groups were slightly different and also in the high range ($\bar{X} = 3.77$, SD = 0.66 and $\bar{X} = 3.76$, SD = 0.72 respectively), whereas the senior subgroup was in the lowest range ($\bar{X} = 3.64$, SD = 0.65). In addition, Thai law students in all subgroups showed high level reporting in both key domains of willingness and ability.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

This present study aimed to investigate the levels of learner autonomy and examine the differences in learner autonomy among Thai law students learning in the target university. There were 403 participants who were doing a bachelor’s degree in law (LLB) at a public research university in Thailand. This study has shown that Thai law students are autonomous since the Mean ($\bar{X}$) and the Standard Deviation (SD) from the findings were high. Even though it is commonly known that Thai traditional classrooms or the general Thai educational curriculum may not promote learner autonomy as much as they could, the findings of this study grow apart. The results indicate that Thai law students are ready to be autonomous learners as they have a high level of willingness and ability. Learners are able to be successful in language
learning when they have a responsible attitude. Accordingly, learners need a great deal of self-responsibility and active involvement when participating in learning activities in order to reach their potential in language learning. Moreover, nowadays, the teachers’ duty is more challenging and demanding in assisting learners to grow up as independent and creative learners. From the discussion, motivation is one of the key factors that contributes to a high level of learner autonomy. The learners’ degree does not illustrate the learner autonomy level because it depends on how much willingness and ability the learners have got, not their qualification.

5.3 PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The results of this current study are beneficial for the lecturers, dean, and officers in academic affairs in designing a curriculum and effective educational system that could fulfill the students’ English language proficiency. The results could lead to what should be emphasized in the curriculum to maximize the students’ proficiency and to promote the missing components of learner autonomy, which are so important for achieving complete success. Moreover, the faculty can use the results of this present study to provide the activities or tools that foster language learners and facilitate the learners to become more autonomous.

In the past, Thai teachers were commonly known as the authorities in the classroom. So most students relied more on them. Nonetheless, the findings of this study have illustrated the high level of learner autonomy among Thai law students learning in the university. This shows the change of the teaching and learning methods, and it also shows that learners now rely more on themselves. Using technological advances can help the teachers to improve and prepare effective materials and resources for students; in addition, the learners should be able to seek and acquire knowledge easily and effectively. Additionally, the results of both key domains - willingness and ability - are at a high level; however, the willingness ranked in higher proportion than the ability. It can be implied that teachers should provide learners with the essential knowledge and skills which allow them to seek and obtain new knowledge on their own.

The teachers who want to promote learner autonomy of the learners should change their role from the authorities who control almost all processes in language learning in the classroom to the counselors or facilitators who provide advice, help, or encouragement. Even if Thai law students are only familiar with the traditional classroom where the teachers stand between the students and the knowledge, self-confidence should be promoted for the learners. If they are confident in themselves and believe in their knowledge and skills, they will acknowledge and appreciate autonomous learning as a powerful and efficient tool of learning.

From the results and discussion, one of the most important conditions of autonomous learner is clearly learner motivation. It is considerable if learners get
interested in their learning process, convince themselves to do their work, and are able to perceive the importance of the learning process and their own results. Motivation is one of the principal factors that have a big effect on the success of language learning. Primarily, it provides an encouragement to start the process, and then ‘the driving force’ in order to help carry out the process and complete the goal set (Dornyei, 1998). In fact, different people have a different motivational factor. They are influenced by various factors, and their degree of motivation also depends on their personality. Therefore, both teachers and learners should take charge of enhancing learner motivation in order to succeed in language teaching and learning.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY
The following limitations are based on the findings and conclusions of this current study.

5.4.1 This study experimented with learner autonomy of Thai law students learning in a particular university. The results may not be able to be generalized to the whole population of Thai law students.

5.4.2 This study investigated the learner autonomy level of Thai law students learning at a public research university in Bangkok. Due to the high competition to enter this particular educational environment, it may affect the results of learner autonomy level. Therefore, those students may automatically be more autonomous. It might lead to the high score of learner autonomy level shown in the findings.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY
This sub-section discusses some suggestions that further language teaching research or other related works should take into consideration.

5.5.1 The results of this study may not be generalized to the whole population. Thus, any further study should enlarge the participant sample into other universities for generalizing the findings to the whole population.

5.5.2 There is no variety of students from other subjects of study, and consequently further study should consider replicating this study on a larger scale, perhaps by including more varieties of fields of study.

5.5.3 The further study should add more components of learner autonomy, such as self-confidence and motivation, to get clearer details on assessing learner autonomy. Furthermore, the relationship between the components and learner autonomy level should be further defined to see whether there is a direct connection between them.
References


USING PICTURES TO TEACH THAI VOCATIONAL STUDENTS ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS

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Abstract
The objectives of this study were 1) to investigate the effects of describing-picture on the English speaking ability of Thai vocational students, and 2) to explore the opinions of Thai vocational students towards learning English through describing pictures. The sample was 16 vocational students in Bangkok. They were enrolled in describing-picture activities as an intensive course during a summer session in academic year 2019. The experiment lasted for 5 days. The data were collected quantitatively and qualitatively. The arithmetic average was used to investigate the differences between pre and post-test English speaking ability. The qualitative data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics and shown in frequency and percentage. The findings indicated that: 1) there was a significant difference in students’ mean scores on English speaking ability before and after the students’ participation in learning English speaking through describing-picture activities, and 2) students had positive opinions towards the describing-picture activities. They revealed that learning through the describing-picture strategy was interesting and fun. Besides enjoyment with the describing-picture activities, student English-speaking ability was improved.

Keywords: Pictures, Describing pictures, English speaking.
1. Introduction

Nowadays, it is widely accepted how important it is to be able to communicate in English, especially speaking. Apart from furthering study, doing business, traveling, or making foreigner friends, English speaking ability is a crucial tool for people from different nationalities to understand each other. In Thailand, English skills still cause a difficulty for many Thai students. According to Wiriyachitra (2003), most students have not much opportunity to learn and practice English in Thailand; therefore, it makes English learning in Thailand not very successful. The test results from the international English Proficiency test- the 2018 Education First English Proficiency Index (EF EPI) - demonstrated that Thailand was ranked 64th from 88 countries and was classified as 'Low Proficiency'.

Many factors are of concern for Thai students in practicing and learning English speaking. First, teachers as well as students encounter various obstacles in teaching and learning English language. For example, the equipment in the classrooms and the education technology is insufficient. Students are also afraid of speaking English as some particular pronunciation is very difficult for them to pronounce.

In Thailand, as teachers focus on grammar, reading from the textbooks, and vocabulary and do not provide enough activities for speaking skills, most Thai students lack of the opportunity to speak English (Siritanarath, 2007). Furthermore, Jaiyai et al. (2005) believed that students are too shy to speak English because of the interference from their Thai mother tongue.

Objectives of the Study
1. Investigate the effects of describing-picture on English speaking ability of Thai vocational students.
2. Explore the opinions of Thai vocational students towards learning English through describing pictures.

Research Questions
1. Does learning English through describing-picture activities improve the English-speaking ability of Thai vocational students?
2. What are the opinions of Thai vocational students towards learning English through describing-picture activities?

2. Literature Review
2.1 Teaching of English-Speaking Skills
Speaking English can cause a difficulty since it needs a habit of transformation in a real communication. According to Chaney (1998), speaking is using verbal and non-verbal symbols in different contexts to build and share the meaning. There are different ways to teach English speaking. The Presentation-Practice-Production
strategy (PPP, Maurer, 1997) is more as a direct teaching approach and Engage-Study-Activate (ESA, Harmer; 2007) is more communicative.

### 2.2 Using Picture Technique in ESL Classrooms

Pictures are beautiful and interesting and should be used in the classroom as they gain interest from students. It can also motivate by drawing students’ attention and then they will enjoy learning and participating in the classroom.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Design

In this study, a single group quasi-experimental research design used pre-test and post-test to measure the effects of the treatment given by the researcher. The experiment with the use of pictures lasted five times. The students were measured for their English-speaking ability both before and after they were taught with describing-picture activities. The objectives of this study were to explore the effects of teaching English speaking through a describing-picture technique on the English speaking ability of Thai vocational students and also gathering their opinions towards the describing-picture technique. The independent variable referred to describing pictures. The dependent variables referred to students’ English-speaking ability and students’ opinions towards describing pictures.

#### 3.2 Data Collection

In the data collection, 16 participants who had studied in the vocational school were selected to participate in this research study. Then, the participants completed pre-test to see the individual results of their English-speaking ability on the first day of the course. Pretest and posttest were parallel as the researcher used the same test to measure students’ English ability before and after the treatment. Students needed to do the test to perform their English-speaking ability according to the direction from the examiner. The test took about 6 minutes. Students were tested individually with the examiner. The voice and action during the test were recorded as a video-recording for an evaluation using a scoring rubric which was fluency, grammar, vocabulary, and content. The total test score was 20. The scores divided into four ranks as follows; 0-5 is low level, 6-10 is fair level, 11-15 is intermediate level, 16-20 is high level. The objectives of the course were to improve students’ English speaking ability and explore the students’ opinions towards describing-picture activities. The teacher taught the students by using the describing-picture activities for 2 hours a day in five lessons. The next day, after completing all the lessons, the participants were asked to complete the posttest and questionnaire. The evaluation of criteria of the questionnaire were as follows:

- **1.00–1.80** means the level of students’ agreement was ‘very low’
- **1.81-2.60** means the level of students’ agreement was ‘low’
2.61-3.40 means the level of students’ agreement was ‘moderate’
3.41-4.20 means the level of students’ agreement was ‘high’
4.21-5.00 means the level of students’ agreement was ‘very high’

Finally, some participants who represented two groups of students - high level and low level were interviewed with 3 questions. They were asked to describe their thoughts and opinions towards the describing-picture activities.

3.3 Data Analysis
There were two types of data that were acquired in this research study.

3.3.1 Quantitative analysis: Pre-test and Post-test
The participants’ pre-test and post-test scores were analyzed by Microsoft Excel to see the mean score and standard deviation to answer the research question 1: Does learning English through using pictures improve the English-speaking ability of Thai vocational students?

The research instrument was an English-speaking ability test. The independent variable was describing-picture activities. The dependent variable was the mean scores of the English-speaking ability test. The results from pretest and posttest were used as a data to find out the answers to research question 1. In the first meeting, the students were asked to do the pre-test before participating in the English-speaking describing-picture activities. In the last meeting, students were asked to do the post-test, which was the same test as the pretest. For both pretest and posttest, students were video-recorded to establish their English speaking ability. To assign scores regarding their performances in English speaking, the video recordings could be opened for repetition as needed, the researcher could watch and evaluate their speaking ability from the video without transcribing the videos. The speaking rubric comprised five rating scales, which were used to score the students’ speaking ability. The rubric consists of rows of scores and columns with the criteria for evaluation, from the high level (the range of score was 15-20), to the low level (the range of score was 1-5). The components of assessment included grammar, using vocabulary, speaking fluently, and content. The speaking rubric was developed by the researcher in this study. It was adapted from a sample rubric in a TOEFL iBT Test. The speaking rubric was an analytic scoring rubric which separates the components of the speaking skills into sub skills, and the rater scores each component, then sums the sub scores into final score (Mukminatien, 2000). The researcher analyzed the scores of both pretest and posttest to find the mean scores and standard deviation. Then, the pretest and posttest scores were compared to find out the improvement of the target group’s English-speaking ability.
3.3.2 Quantitative analysis: The students’ opinions questionnaire

The data that were obtained through the questionnaire were calculated by using frequency and percentage to see students’ opinions towards picture describing to answer research Question 2: What are the opinions of Thai vocational students towards learning English through using pictures?

3.3.3 Qualitative analysis: In-depth Interview

The in-depth interview was to find out the students’ opinions towards describing-picture to answer research Question 2: What are the opinions of Thai vocational students towards learning English through using pictures? Two participants who represented two groups of students - high level and low level - were selected to answer the interview questions by using an in-depth interview in Thai language. The questions focused on students’ opinions through learning by describing-picture activities. Analysis and grouping related to the guided questions and their ideas were used to collect and present students’ thoughts and opinions. Next, the participants answers in the interview form were coded and categorized by the key main points from their answers according to their similar and different features.

4. Findings

4.1 Students’ Pre- and Post-test Results in Speaking Ability

This section is in response to research question 1 “Does learning English through describing-picture activities improve the English-speaking ability of Thai vocational students?” Table 1 presents the scores of the pretest in terms of students’ speaking ability. The number of participants, total score, mean scores and standard deviations are provided to aid interpretation of the scores of pretests. There were 16 participants who took this test. The total test score was 20. The scores were divided into four ranks as follows; 0-5 is low level, 6-10 is fair level, 11-15 is intermediate level, 16-20 is high level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1
Pretest Score of Thai Vocational Students’ Speaking Ability
According to the results presented, there were 10 students who were in the range of fair level. Six students were categorized in the low level. The mean of the pretest was 5.81 and the standard deviation was 3.39.

Next, Table 2 will present the scores of the posttest on students’ speaking ability.

### Table 2
*Posttest Score of Thai Vocational Students’ Speaking Ability*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Posttest Scores</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mean** 14.69

**Standard Deviation (S.D.)** 2.18
According to Table 2, eight students were categorized in the high level as their scores were in the range of 16 to 18. There were 8 students categorized in the intermediate level because their scores were in the range of 11 to 15. The mean of the pretest was 14.69 and the standard deviation was 2.18. Table 3 will present a comparison of the test scores of the Thai vocational students’ speaking ability as following below:

**Table 3**

A Comparison of Test Scores of Thai Vocational Students’ Speaking Ability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>Posttest</th>
<th>Score Difference Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage Improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40.00</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20.00</td>
</tr>
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<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>55.00</td>
</tr>
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<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60.00</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>80.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>65.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>5.81</td>
<td>14.69</td>
<td>8.88</td>
<td>44.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation (S.D.)</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows that, after 10 hours of learning through describing-picture activities lessons, the average score of the posttest was 14.69 points, and higher than the pretest score which was 5.81. The standard deviation of the pretest was 3.39 which was slightly different from the posttest of 2.18.
The highest difference in score was 16, followed by 13 and 12. The lowest difference in score was 3. The table also shows the highest percentage of the score change which was 80.00, followed by 65 and 60.

4.2 Thai Vocational Students’ Opinions towards Learning English Speaking Skills through Describing-picture Activities

This section presents students’ opinions towards learning English speaking skills through the describing-picture approach in response to research question 2 “What are the opinions of Thai vocational students towards learning English through describing-picture activities?”

4.2.1 Students’ Level of Agreement on Learning through Describing Pictures Activities

This section presents students’ level of agreement on learning through describing-picture activities. The evaluation of criteria of the questionnaire is as follows:

- 1.00–1.80 means the level of students’ agreement was ‘very low’
- 1.81-2.60 means the level of students’ agreement was ‘low’
- 2.61-3.40 means the level of students’ agreement was ‘moderate’
- 3.41-4.20 means the level of students’ agreement was ‘high’
- 4.21-5.00 means the level of students’ agreement was ‘very high’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Describing-picture activities are very interesting for me.</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>4.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I develop my English-speaking ability more after learning through describing-picture activities.</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>4.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Describing-picture activities improve my English fluency.</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>3.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Describing-picture activities help me improve my grammar.</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>3.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Describing-picture activities help me develop my English pronunciation.</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>3.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I learn new English vocabulary.</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>4.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I have more confidence to speak English after I practice through describing-picture activities in class.</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Describing-picture activities help me have fun in the class.</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>4.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I have more chance to speak English in the classroom.</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I enjoy learning English more after learning through describing-picture activities.</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>3.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 demonstrates students’ level of agreement based on the results from the questionnaire. The highest score was for statement 1) Describing-picture activities are very interesting for me ($\bar{X} = 4.06$, SD = 4.27) followed by statement 2) I develop my English speaking ability more after learning through describing-picture activities ($\bar{X} = 3.93$, SD = 4.18), and statement 6) I learn new English vocabulary ($\bar{X} = 3.93$, SD = 4.18) while the lowest score was for statement 3) Describing-picture activities improve my English fluency ($\bar{X} = 3.38$, SD = 3.51).

To summarize, students expressed their positive opinions towards describing-picture activities as they thought the activities were interesting. In addition, the results demonstrate that they believed they could enhance their English-speaking ability and learned new English vocabulary. On the contrary, the improvement of English fluency was rank the lowest.

Furthermore, apart from 10 statements using the Likert 5-point scale, 3 open-ended questions of the questionnaire were also included in the questionnaire for students to express their opinions towards describing-picture activities.

4.2.2 Open-ended Questions

The data obtained from the open-ended questions were summarized in three aspects as follows:

1) Satisfaction in Learning English Speaking through Describing-picture Activities
   Many students (62.5%) said that they enjoyed learning through these activities as they have learnt English speaking skills and it was fun every class.

2) Improvement on their English-Speaking Ability after Learning through Describing-picture Activities
   Most students (81.25%) said that they improved their English ability as they had opportunities to practice speaking skills. In addition, as they need to memorize vocabulary in order to make sentences and speak, therefore, they can remember a lot of vocabulary.

3) Obstruction while Studying English Speaking through Describing-picture Activities
   Some students (43.75%) expressed that their obstructions for learning English speaking were grammar, structure, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

   In conclusion, students had positive opinions about the describing-picture activities as they thought it was interesting and enjoyable. In addition, they claimed that they improved their English-speaking ability after learning through describing-picture activities. However, the obstructions in students’ learning English speaking through describing-picture activities were grammar, structure, vocabulary, and pronunciation.
4.3 In-Depth Interview Results

In this part, two participants who got the highest and the lowest scores were asked to answer 3 questions as follows:

1. Do you enjoy studying English through describing-picture activities? Why?
   Both students revealed that they enjoyed learning through describing-picture activities as it is fun and easy to understand.

2. Do you think learning through describing-picture activities helps improving your English-speaking ability? (Fluency, Grammar, Vocabulary)
   They responded that they developed their English-speaking ability after learning through the describing-picture activities. Both of them mentioned that they could remember vocabulary and make sentences better.

3. Do you think learning through describing-picture activities should be improved in any way? If yes, please identify.
   One of the students believed there was nothing should be changed for describing-picture activities as there were already appropriate activities to learn English speaking skills.

   To conclude, students had positive opinions towards learning English speaking through describing-picture activities. They thought the class was interesting and fun. The use of describing-picture activities in the class could enhance their learning motivation as they enjoy learning more. Their English-speaking ability was improved after learning through describing-picture activities. However, Student B added that he needed more time to practice and learn to develop his English-speaking ability.

5. Discussion

This section presents a discussion of the findings according to the following research questions.

5.1 Evaluation of the Effects of Describing-picture Activities to Improve English Speaking Ability

In this section, the participants were asked to take a pretest and a posttest. It was found from the results of the pre-test that most participants received scores in the range of 6 to 9 which was categorized in the fair level. The rest of the participants were categorized in the low level as their scores were in the range of 0 to 4. After 10 hours of using describing-picture activities in 5 days consecutively, from the results of the posttest, half of the participants achieved scores in the range of 11 to 15 which was categorized in the intermediate level. The participants who were in this group were able to use some vocabulary they learnt to describe characters and tell a story quite well but they still encountered problems with fluency and grammar. At the same time, eight participants who received scores in the range of 16 to 18 which were
categorized in the high level had the abilities to use vocabulary to describe characters and tell a story appropriately. This group of students was able to use vocabulary to make a story smoothly. Moreover, they could use connecters to enhance their stories.

According to the results of the post-test, it was revealed that all of the participants had improved their speaking abilities significantly according to their higher scores in the posttest. It is clearly seen that the mean score of the pretest was 5.81 while the mean of the posttest score was 14.69. Therefore, it could be concluded that there was a significant improvement between pretest and posttest scores after learning through this technique.

5.2 Students’ Opinions towards Learning through Describing-picture Activities

The data for this research question was elicited through the questionnaire and the in-depth interview. The results from both instruments showed that students had positive opinions towards describing-picture activities.

The result from the questionnaire demonstrated that the students believe that their English speaking abilities were improved after learning through describing pictures. Furthermore, they enjoyed studying English more as the activities were interesting and fun.

The interview results corresponded to the questionnaire findings showing that the respondents had positive opinions and agreed that using pictures activities could enhance vocabulary, speaking abilities and was a fun learning technique. Both of the participants who attended the interview process agreed that learning through using pictures activities was fun and easy to understand. It was very helpful for them to remember new vocabulary, make sentences, and tell a story.

The results of the interviews completely supported the idea that describing-picture activities were enjoyable, useful, and an interesting way to learn English-speaking skills.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

There are some limitations in this study as follows:

1. There was only one experimental group of participants in this study; it should be more effective to have two groups, experimental and control group, so that the results can be compared.
2. The sample of this study was a small group; therefore, it might not be accurately generalized.
3. The time given for the experiment was only 5 lessons due to the time constraints of a summer course. Longer periods of time may yield different findings.
5.4 Recommendations for Further Research Studies

The current study focused on the effects of describing-picture activities on Thai vocational students’ English-speaking ability. Describing-picture activities could be investigated further in the future according to these recommendations.

First, the level of students could be varied; researchers may conduct the research with every age of sample especially young learners as pictures could be used to motivate them to pay attention and enjoy learning.

Second, exploring various types of pictures to use in the describing activities such as photo stories and sequenced pictures - to encourage students to practice and improve their English language ability would be of benefit.

Third, a longer period of time for a similar study using the same experimental design would be of benefit to further evaluate the effects of pictures in teaching.

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A CORPUS-BASED STUDY OF ENGLISH SYNONYMS: ILL AND SICK

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ABSTRACT

This research is a corpus-based study which aims to broaden the knowing of the two synonyms: Ill and Sick. The research instruments used in this study were: 1) Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary Online, and 2) Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). The researcher collected the data from the first 300 concordance lines from COCA and compared the data with Oxford Dictionary Online to find the differences in meaning and grammatical pattern. The study shows that the two synonyms are both similar and different in grammatical pattern, meaning, and collocation. Although the words “ill” and “sick” share the same meaning of feeling unwell or about the illness, both of them have the other different meanings: “ill” means “poor in quality, badly, difficulty, misfortune” while “sick” means “disappointed, annoyed, and unpleasant” and “sick” can be used as a verb without “up” to give a meaning of “ill” The differences of the definitions are related to their part of speech which affected their grammatical pattern also. In terms of the collocations, both “ill” and “sick” can be considered as a weak collocations since they can be used with many words, but there are some collocations which are unique collocation such as ill at ease, good or ill, and sick of.

Keywords: Corpus-Based, COCA, Collocation, Synonym
1. Introduction

English language is an international language and plays important parts in various fields. In other words, English is probably the only language that truly connects the world together (Nisani, 2015). To learn any language, the vocabulary is the basic and essential knowledge for language learners. The learners should know not only the meaning of words, but also how to use them properly. Sometimes, using the same word in different contexts can give you a different meaning, or for the native speakers, the word can give an implied meaning which can cause misunderstanding between the speakers and the listeners. To use the vocabulary properly can help you to convey the right meaning to the listeners. In order to master English vocabulary, the learners should be aware of how to use the synonyms correctly (Nisani, 2015). Some synonyms can be used interchangeably with the same meaning but others cannot. Their differences lie in many factors; different denotative meaning, dialects, formality of the context, connotations, grammatical patterns, and collocations (Phoocharoensil, 2010).

Thus, studying the use of synonym words is very useful since it will show many factors of language use, and to use a corpus for studying is very convenient and authentic, so this study will be beneficial for English teachers or learners who want to master their English.

For this study, the researcher will focus on the two synonym words “sick” and “ill” because they both are taught since elementary school level and they are presented predominantly with only the meaning of “unwell”. To gather the data of synonym words with various contexts to find the different functions of both meanings, parts of speech and collocation, is very difficult, so the researcher use computer science and corpus linguistics, the fastest-growing methodologies in contemporary linguistics, as a tool, compared with the Oxford Dictionary Online which is widely regarded as the accepted authority on the English language. It is an unsurpassed guide to the meaning, history, and pronunciation of 600,000 words — past and present — from across the English-speaking world. For the corpus data store, the researcher used the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), the largest freely-available corpus of English, and the only large and balanced corpus of American English, for the reasons of the reliability and convenience.
2. Research questions

This research study aims to answer the following research questions:

1) What are the similarities and differences in meaning between “ill” and “sick”? 
2) What are the common words that collocate with “ill” and “sick”? 
3) What are the similarities and differences in grammatical patterns between “ill” and “sick”? 

3. Literature Review

3.1 Synonyms

3.1.1 Definitions of synonyms

Synonymy originates from the Greek word synonymous, which means having the same name. (Jackson & Amvela, 2000, p. 92). There are many different definitions of the word synonym. The Oxford Dictionary Online gives the meaning of synonym as a word or phrase that means exactly or nearly the same as another word or phrase in the same language”, for example, fabulous and wonderful, tool and equipment, etc. The synonym word can be found as a single word or in pairs and can be in various parts of speech, such as verb, adjective, adverb, and noun.

3.1.2 Types of synonym

There are various types of synonym such as synonyms from different dialects, synonyms with different stylistic features, and synonyms with different connotative meanings. The present study focuses on two major types, strict and loose synonyms (Nisani, 2015).

Strict synonyms (absolute) refer to two words which have similar meaning in all their aspects. They are interchangeable in all contexts also. Strict synonyms are very rare and seem to not exist. In cases when two strict synonyms appear at the same time, one of them usually changes meaning over time or disappears from the language, since strict synonyms are redundant and finally become a cliché word (Phoochareonsil, 2010).

Schubert (2001) mentioned that all the linguists who work with this definition said that this type of synonymy can only be found rarely in the English language. Schubert (2001) showed two examples of total or absolute synonymy in her research:
1. Sofa: Settee
2. Pullover: Sweater

Loose synonyms (relative) are the most commonly found. Usually, when we speak of synonymy, we mean ‘loose’ or ‘relative’ synonymy (Nisani, 2015). It refers to two words which not only have a significant overlap in meaning between them, but also some contexts where they cannot be used interchangeably. Nisani (2015) gave as an example in her research for the two synonyms which cannot be used interchangeably, the words “discover” and “find”. “Discover” implies the first one to come across something while the word “find” means experience something in some way.

The list below are sample pairs of loose synonyms.
1. Quit  Stop
2. Make  Create
3. Wonderful  Fantastic
4. Begin  Start

3.1.3 Criteria for distinguishing synonyms

Criteria for distinguishing synonyms in this study focus on the collocation. Collocation refers to a group of two or more words that usually go together. There is often no reason for a collocation. People just put certain words together more often than they put other words together (Beare, 2018). Collocations are patterns and phrases or groups of words that typically and frequently co-occur. Hill (2000) explained that collocation is a predictable combination of words and some combinations may be very highly predictable from one of the component words, for example, an action movie, a film stunt, etc. All the analyzed collocation patterns were categorized into four groups based on Hill’s (2000) strategy. Collocations can be divided into four categories: (1) unique collocations, (2) strong collocations, (3) weak collocations, and (4) medium-strength collocations.

3.1.3.1 Unique collocations refers to collocations, the components of which are fixed, e.g. shrug one’s shoulders, wreak havoc.

3.1.3.2 Strong collocations are not unique but strong or very strong in the sense that they allow a very limited number of collocates, e.g. rancid butter/oil.
3.1.3.3 Weak collocations have a great number of words that can serve as word partners of each other and their meaning is easily guessed, e.g. bad boy, bad luck, bad dream.

3.1.3.4 Medium-strength collocations was suggested by Hill (2000) as the collocation which is worth introducing to English learners because it plays the crucial role in speaking and writing (Nisani, 2015) e.g. major operation, a whole range.

3.2 Definitions of Corpus

Corpus or corpora (plural) is a collection of authentic texts composed of both written and spoken language, which is stored with large amounts of text on a computer and can be systematically retrieved and analyzed using corpus analysis software. Corpus linguistics is a field which focuses upon a set of procedures, or methods, for studying language. We can take a corpus-based approach to many areas of linguistics. Importantly, the development of corpus linguistics has also spawned new theories of language — theories which draw their inspiration from attested language use and the findings drawn from it.

Corpus usage has an important role in English language teaching; it helps the learners by exposure to the language which is used in real life. Khojasteh and Shokrpour (2014) demonstrated in their study that materials developers still largely base content selection on intuition and that they neglect important and frequent features of the language, spoken or written, by real language users (Thornbury, 2002).

3.3 Relevant research

The previous studies which are related to corpus-based study of English synonyms are various and several of them show that perfect synonyms do not seem to exist. That is, they cannot be used completely interchangeably in all contexts but instead share only some shades of meaning (Nisani, 2015). Many corpus-based studies of English synonyms have shown differences of word use in various factors, e.g. dialects, style or formality, connotations, collocation, grammatical pattern, etc. Phoocharoensil
(2010) used corpus-based research to study five synonyms that were: 1) ask, 2) beg, 3) plead, 4) request, and 5) appeal. The researcher focused on lexical, syntactic, and stylistic information. The study’s procedure was processed by comparing basic information from three dictionaries; 1) the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2005), 2) the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2009), and 3) the Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2009). The study has shown that most synonyms in English are loose ones. They are not interchangeable in every context of use. Their differences lie in many factors like different denotative meanings, dialects, formality of the context, connotations, grammatical patterns, and collocations.

According to Nisani (2015), her study examined three synonyms in English; 1) possible, 2) probable, and 3) likely, concentrating on their meaning, grammatical pattern, noun collocation, and degree of formality, and the study results showed that these three adjective synonyms cannot be substituted in all contexts although they share the same core meaning. They have some differences in meaning, grammatical pattern, noun collocation and stylistic information. The three adjective synonyms; possible, probable, and likely share the same core meaning as “that can be done, achieved, or expected to exist, happen or be true” but in written and spoken there are some slight differences. The study showed that the word possible is commonly used in the meaning of “that can be done or achieved but might be not certain” while generally the meaning of probable is “that may be expected to exist, happen, or be true with the evidence” and likely is commonly used to mean “that might happen or be true with the reason”.

Moreover, Ruenroeng (2014) revealed the same results in her study. The corpus-based study aimed to investigate three synonymous verbs: ruin, demolish, and destroy. These words are used differently in terms of grammatical patterns, degrees of formality, collocation, and their distribution in different genres. The definitions of the three synonyms are not absolutely the same. Even if they share a core meaning, they each convey different meanings. The grammatical patterns of these three words are not completely identical. They just share some patterns, but they cannot act as substitutes for each other in all contexts due to the differences in degree of formality, grammatical patterns, and collocations.

Thus, the study of English synonyms using the corpus-based approach is very useful and beneficial for the teachers and learners. The study can help us understand more about the different factors of word use which can allow us to use the vocabulary correctly and properly.
4. Methodology

4.1 Corpus

This research studied two English synonyms: sick and ill. The researcher collected the data on these two words using an online corpus program “Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA).” The first 300 concordance lines of each synonym were collected from COCA to analyze and compare their meanings, grammatical and collocations, focusing on the spoken language use.

4.2 Instruments

The research instruments used in this study were:

4.2.1 Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary Online. The researcher used it as a main reference to show the parts of speech and meanings of the two synonyms to compare with the data collected from COCA.

4.2.2 COCA was used for searching and collecting the data of the synonyms to find out the parts of speech, the meanings and the collocations that were used in spoken language by collecting text from the first 300 concordance lines.

4.3 Procedures

The researcher searched for the parts of speech and meaning of the two synonyms “ill” and “sick” from the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary Online and collected the data about the synonyms to find out the parts of speech, the meanings and the collocations from COCA. The researcher used the first 300 of the concordance lines of each synonym and analyzed 3 main factors: meanings, grammatical pattern, and collocations.

4.4 Data analysis

The first 300 concordance lines of each synonym were collected from COCA and were analyzed in three main topics: 1) Grammatical patterns, 2) Meanings, 3) Collocations.

5. Results and discussion

The data were categorized in 3 main topics: 1) Definition from a Dictionary compared with the corpus-based meaning, 2) Corpus-based Grammatical patterns, and 3) Collocations of the two synonyms: ill and sick.
5.1 The Similarities and Differences in Meaning Between “Ill” and “Sick”

Table 5.1: Comparing the Definition and part of speech of the word “ill” from Oxford Dictionary Online and COCA

When comparing the definition of “ill” from Oxford Dictionary Online and COCA, the data from COCA shows the other meaning of “ill” as an adjective which means misfortune or unfortunate event while the Oxford Dictionary Online says “ill” as an adjective means feeling unwell, poor in quality and something not favourable or auspicious. There is no differences in meaning of the word “ill” by this comparing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parts of speech</th>
<th>Oxford Dictionary Online</th>
<th>COCA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADJ.</td>
<td>Suffering from an illness or disease or feeling unwell.</td>
<td>Suffering from an illness or disease or feeling unwell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poor in quality.</td>
<td>Poor in quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not favourable or auspicious.</td>
<td>Misfortune or unfortunate event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Usually in combination with badly, wrongly, or imperfectly.</td>
<td>Usually in combination with badly, wrongly, or imperfectly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADV.</td>
<td>Only with difficulty; hardly.</td>
<td>Only with difficulty; hardly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.</td>
<td>A problem or misfortune.</td>
<td>A problem or misfortune.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The meanings of “sick” from the Oxford Dictionary Online are similar to the meanings which were collected from COCA but there is some difference in meaning as in the following table.

Table 5.2: Comparing the Definition and part of speech of the word “sick” from Oxford Dictionary Online and COCA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parts of speech</th>
<th>Oxford Dictionary Online</th>
<th>COCA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADJ.</td>
<td>Affected by physical or mental illness.</td>
<td>Affected by physical or mental illness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disappointed, mortified, or miserable.</td>
<td>Disappointed, mortified, or miserable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Sick of) Intensely annoyed with or bored by (someone or something)</td>
<td>(Sick of) Intensely annoyed with or bored by (someone or something)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(Especially of humour) Having something unpleasant such as death or misfortune as its subject and dealing with it in an offensive way.

V. (Sick something up) Bring something up by vomiting.

N. Vomit.

For the word “sick” as a verb, the data from the COCA shows that “sick” can be used as a verb without preposition “up” and it gives different meaning from the word “sick up”. This is an example sentence from COCA which shows how to use “sick” as a verb to convey the meaning of illness.

5.2 Grammatical patterns

In the part of grammatical patterns, the data from the first 300 concordance lines from COCA shows the various patterns, which can be compared as in the table below.

Table 5.3: Comparing the similarities of the grammatical patterns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Similar patterns</th>
<th>Ill</th>
<th>Sick</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v. to be / linking verb + ill</td>
<td>v. to be / linking verb + sick</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. to be / linking verb + ill + from + cause of illness (noun)</td>
<td>v. to be / linking verb + sick + from + (disease / cause of disease) noun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. to be / linking verb + ill + with + disease (noun)</td>
<td>v. to be / linking verb + sick + with + (disease / cause of disease) noun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>make + someone / reflexive pronoun / objective pronoun + ill</td>
<td>make + someone / reflexive pronoun / objective pronoun + sick</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>too + ill + to + do something (verb) ill + noun</td>
<td>too + sick + to + do something (verb) sick + noun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.4: Comparing the differences of the grammatical patterns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Different patterns</th>
<th>Ill</th>
<th>Sick</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ill</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sick</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
adverb + ill  sick + to + death + of
can + ill + afford  v. to be + sick + of + noun

5.3 The Common Words that Collocate With “Ill” and “Sick”

5.3.1 Collocations of “ill”
The data from the first 300 concordance lines from COCA shows that the word “ill” is used as an adjective or adverb most, thus the word “ill” usually co-occurs with these following nouns, adverbs and verbs

Table: 5.5 The collocations of the word “ill” arranged by frequency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collocations</th>
<th>Parts of speech</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentally ill</td>
<td>(Adv.)</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminally ill</td>
<td>(Adv.)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ill afford</td>
<td>(V.)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ill at ease</td>
<td>(Phrase)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critically ill</td>
<td>(Adv.)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronically ill</td>
<td>(Adv.)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good or ill</td>
<td>(Adj.)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ill equipped</td>
<td>(Adj.)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak ill</td>
<td>(V.)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ill wind</td>
<td>(N.)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ill time</td>
<td>(N.)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3.2 Collocations of “sick”
The data from the first 300 concordance lines from COCA shows that the word “sick” is used as adjective most and it usually co-occurs with these following nouns and prepositions.

Table 4.6: The collocations of the word “Sick” arranged by frequency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collocations</th>
<th>Parts of speech</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sick of</td>
<td>(Phrasal V.)</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sick and tired of</td>
<td>(Idiom)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sick burn</td>
<td>(N.)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sick day</td>
<td>(N.)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sick time</td>
<td>(N.)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall sick</td>
<td>(Adj.)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sick mind (N.) 1
Sick game (N.) 1
Sick out (Phrasal V.) 1
Sick leave (N.) 1
Sick fruit (N.) 1

6. Conclusions and recommendations
6.1 Summary of findings

6.1.1 Definitions of “ill” and “sick”

The data from the Oxford Dictionary Online shows that both ill and sick can be used as an adjective and a noun. Although they share the same meaning of feeling unwell, or about the illness, both of them have other different meanings: “ill” also means “poor in quality, badly, with difficulty, and misfortune” while “sick” means “disappointed, annoyed, vomit, and having something unpleasant”.

To compare the meanings which were found from the concordance lines in COCA, the researchers found that “sick” can be used as a verb to convey the meaning of illness or feeling unwell whereas the data from Oxford Dictionary Online shows that “sick” can be used as a verb only in the form of “sick up”.

6.1.2 The grammatical patterns

In the part of grammatical patterns, the data from the first 300 concordance lines from COCA shows the various patterns. Although some of them are similar as they share the same parts of speech such as an adjective and a noun, the rest of them are different because they are idioms.

6.1.3 Collocation

The data from the first 300 concordance lines from COCA shows the collocates of the two synonyms “ill” and “sick”. These two words share the same collocate “ill time” and “sick time” but have different meanings. “Ill time” means a bad period or unpleasant situation but “sick time” means the period that you are sick or unhealthy.

Moreover, there are some phrases in which the two synonyms cannot be substituted.

For example: ill equipped good or ill sick of sick leave ill afford critically ill sick and tired of sick burn ill at ease sick game sick burn
6.2 Recommendations for further research

For further research, this study collected data from COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English), which represents American English, and compared this with data from the Oxford Dictionary Online which represents British English. Thus, in any further study, the researcher should compare the data from the BNC (British National Corpus,) which represents British English, with the Oxford Dictionary Online which also represents British English. In addition, another set of data should be COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English), which represents American English, to be compared with the Cambridge English Dictionary which represents American English also, so the results will be more specific and clearer to understand.

References


A STUDY ON THAI KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS’ PERCEPTION AND PRODUCTION OF 10 ENGLISH PROBLEMATIC FINAL CONSONANT SOUNDS: A CASE STUDY IN THE NORTHEAST OF THAILAND

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Abstract: This paper focuses on the perception of, and production of, English final consonant sounds. This research study applies a mixed-method approach to examine the perception and production performance of sixty kindergarten teachers in ten private schools in the Northeast of Thailand. Moreover, the relationship between perception and production was investigated. The study focused on ten final consonant sounds: /p/, /t/, /k/, /ð/, /v/, /s/, /z/, /θ/ and /l/. Four research instruments were used to collect the data in this study: a perception task, production task, classroom observation, and semi-structured interview. In addition, ten teachers were chosen purposively for classroom observation and semi-structured interviews to gain in-depth information to support and triangulate with the quantitative data. The findings revealed that: (1) most of the kindergarten teachers were able to perceive the final consonant sounds at the moderate level; (2) Most of the kindergarten teachers were able to pronounce the final consonant sounds at the moderate level; (3) there is a statistically significant relationship between perception and production of English final consonants (r=0.356, N=60, p>0.01). The Pearson Correlation Coefficient value of 0.356 means a weak positive correlation. It can be concluded that higher level perception of English final sounds is associated with better production of the sounds. Regarding the classroom observation and semi-structured interviews, the findings also showed that the kindergarten teachers had limited knowledge of English consonant
sounds. Therefore, they had some problems in perceiving and producing the English final consonant sounds. The recommendations of the study were to introduce basic English phonology, starting with segmental features, consonants and vowels; this basic knowledge can also develop other English skills of teachers.

**Keywords:** English final consonant, perception, production, kindergarten teachers

1. **Introduction**

Kindergarten teachers have played an increasing role in young children’s English language acquisition in Thailand. Their English skills and English teaching experiences can affect students’ English proficiency and pronunciation. Another factor playing a role in English proficiency is the different sound system between Thai and English. When learners learn a second language, they need to be able to perceive and produce sounds different from their native language. However, the differences between Thai and English can cause language interference, and it sometimes distorts the English pronunciation. For example, Thai learners try to use similar sounds in order to produce a word and usually omit the final consonant sounds, (Smith and Swan, 1987).

The Thai sound system is different from English system, English has 24 phonemes. Every phoneme can occur in the initial position except the phoneme /h/, and every phoneme can occur in the final position except /h/ (Ladefoged, 2006). On the other hand, Thai has 21 phonemes, all can occur in the initial position, yet only 9 phonemes occur in the final position. It is clearly seen that Thai has less final consonant sounds than English. Many of them do not exist in Thai, and even for the same final position phonemes that Thai and English share, for example, the voiceless plosive /p/, /t/, and /k/, the articulation of these sounds is slightly different. Thai final consonant sounds have no audible release sound, while English final consonant sounds must be pronounced clearly (Chanintaratheip, 2013).

Among various English problems of kindergarten teachers, final consonant sounds are commonly found to be problematical in class. Thai kindergarten teachers either do not pronounce English final consonant sounds or pronounce them inaccurately. The fact that Thai and English languages are different in such aspects as phonemes and distribution, etc. may be one of the possible explanations. Various studies on the problematic sounds of English final consonants, such as /b/, /d/, and were done by Lahdae (2016), Ongsuragz (2008), Tanthanis (2012), and Wei & Zhou (2002); however, none of their studies were done on kindergarten teachers. Thus, to fill this gap, the researcher in the current study decided to investigate ten consonant sounds that are frequently used in kindergarten level. Three sounds - /p/, /t/, and /k/ exist in
the Thai sound system; three sounds – /f/, /s/ and /l/ exist in the Thai sound system but not in the final position; four sounds – /g/, /v/, /z/ and /θ/ do not exist in the Thai sound system. The sounds from these three diverse categories would be useful in evaluating whether the similarity and difference of Thai and English sound systems have effects on kindergarten teachers’ perceptions and production of English sounds.

In terms of teachers’ English proficiency, the perceptions and production skills of teachers are focused on because these two skills are basic for language study. There is some controversy about perception and production. Some studies state that both show an interrelationship. Learners with good perception also have good production skill, and poor perception leads to poor production skill (Bradlow et al, 1997). As stated by Flege (1995), if learners are not able to perceive the target language correctly, they cannot produce the second language sounds correctly as well. These two skills are significant and show a relationship between each other.

Teaching English in kindergarten has been a subject of debate for educators. Some have proposed that children could learn to speak a second language without an accent and with fluent grammar until about age 7 or 8. After this age, however, performance gradually declines, no matter what the extent of practice or exposure is (Purves, Augustine, Fitzpatrick, et al., 2001). They support teaching English to young learners. Meanwhile, another group has defended with the phonological fossilization argument, if children receive incorrect language, they will not learn to speak well. Wei (2008) believed that when such phonological errors were repeatedly used and eventually stayed stable in an inaccurate manner, phonological fossilization occurred. In this regard, these arguments come up with the question of whether Thai kindergarten teachers should teach English.

Accordingly, the result of this study will show the English performance of Thai kindergarten teachers in terms of perception and production of English final consonants. Also, the findings of the study can help prepare Thai kindergarten teachers to teach English, or it can be part of training needs analysis for Thai kindergarten teachers in further studies. Moreover, this study will help teachers analyze their problematic sounds on their own and improve their English skills. Therefore, the study attempted to find the answers for the following questions:

1. Can kindergarten teachers perceive the sounds of English final consonants correctly?
2. Can kindergarten teacher produce the sounds of English final consonants correctly?
3. Is there any relationship between kindergarten teachers’ perception and production of English final consonants?
2. Literature Review

2.1 Perception and Production of Language

“Perception involves the recognition of sound as belonging to a phonological category during the processing of aural input. While Production refers to using the oral-articulatory system to emit an auditory signal carrying a linguistically (phonologically)-encoded message (speaking)” (Isbell, 2016).

‘Perception’ is powerful for language acquisition, especially for children. Once the children grow up and are fully exposed to their native language, the ability to perceive the sounds that are not mother tongue decreases. The language perception of one year old kids does not decrease because of auditory attention but it reflects the development of language perception which is selective pattern perception (Strange, 1995). Moreover, when learning the first language, learners are not yet attuned to any sound system and they can hear the sounds exactly as the words are transmitted from the speaker before they create any phonetic categories for the sounds. For the L2 learners, the L2 sound system is perceived through the filter of the L1. Consequently, L1 learners and L2 learners can perceive the same sounds differently (Best, 1995 and Major, 2001).

In terms of the relationship between perception and production, Flege (1995) insisted that if the learners were not able to perceive the target language correctly, the production of second language sounds would not be correct as well. However, Flege did not claim that every incorrect production of L2 sounds derived from the wrong perception. Strange (1995) pointed out that there were many factors causing the perception problems of L2 sounds, such as the similarity and differences of phonological systems, articulation, phonotactics, and pronunciation between native language and second language.

2.2 Influence of the first language/the role of native language

Avery & Ehrlich (1992) proposed that the influence of the sound system of the first language affected the way to produce the sound in the second language. First, when learners encounter new English sounds that are different from their first language, difficulties may arise. Second, the rules of producing each word are different between the first language and second language. Third, the pattern of stress and intonation which express the overall rhythm and melody of language can be transferred from the first to the second language.

The influence of the first language in terms of sound production affects not only the ability to produce English sounds, speaking skills, but also the ability to hear, listening skills. Sometimes teachers find out that learners continually repeat a mispronounced word in the same way. The reason for this phenomena is that learners
process their listening through the sound system of their first language. Therefore, the sound that learners listen to will be heard in native language rather than the actual sound of the second language. This is a significant matter regarding the influence of the first language: “it is as if learners hear the second language through a filter, the filter being the sound system of the native language” (Avery & Ehrlich, 1992).

2.3 The differences of Thai and English consonant phonemes
Swan & Smith (1987) discussed the differences between English and Thai phonology systems which cause Thai to have difficulties in English pronunciation. In Thai, there are 21 consonant phonemes and 21 vowel phonemes. Regarding the Thai consonants system, the aspirated voiceless stop /pʰ/, /tʰ/ and /kʰ/ are distinctive phonemes and not simply allophones of /p/, /t/ and /k/ as they are in English. Moreover, Thai learners mostly have difficulty in producing /θ/, /ð/, /v/, /z/, /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ because those phonemes do not exist in Thai and English has more fricatives than Thai. A comparison of Thai and English phonology follows:

Table 1: Thai consonant phonemes (adapted from Chanintaratheip, 2013 and Kanokpermpoon 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bilabial</th>
<th>Labiodental</th>
<th>Alveolar</th>
<th>Lamino-palatal</th>
<th>Palatal</th>
<th>Velar</th>
<th>Glottal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plosive</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>d</td>
<td></td>
<td>k</td>
<td></td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pʰ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>kʰ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasal</td>
<td>s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>g</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fricative</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>s</td>
<td></td>
<td>h</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affricate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>tʃ,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tap</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>r</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lateral</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>l</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ɹ, ɹʷ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The phonemes in the circle can appear in the final position.
Table 1 represents Thai consonant phonemes. In each small block, voiceless phonemes are on the left and voiced phonemes are on the right.
Initial consonant: There are 21 consonant phonemes in Thai, all of them can be used in the initial position.
**Final consonant:** Only 9 phonemes can be used in the final position; they are stops, nasals and approximants /p/, /t/, /k/, /b/, /d/, /m/, /n/, /j/, and /w/.

Phonetically, all Thai final consonant sounds are unreleased.

Table 2: *English consonant phonemes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bilabial</th>
<th>Labiodental</th>
<th>Dental</th>
<th>Alveolar</th>
<th>Palatal</th>
<th>Velar</th>
<th>Glottal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plosive</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>k</td>
<td>g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasal</td>
<td>m</td>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fricative</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>θ</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>j</td>
<td>ʒ</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affricate</td>
<td>tʃ</td>
<td>dʒ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lateral</td>
<td>l</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximant</td>
<td>(w)</td>
<td></td>
<td>j</td>
<td>w</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 represents English consonant phonemes. The phonemes which do not exist in the Thai sound system are in the shaded blocks.

**Initial consonant:** Among 24 English phonemes, every phoneme can occur in the initial position except

**Final consonant:** There are 23 phonemes occur in the final position; the 3 consonant sounds /hl/, /j/ and /w/ cannot occur in the final position.

Compared to Thai phonology, English final consonant sounds can be divided into three groups as follows:

1. The final consonant sounds that occur both in Thai and English; /p/, /t/, /k/, /m/, /n/, and /ŋ/.
2. The sounds that occur in Thai but not in the final position; /bl/, /d/ /l/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, and /l/.
3. The sounds that do not occur in Thai in any position; /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /j/, /j/, /ɜ/, /dʒ/, /ʒ/, and /技术创新/.

*The phonemes in the circles are a focus of this study.*
3. Methodology

3.1 Participants in this research were sixty Thai kindergarten teachers from private schools in northeastern Thailand. They all taught a similar young learner English curriculum and were trained how to teach English for young learners. Their English skills were limited since they did not graduate in an English major. All of them were female because most target schools required female kindergarten teachers. Due to ethical issues in conducting research, all participants from each school were volunteers.

3.2 Instruments

There were four research instruments in the study; final sound identification task (listening), reading aloud task (pronouncing), classroom observation and, semi-structured interview.

3.3 Data Collection

The first task was final sound identification task. The participants listened to thirty monosyllabic words from the recorded file. All words were pronounced by Native American English twice. Then, the participants were asked to identify the correct final consonant sound of each word by choosing between two items. This task lasted for five minutes.

The second task was the reading aloud task. The participants were given a thirty monosyllabic words list beforehand and then were asked to pronounce the words. Their voices while pronouncing these words were recorded with permission. This task lasted for five minutes.

After finishing the first two tasks, the researcher analyzed the scores and selected the participants who had high scores (22-30), medium scores (15-21) and low scores (0-14) and asked for permission to observe their teaching in the class. Each classroom observation took approximately 50-60 minutes depending on the school policy. During observation, the researcher sat at the corner, observed the language used in class and recorded how participants produced the final sound of each English word. Moreover, the researcher asked for the permission to record the sounds in class in order to recheck the data after the class. Also, any incorrect pronunciation besides the research study could be recorded for further ideas.

After the classroom observation, the researcher interviewed the participants regarding English teaching, their understanding, and the strategies for developing their English pronunciation, so as to obtain more information to support the results of the identification task and the reading aloud task. The interview was recorded via digital recorder with permission. Each interview session lasted for ten minutes. All transcriptions were done by the researcher.
3.4 Data Analysis
First, the data from the tasks were analyzed by using the SPSS program version 18. The data from the final sound identification task and reading aloud task were analyzed and described by statistics of percentage. For the experimental data from the reading aloud task, the inter-rater reliability was considered. Therefore, the data were checked by three experts, one Thai and two native American English teachers, to compare and ensure that the result of English final consonants produced by participants were consistence.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Participants’ perception

Table 3: Overall Results of the Perception towards English Final Consonant Sounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Minimum Score</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
<th>Maximum Score</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>43.33</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>83.33</td>
<td>19.30</td>
<td>2.848</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows the overall results of participants’ perception, including the score range and the average score. The highest possible perception score was 30. The highest participant score was 25 points (83.33%) and the lowest score was 13 points (43.33%). The average score was 19.30 points with a standard deviation of 2.848. It means that most participants had scores within 2.85 points of the mean (16.45-22.15 points).

Figure 1: The Participants’ Perception Scores by English Final Consonant Sounds

From Figure 1, it can be concluded that the similarity between Thai and English sounds has a significant effect on the participants’ perception of English final consonant sounds. The final consonant /t/ — voiceless alveolar plosive, was recognized by the participants with the highest score of 87.78%. As the final consonant /t/ is similar to the Thai sound, the participants could identify it easily. On the other hand, the final consonants /v/ — voiced labiodental fricative, /θ/ — voiceless postalveolar fricative, and /z/ — voiced alveolar fricative got the lowest scores. These sounds do not
appear in Thai phonology; therefore, the participants were not familiar with them and could not identify them correctly.

4.2 Participants ‘production

Table 4: Overall Results of the Production towards English Final Consonant Sounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Production</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum Scores</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
<th>Maximum Scores</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23.33%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>86.67%</td>
<td>15.73</td>
<td>4.153</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 presented the overall results of the participants’ production task. The total number of production items was 30. The highest score was 26 points (86.67%) and the lowest score was 7 points (23.33%). The big difference between the highest score and the lowest score revealed that their production performance greatly varied among the sixty participants. With the standard deviation of 4.15, the scores of most participants were between 11.48 and 19.88. The average score was reported as 15.73, which was at the moderate level. Therefore, it can be inferred that most of the participants had limited production skills of English final consonant sounds.

Table 5: The Results of the Production Task by English Final Consonant Sounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Consonant Sounds</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sounds that exist in final position of Thai</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/t/</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>.972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/p/</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>.969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/k/</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>.787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/l/</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>.725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/s/</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>.811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sounds that exist in Thai, but not in final position</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/f/</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>.873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/v/</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>1.271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sounds that do not exist in Thai</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/v/</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>.958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/z/</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>.767</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results in Table 5 show that the participants could produce each final consonant sound with different degrees of difficulty. They could best pronounce four final sounds with the mean of more than 2. The mean scores of these sounds, /t/, /p/, /k/ and /l/, are 2.27, 2.10, 2.08 and 2.02 respectively. Meanwhile, they could pronounce the final /s/ quite well with the mean of nearly 2. Their problematic sounds were /v/ with the mean of 0.78, meaning that they could
hardly pronounce these sounds. Moreover, the final /p/ and /t/ tended to be difficult for them as well. The mean scores of /p/ and /t/ are 1.42 and 1.33 respectively. The results from classroom observation showed that the ten representative participants had problems in pronouncing the target final consonant sounds in this study: /p/, /t/, /k/, /d/, /l/, /v/, /s/, /z/, /θ/ and /l/. Unsurprisingly, the number of mispronounced words of high-level group are less than those of the moderate and low level groups, implying that the high-level group can perform better than the other two groups both in the production task and classroom observation.

Table 6: The Comparison of Participants’ Perception and Production scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Score</th>
<th>Minimum Score</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Score (%)</th>
<th>Maximum Score</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Score (%)</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>43.33</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>83.33</td>
<td>19.30</td>
<td>2.848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23.33</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>86.67</td>
<td>15.73</td>
<td>4.153</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results in Table 6 showed that the maximum scores of both tasks were very close. The maximum score of the perception task (25 points, 83.33%) was less than that of the production task (26 points, 86.67%) by one point. On the other hand, the minimum perception score (13 points, 43.33%) was more than that of production by six points. The mean score of perception was 19.30 while the production mean score was 15.73. Thus, it can be concluded that the participants could perceive the final consonant sounds better than produce the sounds.

The average perception and production scores of each final consonant sound are compared to see whether both scores of each final consonant sound show consistency or discrepancy. The findings are demonstrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: The comparison scores between perception and production of final consonants
From the ten sounds, there are five sounds, /t/, /g/, /z/, /d/, and /n/, that have perception mean scores (2.63, 1.95, 1.62, 1.50, and 1.47) higher than production scores (2.27, 1.42, 0.57, 1.33, 0.78). The rest of the sounds, /p/, /k/, /f/, /l/, and /s/, show equal perception and production mean scores (2.10, 2.08, 2.02, 1.98, and 1.95).

4.3 The Correlation between Perception and Production of Ten English Final Consonant Sounds

The Pearson Correlation Coefficient between the sixty kindergarten teachers’ perception and production of English final consonant sounds was calculated. The results showed that there was a statistically significant relationship between perception and production of English final consonant sounds, at the level of 0.01. The variables show a weak positive correlation of 0.35 (r= .356) at a significant level .005 of 95%. Thus, good perception of English final consonant sounds is associated with good production of the sounds, and vice versa. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: The Correlation between Perception and Production of Ten English Final Consonant Sounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception &amp; Production</th>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Production</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.356**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

According to all the findings above, results can be summarized into three points. Firstly, the results confirm the correspondence between the perception and production of participants in the moderate level. Those who perceived final consonant sounds in the moderate level also produced the final consonants in the same level. As the
number of participants in this group is very low at 8.33%, it means that few participants can perceive and produce the sound equally. Secondly, the majority of the participants (71.67%) had better perception ability than production ability. This means that their perception in terms of sound identification was good but they had difficulties in producing the target sounds. Possible reasons are the participants’ minimal knowledge of phonology, their limited ability to articulate the consonant sounds or their unfamiliarity with pronunciation. Lastly, some participants showed that they could produce the final consonant sounds better than perceive those sounds. They had either high or moderate production scores. It can be assumed that their ability in producing sounds can support their ability in perceiving the sounds also. This finding rejects the claim of Osborne (2010) that there is a period of accurate perception before accurate production in the process of learning the second language.

Discussion

4.4 The perception of English final consonant sounds

The participant best perceived the final consonant sounds from the first group which were /t/, /p/ and /k/, respectively. The possible reason is that these three sounds occur in the Thai sound system, especially in the final position; therefore, the participants are familiar with the sounds and can perceive them more easily than the other sounds. This can be supported by Lado’s statement, suggesting that the sounds that are similar to the first language will be easier to acquire than the sounds that are in contrast. Therefore, these three final consonant sounds were not difficult for the kindergarten teachers to perceive. It is clearly seen that even the participants who had limited English skills could best perceive the final consonant sounds that exist in their native language.

On the other hand, the final consonant sounds that showed difficulty in perception were fricative sounds; /z/, /s/ and /v/. This is probably due to the fact that these three sounds do not exist in any position of the Thai sound system. Coupled with the fact that the participants had limited English skills and less exposure to English, they were not familiar with these sounds and could not perceive them well. Moreover, two fricative sounds, /f/ and /s/, have contrasting sounds in Thai phonology as /f/-/v/ and /s/-/z/. These two pairs have similar places of articulation, and manner of articulation, except voicing. Therefore, these similar contrasting sounds may cause confusion and difficulty in perceiving the target sounds. This result confirms Flege’s studies: “SLM predicts that the more similar the sound of the target language and the native language are, the more difficult their discrimination and acquisition will be; and by contrast, the more the different sounds of the target language and the first language are, the easier their discrimination and acquisition will be” (Flege, 1995).
In summary, kindergarten teachers could perceive the final consonant sounds moderately. However, they need more practice in perceiving, especially fricative sounds, which seem to be difficult for Thai learners, and to develop their basic understanding of English sounds and to enhance other English skills. This is an important issue for kindergarten teachers. If they have to teach young learners English, they should perceive the English sounds correctly in order to train young learners to pronounce English sounds.

### 4.5 The production of English final consonant sounds

The results revealed that the majority of participants had low level of performance. The overall mean score of production task (15.73) was rather low at moderate level. It can be concluded that the kindergarten teachers need more practice on producing the final consonant sounds. This confirms many research studies on pronunciation problems of Thai learners; that Thai learners still have problems in pronouncing the correct sounds in terms of segmental features (Chakma 2010; Kanokpermpoon 2004; Lahdae 2016; Ongsuragz 2008; Tanthanis 2012). The similarity and contrast between English and Thai phonology plays an important role in participants’ final sound pronunciation. The findings show that the participants can perceive and produce the final sounds that occur in Thai final position the most. Next, the final sounds that occur in the Thai sound system but not in the final position also show better performance in perceiving and producing than those that do not occur in any position in the Thai sound system. It indicates that the similarity between English and Thai phonology supports participants’ English perception and production.

Regarding the markedness theory, which proposes that “in every linguistic opposition, there is one member of any pair of opposites that is psycholinguistically unmarked (more basic, more frequent) and one that is marked (more specific, less frequent, more limited), (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996). Eckman (as cited in Edward and Zampini, 2008) proposed the markedness differential hypothesis that the areas of the target language which differ from the native language and are more marked than the native language will be difficult to pronounce. Marked phenomena, such as voiced final obstruent, are more difficult and take longer to learn than less marked or unmarked phenomena, such as voiceless final obstruent (Jevring, 2015).

One of the differences between Thai and English is voiced contrasts in the final position. Most of the voiceless sounds are unmarked while voiced sounds are marked. This means that marked sounds seem to be difficult for Thai learners. This notion is confirmed by the results of the study regarding three voiced contrastive sounds; /k/-/g/, /f/-/v/, and /s/-/z/. All the voiceless sounds had better scores than the voiced sounds. The fact that these three voiceless sounds occur in the Thai sound system (though the sounds /f/ and /s/ do not occur in Thai final position), means that the
teachers are more familiar with them than the voiced sounds. The basic background of the voiceless sound in the initial position may help them produce the final voiceless sounds easily. On the contrary, three voiced sounds do not occur in any position of Thai language. The teachers may not be familiar with these sounds. And, due to the fact that voiced articulation is more complicated than voiceless, the teachers could not produce the sounds well. For this reason, the teachers tend to make substitutions for those sounds they cannot produce, using the most equivalent sounds in Thai (Smyth, 2001; Wei & Zhou, 2002). There are various studies reporting that Thai EFLs substitute voiceless consonant sounds for voiced consonant sounds (Ariyapitipun, 1988; Avery & Ehrlich, 1992; Tanthanis, 2012). This also shows the interference from the first language to the second language (Lin, 2014; Natakorn, 2001).

4.6 The relationship between Thai kindergarten teachers’ perception and production of English final consonant sounds

The overall scores for perception and production of English final consonant sounds by the sixty participant Thai kindergarten teachers showed that the perception mean score (19.30) was higher than the production score (15.73). In terms of individual sounds, the findings showed that most of the final sounds have better perception than production performances; the final /t/ from the first group, and the final sounds from the third group /g/, /z/, /ŋ/, and /v/. It means that the participants could perceive the sounds better than produce them. The final sounds where the relationship between perception and production is correlated are the final /p/, /k/, /t/, /l/, and /s/. These five sounds occur in the Thai sound system, either in a final position or in other positions. It indicates that the participants were able to perceive the sounds that exist in the Thai sound system and also produce the sounds at the same level. Therefore, it can be concluded that kindergarten teachers better perceive the final consonant sounds than produce them.

This finding is in line with the idea of Flege (1995). He pointed out that the perception should precede the production, and he insisted that if the learners were not able to perceive the target language correctly, the production of second language sounds would not be correct as well. In addition, O’Connor and Fletcher (1989) mentioned pronunciation perception in terms of sound discrimination -- students who cannot hear a particular English contrast have no chance of reproducing it.

Concerning the relationship between the final consonant sound perception and production by individual participant, the results of this study can be divided into three types of relationship. First, the participants had the ability to perceive and produce at the same level. Second, the majority of the participants better perceived the final consonant sounds than produced the sounds. Third, twenty percent of the participants better produced the final consonant sounds than perceived them.
5. Conclusion

It can be concluded that there is a relationship between perception and production of English final consonant sounds. Most of the participants performed the perception task through listening to the words better than the production task of pronouncing them. It indicated that the teachers could perceive the final consonant sounds but they lacked knowledge to pronounce the sounds correctly.

In conclusion, the ability to perceive and produce the final sounds by kindergarten teachers should be a concern, and their skills should be developed as much as possible. Although kindergarten teachers do not teach English as a compulsory subject, some of them are assigned to teach some English such as English vocabulary, simple phrases and sentences. Furthermore, as English is one of the international languages, it would be great to prepare kindergarten teachers for English teaching in advance. Nonetheless, any English trainers who instruct kindergarten teachers should understand their contexts, and be well aware of their English competency, in order to design the most suitable course for them in learning and teaching English.

References


Chanintaratheip, N. (2013). Perception and production of English final consonants by Thai elementary school students, Thesis submitted, Department of Linguistics Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University.


A STUDY OF PROBLEMS AND NEEDS IN ENGLISH SPEAKING AND LISTENING SKILLS OF STAFF IN A MULTINATIONAL AUTOMOTIVE COMPANY IN BANGKOK

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Abstract
With the increase in international businesses in Thailand, English has played a major role when it comes to communication particularly in multinational companies. This study of a multinational automotive company in Bangkok, with 40 participants from various departments and different job positions was done to investigate English communication issues/challenges, in particular listening and speaking abilities of staff members, to find out what English training courses would suit their needs in order to improve their English speaking and listening skills. Participants were asked to answer a questionnaire which included 29 Likert scale questions and an open-ended question to provide suggestions on their preferred English courses that will be provided by the company. The results indicate that they have problems with use of technical terms, slang and phrasal verbs and complex sentences. Participants’ feedback shows interest to focus on areas of listening and speaking skills to improve grammar (such as sentence structure), vocabulary and accent.

Keywords: Multinational companies, communication problems, English listening skill, English speaking skill, English courses

1. Introduction
International business and investments lead to the expansion of businesses all over the world. Nowadays, there are many international companies investing in Thailand and having their head quarters here. There are various forms when it comes to
multinational companies (MNC), ranging from small companies investing abroad to larger groups handling subsidiaries in many countries. At present, the borderlines between MNCs and its environment has become loose (Mayrhofer & Prange, 2015). International companies based in Thailand are run by multinational staff (Thai and non-Thai). This international business requires their staff to use English as a medium. Non-native to non-native speakers is called “International English” (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 2011).

English has become the international language of business (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 2011). Moreover, Matin, Jandaghi, Karimi, and Hamidizadeh (2010) stated that people not only communicate in social settings but also career settings. Relationships between people depend on how well they communicate. In order to succeed in one’s career, not only good work required but also good communication skills are needed. To be able to communicate well in any language, people have to understand others that they are communicating with (Nunan, 2003).

The multinational automotive company in the study has been in Thailand for over 17 years. As an international organization, the management team and some of the managers are expats and the rest are Thais. This means that their medium of communication the majority of time is English. As the company uses both “Top Down” and “Bottom up” communications models, the Thai staff members are exposed to English very often. Management sees the importance of internal communication as it helps enhance productivity, the effectiveness of the job and overall will be beneficial for the company as a whole.

Zela (2015) stated that to be fluent in communication, speakers must hold the communication skills that are defined in English language teaching which are: listening, reading, speaking and writing. As the company would like to enhance effective internal communication, this study will focus on speaking and listening specifically. Liu (2015) stated that most students learned English for the purpose of passing examinations, hence they would pay attention only to the accumulation of words and grammar. The result was that they performed well in the examination, but suffered and lacked in English speaking and listening skills used in everyday life. This can also be applied to the Thai staff who work in this company. Even though most of them had studied English for many years (starting from kindergarten to university), the majority of the Thai education system would focus mostly on grammar and reading rather than speaking and listening. Therefore, they may lack in speaking and listening competence before joining the company.

This study focused on communication problems, specifically in listening and speaking. It can occur within the company when the staff communicate in English with the foreign staff, and with the people they work with outside of the company such as customers. The researcher expected that this study will provide useful
information on designing the training courses that will suit their needs and will help both the staff and the company to enhance effectiveness and productivity within the company.

1.1 Research Questions
1.1.1 What English listening comprehension problems do staff encounter when listening to spoken English?
1.1.2 What English speaking problems do staff encounter when speaking English?
1.1.3 What English training courses should staff take to improve their English listening and speaking skills?

2. Literature Review
2.1 Need analysis
Need analysis was defined differently by practitioners. Michael West of India came up with the word ‘need analysis’ in 1920 when he tried to set up what should be the way that the learner should learn. Need analysis is the ongoing process that works systematically to collect information about the needs of learners, interpreting that information, and then creating courses according to the interpretation in order to meet the needs of learners (Khamkaew, 2009). Ellis and Johnson (1994) added that need analysis is a method of acquiring a detailed description of the learner’s need. Acquiring information came from a range of people, for example, a staff in a company, the trainers, and the learners themselves.

Furthermore, Hutchinson and Waters (2010) stated that target needs refer to what are the needs for learners that are suitable for the target situation and what learning needs that the learners would like to learn. They also further subcategorized the target needs and learning need to necessities, lack and wants as the below explanation. In addition, Dudley-Evans and St. John (2011) has defined a current concept of needs analysis as follow:

A. Qualified information about the learners: the assignment and the exercises which learners will use – target situation analysis and objects needs.
B. Learners’ personal information: components affecting how they learn for instance the past experience of learning, culture, why they apply for the course, expectations and their attitude towards English – wants, means, subjects needs.
C. Learners’ English knowledge background: what the current language use are – present situation analysis.
D. The lacks of learners: the distance between (C) and (A) – lacks
E. The information of language learning: the efficient way of learning acquiring the language and skills – learning needs.
F. Qualified communication information about (A) Professional communication information about (A): the ability to use the language in the target situation - linguistic analysis, discourse analysis, genre analysis.

G. What are the wants out of the course.

H. The knowledge about the setting that the course will be operate in. - means analysis

2.2 English communication problems in speaking and listening

2.2.1 Speaking

There are two main reasons why many people feel that speaking is more difficult than reading, writing or listening. First, speaking takes place in real time: the person who you are talking to is waiting to get your response right away. Second, when you speak, you are unable to edit or revise what you would like to say unlike writing (Nunan, 2003). Khamprated (2012) claimed that the ability to speak English is very crucial in terms of international relations because it allows non-native speakers to participate on an international level. Aside from the above factors, Tuan and Mai (2015) also found that the other factors that made the students to perform English poorly were their lack of motivation in learning, their use of their mother tongue in the process of learning, their lack of vocabulary, and their participation while having to involve in the teaching activities. In addition, Rababah (2002) identified that there are various difficulties that cause EFL learners in terms of speaking English. These include the learner themselves, the strategy of teaching, the curriculum and the environment. For instance, many learners are unable to get their messages across because of the lack of necessary vocabulary. As a result they are unable to keep the interaction going. Another reason could be the insufficient strategy and communication incompetence that make them unable to get the interaction going.

2.2.2 Listening

The process of making sense from what people hear is listening. It is an active process and was categorized as receptive or productive. Listening is a receptive skill like reading. A person is required to receive and understand incoming information. Listening is done for a purpose; it is meaning based. “We do not listen to words, we listen to the meaning behind the words” (Nunan, 2003, p. 24). There are two main reasons for listening, firstly, communication can breakdown without listening skills because when people listen and do not understand spoken English, it will be difficult to understand what is being communicated. Secondly, listening helps enable students to learn the language more simply. For instance, learners will be able to pronounce
words after hearing them, along with intonation patterns and sentences. Moreover, in order for learners to reproduce words and sentences, they need to hear the language first (Khamprated, 2012).

Sandhu and Asradbi as cited in (Chayarak, 2014) stated that the most difficult factors in listening are the variety of accents, slang, and the use of special words. In addition, Underwood (1989) organize major listening problems as follow:

1. Cannot control the speed of the speakers
2. Cannot repeat what they hear
3. Limited vocabulary of the listeners
4. Unable to notice the signals
5. Having trouble when interpreting
6. Failure to focus
7. Building the habit of learnings.

2.3 English for specific purposes

ESP is more of an approach rather than a product, meaning that ESP is not associated with a particular kind of language, teaching material or methodology. Hutchinson and Waters (2010) recommended to ask a simple question to get the foundation of ESP; “Why does this learner need to learn a foreign language?”. The answer will then be direct to the learners, and the requirement of the language along with the context of the learning (the primacy need of ESP) is established. The reasons for which the students learn English is what was defined as ‘Need’, which vary from studying purposes to participate in business meetings or book hotels, for instance. These purposes are the points that determine the language courses to be taught.

Dudley-Evans and St. John (2011), classified ESP into two main areas: English for Academic Purposes (EAP) – regarding the needs for academic study; and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) – regarding the needs related to work and training as the diagram below
Singaran (2016) believed that ESP practitioners are not only involved in teaching English for specific purposes but rather ‘specified people’, which means the attention is on specific learners whose job requires them to use the language and communicate with people around them effectively.

2.4 Relevant research

There are similar research studies conducted in various company settings focusing on problems in communication skills. The following studies closely represent the communication issues in speaking and listening skills.

Verapornvanichkul (2011) conducted a survey of problems in oral communication skills when dealing with English speaking clients, which was a case study of big 4 audit firm staff members in Thailand. The sample group was 46 staff members for the questionnaire and 6 staff members for the interview. The results of the study showed that inadequate English communication and comprehension skills were the main problems for the staff. These issues were caused by infrequent usage of daily English which led to being nervous when speaking.

Chayarak (2014) carried out research on the barrier of English communication between Thai officers and foreign customers at Bangkok Bank Company. The participants were 30 Thai officers working in the Trade Finance Center. The results showed that the significant problems in listening were foreign accents and pronunciations, whilst the significant problems for speaking English were incorrect pronunciations, grammar use, as well as difficulty in expressing complex ideas. The findings from the study suggested that incorporating new vocabulary in their everyday life would help enhance their English communication skills.
Mohammadzadeh, Barati, and Fatemi (2015) conducted an investigation into the English Language: the needs of the staff of Saderat Bank in Mashhad. The questionnaire included 33 closed questions and 1 open-ended question to explore their needs of English proficiency of 70 staff members in various job positions. Based on the results, speaking skills were the most crucial requirement and they had difficulties in all 4 areas of English skills. They suggested that the company should provide them an English training course.

In summary, many fields have conducted the study about the needs and issues of learners in English. The above studies demonstrated that in order to have effective communication, especially in a company setting, the understanding of the problems and needs is required. The results from previous studies show that staff needs more improvement in English communication skills, specifically in speaking and listening areas.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

The participants in this study were staff members from a multinational automotive company in Bangkok. The sample in the study was 40 employees who shared the same business environment and were accustomed to speaking English both inside and outside of the company. All the participants had at least a bachelor’s degree. Hence, the educational background was a graduate level.

3.2 Material

The research instrument for this study was a questionnaire provided only in English, as they had to use English at work the majority of the time. The questionnaire was aimed at finding the issues of English speaking and listening skills, and wants for English training course. The questionnaire was adjusted from similar studies as the researcher had reviewed from previous studies.

3.3 Data collection

The questionnaire was sent to the staff in the targeted multinational automotive company. Participants were informed that all their personal information would remain confidential. After two weeks, the researcher collected the completed questionnaires to gather the information. The collected data was then checked and analyzed.

3.4 Data analysis

The researcher used the Statistical Package for Social Science program (SPSS) as the software to analyze the data collected from the participants. In parts 1 and 3, data was calculated for frequency and percentage. In part 2, data was collected through a Likert Scale and analyzed quantitatively using the SPSS.
4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Finding

4.1.1 Participants’ demographic information
Most of the participants were female (77.5%). More than half of the participants were between 21-40 years old, the largest group of them (92.5%). Most of the staff graduated with a Bachelor’s degree (82.5%). The majority of them graduated as Non-English majors (67.5%). Moreover, regarding work experience, the findings reveal that more than half of the them had been working in their position for about 1-5 years (62.5%) and the rest has been working in their position for more than 6 years (37.5%).

4.1.2 Communication problems when speaking and listening with non-Thai staff and with people outside the company (customers)
The participants were asked to indicate their communication issues in terms of listening and speaking with the staff who work within the company, and people who are not working within the company such as customers. The results for the study can be summarized as follows:

4.1.2.1 Listening problems with non-Thai staff
According to the 6 listening problems provided, the most frequent problem the majority of the test group encountered was that they do not understand technical terms or unfamiliar words that their colleagues used (mean = 3.18). However, the mean scores are only slightly different with the other five problems which have been reported as ‘Sometimes’ by the participants. Apart from how they do not understand technical terms or unfamiliar words that people they work with in the office use, they also do not understand slang or phrasal verbs, along with the complex sentences used. These were selected as the three problems the participants mostly encountered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Listening Problem in the office</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Communication Problem Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I’m not familiar with foreign accent(s) and pronunciations of people who I work with in the office.</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I cannot understand the words in the conversation that people who I work with in the office speak.</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>0.911</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I don’t understand slang or phrasal verbs of people who I work with in the office.</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>0.876</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I don’t understand the complex sentences that are used by people who I work with in the office.</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>0.974</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. I cannot understand what is said by people who I work with in the office. 2.60 0.982 Sometimes
6. I don't understand technical terms or unfamiliar words that people I work with in the company just said. 3.18 0.712 Sometimes

Overall 2.92 0.11 Sometimes

4.1.2.2 Listening problems with people outside the company (customers)
Regarding the 5 listening problems provided under this category, the most frequent problem the majority of the participants encountered was that they are not familiar with foreign accent(s) and pronunciations from people who work outside of the office (such as customers) (mean = 3.31). However, the mean scores are only slightly different in the other four problems which was reported as ‘Sometimes’ by the participants. Apart from not familiar with foreign accent(s) and pronunciations from people who work outside of the office (such as customers). Not understanding slang or phrasal verbs from people who work outside of the office (such as customers), Not understanding complex sentences that are used by people who they work with their coworkers were selected as the three problems the participants mostly encountered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Listening Problem with people outside the office</th>
<th>( \bar{x} )</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Communication Problem Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I'm not familiar with foreign accent(s) and pronunciations of people who work outside of the office (such as customers).</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I cannot understand the words in the conversation of people who work outside of the office (such as customers).</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>0.911</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I don't understand slang or phrasal verbs of people who work outside of the office (such as customers).</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>0.876</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I don't understand the complex sentences that are used by people who work outside of the office (such as customers).</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>0.974</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I don't understand what is said by the people who work outside of the office (such as customers).</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>0.982</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1.2.3 Speaking problems with non-Thai staff

The most problematic situation regarding speaking the participants selected was that they cannot pronounce words or phrases correctly with the people they work with in the office (mean = 3.10). Moreover, the participants found that they could not say their sentences in the correct order when speaking with their coworkers (mean = 3.08), and they could not choose the right word when speaking (mean=3.08).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Speaking Problem in the office</th>
<th>( \bar{x} )</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Communication Problem Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I cannot pronounce words or phrases correctly with people who I work with in the office.</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I cannot choose the right word when speaking with people who I work with in the office.</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>0.911</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I feel nervous when speaking English with people who I work with in the office.</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>0.876</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I cannot say the sentence in the correct order when speaking with people who I work with in the office. e. g. I should say I have a tight schedule instead of I have a schedule tight.</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>0.974</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I cannot stress the word correctly when speaking with people who I work with in the office.</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>0.982</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1.2.4 Speaking problems with people outside the company (customers)

According to the 5 speaking problems provided, the most misunderstanding the majority of them encountered was that they could not say their sentences in the correct order when speaking with the people they work with outside of the company (mean = 3.18). However, the mean scores are only slightly different when compared to the other five problems which have been reported as ‘Sometimes’ by the participants. Apart from how they cannot say their sentences in the correct order when
speaking with the people they work with outside of the company, they also cannot pronounce words or phrases correctly. They feel nervous when speaking English with people who they work with outside of the company, were selected as the three problems the participants mostly encountered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Speaking Problem with people outside the office</th>
<th>̅x</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Communication Problem Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I cannot pronounce words or phrases correctly with people who I work with outside of the company (such as customers).</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I cannot choose the right word when speaking with people who I work with outside of the company (such as customers).</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>0.911</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I feel nervous when speaking English with people who I work with outside of the company (such as customers).</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>0.876</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I cannot say the sentence in the correct order when speaking with people who I work with outside of the company (such as customers). e.g. I should say I have a tight schedule instead of I have a schedule tight.</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>0.974</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I cannot stress the word correctly with people who I work with outside of the company (such as customers).</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.982</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td><strong>3.05</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.09</strong></td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1.3 The needs of English speaking and listening skills and training preferences

This part of the findings illustrate training preferences, in terms of listening skills. About 30% of the participants thought that vocabulary is the most crucial to part to improve, with grammar (sentence structure) at 27.5%, accent at 25% and lastly technical terms at about 17.5%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which part of listening skills would you like to improve?</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accent</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Terms</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar (i.e. Sentences Structure)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>others</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of speaking skills, the finding shows that grammar (sentence structure) is the most essential component (37.5%), followed by vocabulary at 30%, accent at 22.5% and lastly technical terms at 7.5%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which part of speaking skills would you like to improve?</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accent</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Terms</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar (i.e. Sentences Structure)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1.4 Suggestion on English training

This part of the findings was retrieved from the open-ended questions of the questionnaire. Responses revealed that most of the participants would like to take speaking courses with native speakers as their teachers. They also would like to study in a smaller group in order to have more group discussions, or take a course that would allow them to communicate in English be it by sharing ideas or debating on any relevant topics. They also suggested to categorize each course to suit their needs such as “Business English” or “Daily Conversations” for the most effective results.
4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Problems in English listening skills
Listening problems that the staff encountered the most when listening to their non-Thai colleagues are technical terms or unfamiliar words, slang or phrasal verbs and complex sentences. Meanwhile, listening problems that the staff encountered the most when communicating with non-Thai customers are foreign accents, slang or phrasal verbs and complex sentences respectively. From both findings, the participants share similar listening problems which are slang or phrasal verbs and complex sentences. In addition, the participants have the most difficulty with technical terms that are used by their non-Thai colleagues. As the nature of an Automotive company, there are a lot of technical terms being used such as car models, parts, finance terms. Whereas the participants have the most difficulty with foreign accents when listening to non-Thai customers, which may imply that there are clients from many countries. As most of the meetings were one-time encounter, they did not have time to become familiar with the accents compared to their non-Thai colleagues who they work with every day. These findings are in line with Sandhu and Asradbi (1991), as cited in (Chayarak, 2014), stated that the most difficult factors in listening are differences in accent, slang and the use of special words. Moreover, Underwood (1989) also pointed out the major listening difficulties such as the listeners’ limited vocabulary, issues in interpretation, and the lack of control over their conversational partner’s speed.

4.2.2 Problems in English speaking skills
In terms of speaking, the participants were reported to have difficulties in pronunciation, unable to say in a correct order, and unable to choose the right word when speaking with their non-Thai colleagues in the mean time the participants have problems in being unable to say in a correct order, pronunciation, and being nervous when speaking with non-Thai customers. They encountered the same problems in both situations which are pronunciation and being unable to say in a correct order. For instance, a presentation can be scripted and planned ahead of time for a meeting, however addressing critiques and questions from the audience is a form of impromptu verbal communication. It is this process of thinking on the spot, under the pressure of time to select the appropriate vocabulary and construct grammatically correct sentence structures during a conversation, as explained by Bygate (1987) that poses a challenge to non-native speakers. The interesting point is that the participants are nervous when speaking with non-Thai customers. This may be inferred that because they meet their non-Thai colleagues every workdays, it reduces their nervousness when speaking. However, with the non-Thai customers, they have to speak in a more formal ways and act professional to gain customers’ satisfaction and trust so that cause them to have more pressure.
4.2.3 The needs and suggestions for English training courses.
The research results reveal that, the participants would like to improve vocabulary, grammar (such as sentence structure) and accents as for the listening part. Meanwhile, they would like to improve grammar (such as sentence structure), vocabulary, and accents as for the speaking part. It is interesting that most of the participants rated Grammar (sentence structure) as the speaking skill that they would like to improve the most. It shows that it is not only in writing skills where people are concerned in terms of grammar, but also in speaking as well. Even though they know that they can carry the message across, from what they rated, they also would like to use the correct grammar as well. This might be because the company that they are working for holds a prestigious image, as it offers luxurious products. Thus, speaking with the correct grammar and structure will make them align with the image of the company.

Regarding the needs and suggestions from the participants, most of the staff perceived that English training courses should be provided at English Institutions outside the company and they requested to have only native teachers. Even though the company offered in house training courses over the past years, they preferred to study outside. This might be because they would prefer to study in a new environment and would therefore not have to be afraid of being judged by their colleagues who would be in the same in-house training course.

4.3 Pedagogical implications
The findings of this study provide information that can be useful for the Human Resources and the Development team to organize effective English courses and also learning materials that will meet their needs in order to help enhance their communication skills, specifically in speaking and listening. This can also help improve their work performance when communicating with their non-Thai colleagues and non-Thai customers. Hence, the following pedagogical implications are presented.

HR and the Change team of the company can make use of the research results by considering providing their staff with English courses in ESP areas that focus on what the staff needs such as English for business. In this case, the English course should be related to Automotive Business. In addition they can use the findings from the study as a guideline to develop an instrument for the staff members such as creating a technical terms handbook which contain most frequent terms being use in the organization. In addition, HR and the Change team can use their suggestion on how they prefer to study, such as having a small group discussion on different topics. Then they can arrange an English Club where the staff members can join. Moreover, the
company may provide the staff with films or a book club where they can watch, read and practice English skills. This way may help them enhance their listening skills and they can practice their accents which will help improve their speaking skill.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Technical terms are considered to be the most serious problem in listening skills for internal communication, whereas slang or phrasal verbs are considered to be the most serious issue listening skills for external communication. Even though, the majority of them had dealt with non-Thai staff and non-Thai customers for years, corresponding to the period of their work experience, it was still difficult for them.

5.2 Being unable to pronounce words or phrases correctly is the most problematic factor for internal communication whilst incorrect sentence order is the most difficult factor for external communication.

5.3 Vocabulary is the most important skill that they would like to improve on and grammar, such as grammar structure, is the skill that they would like to improve in terms of speaking. From the survey of the staff’s needs, they would prefer to have English training courses at English Institutions rather than in house training, and they would also prefer to study with native teachers. They would do so in a smaller group, to be able to study and practice more in order to improve their speaking and listening skills.

Reference


TEACHER’S CODE-SWITCHING: A CASE OF NATIVE CHINESE TEACHERS TEACHING IN THAILAND

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Abstract
Code-switching (CS) is a common linguistic phenomenon in foreign language classrooms. In Chinese language classes in Thailand, students’ mother tongue, Thai, and the target language, Chinese, as well as English, are often used by teachers to facilitate the teaching process. This study focuses on native Chinese teachers’ code-switching practices, specifically the frequency of use and the reasons for teachers’ shifting from Chinese to Thai and English. The researcher employed a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire to investigate the teachers’ code-switching. A total of 194 native Chinese teachers took part in the study. The findings revealed that the most of the Chinese teachers code-switched frequently to achieve teaching goals, such as code-switching for curriculum access, code-switching for classroom management and code-switching to facilitate relationships between the teachers and learners. Among the three functions, CS for the function of facilitating teacher-student social relationships was the most frequently used, followed by CS for classroom management, and CS for curriculum access.

Keywords: Code-switching, TCFL classroom, students’ L1, target language, English
1. Introduction

Whether it is for the purpose of communicating with foreigners, providing service for tourists, studying abroad, or doing international business, learning a foreign language has become indispensable for Thai people. Nowadays, with the increasing economic and trade exchanges between China and Thailand, Chinese has become one of the most popular foreign languages for Thais.

From August to December 2005, the then Minister of Education of Thailand formulated the “Five-Year Strategic Plan for Promoting Chinese Language Teaching in Thailand,” which established the promotion of Chinese language teaching as a national education policy of Thailand. Since then, Chinese teaching has entered the mainstream education system in Thailand. On January 1, 2006, Zhang Xinsheng, then Vice Minister of Education of China, and Mr. Chaturon Chaisang, then Minister of Education of Thailand, signed the “Sino-Thai Framework Agreement on Chinese Language Teaching Cooperation” (Hanban/Confucius Institute Headquarters Thailand Office, 2018). In response to this agreement, the Hanban/Confucius Institute Headquarters, hereafter referred to as Hanban, the China National Office of Chinese International Language Council, has sent a group of young volunteers to teach Chinese in Thailand every year since 2003. The number of volunteer Chinese teachers sent by Hanban has increased from the initial dozens to more than 1,800 (Hanban, Thailand, 2014), but the demand still exceeds supply.

Promoted by the government cooperation between the two countries, an increasing number of Thais have begun to learn the Chinese language, giving rise to “Chinese fever” in Thailand (Feng, 2011). According to statistics provided by Hanban, Thailand (2014), the number of schools offering Chinese language courses in Thailand has increased to more than 3,000. Likewise, the number of Thai students studying Chinese has more than one million.

It is common to see teachers and students switch between students’ first language (L1) and the target language during the teaching and learning process in order to enhance mutual understanding. The conversion between two or more languages is defined as code-switching (CS). CS is often used as an effective strategy for conveying classroom instructions, explaining difficult vocabulary, managing the class, providing background information, and reducing students’ nervousness (Jingxia, 2010; Yao, 2011).

Code-switching also commonly takes place in Chinese classrooms in Thailand. However, unlike general foreign language teaching, code-switching in Thai-Chinese classes by Chinese teachers often involves three languages: Chinese, English, and
Thai. The aim of the present study was to determine to what extent native Chinese teachers code-switch among Chinese, English, and Thai when teaching Chinese to Thai.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (TCFL)
With the rapid increase in the number of Chinese language learners worldwide, hundreds of colleges and universities in China offer courses in teaching Chinese as a foreign language (TCFL). Chinese teachers are considered both ambassadors of Chinese culture and language educators (Chen, 2010). According to Hanban (2018), candidates who can speak the language of the country where they are going to teach are more likely to succeed in the screening test. Thus, the ability to speak Thai is a distinct advantage for people who apply to teach in Thailand.

2.2 Code-switching
According to Hauge (1953), code-switching (CS) refers to a situation in which a bilingual speaker uses a completely unfamiliar word in another language. Linguists have done extensive study on CS from different perspectives. Valdes-Fallis (1978) defines CS as interchanging two codes by transferring, borrowing, or mixing words. According to Gumperz (1982), code-switching refers to juxtapositions of different grammatical systems or subsystems within the same speech exchange. Similarly, Milroy and Muysken (1995) state that CS is “the alternative use by bilinguals of two or more languages in the same conversation” (p. 7). Myers-Scotton (1997), however, provided a broader definition, contending that CS can refer to employing two or more language variants in different conversations, or it can be just a word or a few minutes of conversation. From the perspective of second language learners, CS refers to learners mixing the use of a second language and their mother tongue in their speech (Myers, 2008). Though scholars have defined CS differently, the underlying concepts are the same; that is, CS refers to the phenomenon of using two or more languages or variants in a speech. The CS in this present study refers specifically to switching among the Chinese, English and Thai languages by speakers of native Chinese in a Thai classroom setting.

2.3 Functions of Code-switching in Second Language Acquisition
With the growth of bilingual communication in recent years, CS has attracted increasing attention from scholars. A large number of studies on CS in classroom settings have also been conducted (e.g. Ellis, 2015; Jingxia, 2010; Yao, 2011). The characteristics and functions of CS vary along with the environment and purpose of use. In classrooms, teachers’ language choices are made on the basis of maximizing the quality of communication between the students and teacher. It is a common
phenomenon that teachers code-switch between students’ first language (L1) and the target language to facilitate understanding. The functions of teachers’ CS have been explored by many scholars and educators across different contexts. Ferguson (2003) sums up three broad categories of teachers’ CS. The first category is CS for curriculum access. The purpose of CS in this category is to transfer the knowledge to students, such as explaining grammar points of the target language. The second category is CS for classroom discourse management, which aims to maintain classroom discipline and regulate students’ behavior. The third kind of CS focuses on the rapport between teachers and learners.

Similarly, Canagarajah (1995) broadly categorized the functions of teachers’ CS into classroom management and content transmission as follows:

**Table 2.1 Canagarajah’s (1995) categorization of the CS functions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom management</th>
<th>Content transmission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Opening the class</td>
<td>a. Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Negotiating instructions</td>
<td>b. Explanations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Asking for help</td>
<td>c. Negotiating cultural relevance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Managing discipline</td>
<td>d. Parallel translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Teacher’s encouragement</td>
<td>e. Unofficial student collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Teacher’s praise</td>
<td>f. Teacher’s commands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Teacher’s commands</td>
<td>h. Teacher’s admonitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Relieving tension</td>
<td>j. Pleading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Extra-teaching interaction</td>
<td>l. Teacher’s praise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Focusing on the teachers’ perspectives, Macaro (2005) asserts that teachers code-switch in order to fulfill the following purposes: a) to establish good teacher-student relationships; b) to provide procedural guidance for complex activities; c) to guide students’ behaviors; d) to teach grammar; and e) to translate and check comprehension (p. 69).

Other studies proposed similar frameworks in regard to teacher CS. Merritt, Cleghorn, Abagi and Bunyi (1992) found that teachers code-switch between students’ L1 and L2 under the demands of reformulating information, introducing new content, attracting students’ attention, and substituting words. By the same token, Kamisah (2009) reported that CS works in many ways, such as indicating a topic change, giving explanations and clarification, building social relationships, and emphasizing or deemphasizing information. Informed by previous research, the present study aimed to investigate teachers’ CS in terms of three aspects: CS for curriculum access, CS for classroom management, and CS for teacher-learner social relationships.
2.4 Code-switching in the Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language Classroom

Whether the teachers are Chinese natives or local teachers, in the context of TCFL, the classroom is a bilingual or even multilingual environment. An unavoidable phenomenon is CS by teachers and students between the students’ target language, Chinese, and their L1, sometimes including other foreign languages that they share. However, teachers’ CS between English and Chinese in the TCFL classroom has received broad support from scholars. According to Orton (2011), for CSL teachers employed to teach Chinese in the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia, communication competence in English is regarded as an increasingly important pedagogical skill. In the Chinese language class, English is regularly and strategically employed as an international lingua franca for explanatory, managerial and interactive functions (Wang & Kirkpatrick, 2012). Liu and Liu (2005) determined that CS, as a teaching aid, serves as a bridge between students and the Chinese language teacher, and activates the atmosphere of the classroom.

In recent years, a variety of scholars and educators have conducted detailed investigations and research studies on teacher’s CS in Chinese language classes in Thailand and offered some constructive suggestions. Aroonroj (2018) cited in her study that Chinese teachers who did not speak Thai often faced communication problems in the teaching process, which led to a lack of comprehension and fatigue among students. In addition, Chinese teachers’ poor oral Thai ability caused them to lose control of the classroom, which negatively affected the teaching and learning in general. Aroonroj undertook a comparative research that asked students to grade their teachers’ teaching. The results showed that native Chinese teachers who could speak Thai gained much higher scores from students than the teachers who could not speak Thai. In addition, it was easier for students to adapt to Chinese teachers who could speak Thai. According to the students’ feedback, Thai-speaking teachers were better able to meet their learning needs. The use of Thai by teachers facilitated understanding without reducing efficiency or their motivation to learn Chinese. In short, these studies demonstrate that teachers’ language communication abilities in students’ L1 have a direct effect on students’ target language learning perceptions and performance.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The scope of this study was limited to native Chinese teachers’ CS when teaching Chinese to native Thai students in Thailand. In order to investigate teachers’ practice of CS, a questionnaire was used as the tool to collect quantitative data. All of the participants that responded to the questionnaire took part on a voluntary basis.
3.2 Participants
A total of 194 native Chinese teachers who were teaching Chinese in Thailand participated in this study. Most of them were volunteer teachers sent by Hanban, the China National Office of Chinese International Language Council. In the present study, the teachers’ relevant background information such as their educational background, teaching experience, teaching settings, L1 competence, and their English and Thai language proficiency were investigated.

3.2.1 The Putonghua Proficiency Test
The Putonghua (Mandarin) Proficiency Test is a test of Chinese people’s proficiency in Mandarin promulgated by the China National Language Committee. The Putonghua proficiency levels are divided into three levels: grade A, grade B and grade C. Each grade is further divided into two ranks of plus and minus (Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China). According to the Notice on Organizing the Registration of Volunteers for Chinese Teachers in 2019 (2018), volunteer Chinese teachers are required to attain at least grade B in the Putonghua Proficiency Test to be qualified to teach Mandarin to foreigners.

3.2.2 The College English Test
The College English Test (CET) is a nationwide English test administered by the Ministry of Education of China. The CET is aimed at measuring college students’ English competence in the skills of listening, reading and writing. As a national teaching examination, CET is organized by the Department of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education twice a year and divided into CET band 4 and CET band 6 (China Examination Education Network). According to the Notice on Organizing the Registration of Volunteers for Chinese Teachers in 2019 (Hanban, 2018), achieving at least CET-4 is a necessary qualification for volunteer teachers to teach Chinese abroad.

3.3 Data Collection
The aim of this study was to investigate native Chinese teachers’ CS in a TCFL classroom in Thailand. In order to undertake a comprehensive exploration of the research topic, a link to the questionnaire (https://www.wjx.cn/jq/35412105.aspx) was published through online message boards and chat rooms to collect data from native Chinese teachers who were teaching Chinese in Thailand. Some of the items in the questionnaire were formulated based on previous scholars’ classification of CS functions (Ferguson, 2003; Canagarajah, 1995; Macaro, 2005; Ariffin, 2009; Selamat, 2014). The questionnaire was composed of two parts. The first part was designed to gather the Chinese teachers’ demographic information, including their TCFL experience, proficiency levels in Chinese, English, and Thai, and teaching contexts.
The second part of the questionnaire contained 14 close-ended items using a 5-point Likert scale, which intended to investigate the extent to which the participants switch codes in the TCFL classroom. The respondents were requested to rate the statements based on their frequency of CS (i.e. never, rarely, often, most of the time, and every time). The actual questionnaire sent to the participants was written in Chinese and included a definition of code-switching in order to facilitate respondents’ comprehension. All 194 of the Chinese teachers completed the questionnaire.

3.4 Data Analysis
The researcher put all of the responses from the 194 questionnaires regarding Chinese teachers’ use of CS in TCFL classrooms in Thailand into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to compute the frequencies, means, and standard deviations.

Part One of the questionnaire asked for the Chinese teachers’ demographic information, such as gender, educational background, language skills, and teaching experience. This data served as the basis for analyzing the responses in the second and third parts of the questionnaire.

In Part Two, there were 14 items that asked the teachers to specify the purposes of CS between Chinese, Thai and English in TCFL classrooms. The respondents rated the frequency of their CS for each of the 14 functions using a 5-points scale. The means and standard deviations were calculated using SPSS and the scale ranges were set as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Level of Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1.00-1.80</td>
<td>Very low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>1.81-2.60</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>2.61-3.40</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>3.41-4.20</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every time</td>
<td>4.21-5.00</td>
<td>Very high</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Findings and Discussion
The findings from the questionnaires were divided into two sections: (1) demographic data; (2) the teachers’ CS purposes and frequencies.

4.1 Demographic Data
This part sought to obtain the general information of the 194 native Chinese speakers who were teaching Chinese in Thai schools in the academic year 2018. The data was analyzed with SPSS to compute the percentages and frequency. The results are reported below.
4.1.1 Teachers’ Demographic Information

The participants’ demographic information is illustrated in Table 4.1 and Figure 4.2 below.

**Table 4.1 Teachers’ Demographic Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Obtained Data</th>
<th>Frequency (N = 194)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>179</td>
<td></td>
<td>92.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (year)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>126</td>
<td></td>
<td>64.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>63</td>
<td></td>
<td>32.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 30</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCFL Experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 academic year</td>
<td>119</td>
<td></td>
<td>61.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 academic years</td>
<td>61</td>
<td></td>
<td>31.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (or over 3) academic years</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever attended any training sessions or workshops on Chinese language teaching?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>163</td>
<td></td>
<td>84.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td>15.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Education Level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>117</td>
<td></td>
<td>60.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master</td>
<td>77</td>
<td></td>
<td>39.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the data shown in Table 4.1, the majority of the teachers were female (92.97%), while only 7.73% were males. Most of them were between 20 and 25 years old (64.95%), and 32.47% of them were between 25 and 30 years old. There were only five participants (2.58%) who were over 30 years of age. Most of the young teachers had taught Chinese in Thailand for one to two academic years. It was found that only 7.22% of the participants had more than three years of teaching experience, while 61.24% had spent only one year teaching in Thailand. According to the responses in the questionnaire, a very high proportion of the teachers (84.02%) had attended 45 or 60 days of pre-teaching training organized by Hanban before coming to Thailand. In this group of participants, 60.31% had obtained bachelor’s degrees while 39.69% were master’s degree holders. From Figure 4.2, it can be seen that the majority of the participants (77.84%) had majored in TCFL. Only a small number had graduated with degrees in Chinese language (5.15%), English language (9.27%), pedagogy (3.09%) and other liberal arts majors such as linguistics, French, and Japanese (4.12%). Only one participant had majored in Thai language.
4.1.2 Teachers’ Language Proficiency

Table 4.3 shows the Chinese teachers’ Mandarin proficiency, as well as their English and Thai language proficiency levels.

**Table 4.3 Teachers’ Language Proficiency**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Number (=194)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mandarin Proficiency Level</td>
<td>A minus</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>15.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B plus</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>83.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B minus</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Proficiency Level</td>
<td>CET-4</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>39.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CET-6</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>52.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thai Listening Ability</td>
<td>very fluent</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Self-rating)</td>
<td>not bad</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bad</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>42.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thai Speaking Ability</td>
<td>very fluent</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Self-rating)</td>
<td>not bad</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>45.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bad</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>47.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As illustrated in Table 4.3 above, all of the respondents had taken the Mandarin proficiency test and the English proficiency test in China. As for Mandarin, almost all of them had achieved the requirements of the Notice on Organizing the Registration
of Volunteers for Chinese Teachers set by Hanban. That is, almost all of them had reached the level of B plus or above (99.48%) on the Putonghua test. Only one participant had obtained a B minus. As for English, the largest group of participants had attained CET-6, accounting for 52.06%. Second were those who had achieved the CET-4 level, which accounted for 39.69%. The remainder had taken another English proficiency test, known as the Test for English Majors or TEM, which is similar to the CET examination. Lastly, the participants were asked to self-rate their Thai language proficiency level, focusing on listening and speaking skills. The findings revealed that only about 7% of participants believed they had high proficiency in terms of their listening and speaking skills in Thai. On the contrary, almost half of the participants lacked confidence in their Thai language abilities.

4.1.3 Information about Teaching Setting

The researcher also surveyed the participants’ teaching contexts, including the type of school they worked at and the level of the students they taught. The findings are shown in Table 4.4.

![Table 4.4 Information on the participants’ teaching contexts](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire item</th>
<th>Obtained Data</th>
<th>Number ( = 194)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The teachers are teaching in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public School</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>63.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private School</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teachers' teaching levels are (multiple choice)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>31.96</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>58.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational College</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11.34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9.79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The students’ Chinese language levels are (multiple choice)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zero point level</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>65.46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Chinese level</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>61.34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11.86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Chinese level</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the teachers’ institution, Chinese is a/an</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory course</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>67.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective course</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>32.99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among the 194 Chinese teachers responding to the questionnaire, the majority of them worked in public schools (63.4%) while 36.6% worked in a private setting.
Regarding the levels of students, 58.25% taught in middle schools, 31.96% taught in elementary schools, and only a few worked in vocational colleges and universities (11.34% and 9.79%, respectively). Only one participant reported teaching in a community college. From Table 4.4, it can be seen that most of the students they taught were either at the zero point or basic Chinese level, which accounted for 65.46% and 61.34%, respectively. Only a small number of their students were at intermediate and advanced levels in Chinese language (11.86% and 3.61%, respectively). Thus, it can be seen that most participants taught a basic level of Chinese. Last, but not least, 67.01% of the respondents taught Chinese as a compulsory subject, whereas 32.99% worked in settings where Chinese was as an elective course.

4.2 Teachers’ CS Purposes and Frequencies
As previously mentioned, the present study intended to explore teachers’ CS practices based on Ferguson’s (2003) three aspects: CS for curriculum access, CS for classroom management, and CS for teacher-learner relationships. The respondents were asked to estimate their use of CS for different purposes in the classroom with a 5-point Likert scale (1=never, 2=rarely, 3=often, 4=most of the time and 5=every time). In the following table, the three functional types are coded by F1, F2 and F3, respectively. After the means and standard deviations of the data were calculated using SPSS, the researcher ranked the means in order of numerical value from high to low, with the derived results shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Teachers’ CS Purposes and Frequencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean Value Rank</th>
<th>Questionnaire Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>LOF</th>
<th>CS Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To build/strengthen social relationships with students</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>F3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>To maintain classroom discipline</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>F2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To explain the meanings of vocabulary and phrases</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>F1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>To encourage students’ participation in the teaching process</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>F2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>To give praise/feedback on students’ performance</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>F3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>To negotiate for meanings</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>F1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As can be seen from the mean scores in Table 4.5, the teachers used CS frequently for most of the purposes listed in the questionnaire; only four items were used at a moderate level. Among the total of 14 statements, the five items that received the highest usage value were 1) to build/strengthen social relationships with students (mean=3.80); 2) to maintain classroom discipline (mean=3.71); 3) to explain the meanings of vocabulary and phrases (mean=3.64); 4) to encourage students’ participation in the teaching process (mean=3.64); and 5) to give praise/feedback on students’ performance (mean=3.63), respectively. Among the top five, the statement ranking first (i.e. to build/strengthen social relationships with students) and the fifth highest item (i.e. to give praise/feedback on students’ performance) belonged to the category of CS for teacher-learner social relationships. The second highest statement (i.e. to maintain classroom discipline), and the fourth most used purpose (i.e. to encourage students’ participation in teaching process) corresponded to the function of CS for classroom management. The third highest mean score (i.e. to explain the meanings of vocabulary and phrases) fell under the CS for curriculum access function.

The five statements that were ranked the lowest were 1) to introduce Chinese culture (mean=3.47); 2) to comment on exercises, quizzes, and/or examinations (mean=3.33);
3) to explain difficult concepts (mean=3.14); 4) to explain grammar points (mean=3.00); and 5) to open the class (mean=2.84). Among the five statements, the lowest rank was in the function of CS for classroom management, while the others were under CS for curriculum access.

Table 4.5 shows the rankings of the statements based on the mean values: items 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12 and 13 were CS for curriculum access; items 2, 4, 8, 9 and 14 were CS for classroom management; and items 1 and 5 were CS for facilitating teacher-learner relationships. To allow for more insight into the findings, each aspect of the CS functions will be discussed separately in the following section.

4.2.1 Teachers’ CS for Curriculum Access

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean Value Rank</th>
<th>Questionnaire Item</th>
<th>Frequency(%)</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>LOF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In class, I switch from Chinese, Thai, and English...</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>MOT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To explain the meanings of vocabulary and phrases</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>38.66</td>
<td>40.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>To negotiate for meanings</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>36.08</td>
<td>39.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>To check students’ comprehension</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>10.31</td>
<td>31.44</td>
<td>41.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>To introduce Chinese culture</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>6.19</td>
<td>43.30</td>
<td>35.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>To comment on exercises, quizzes, and/or examinations</td>
<td>6.19</td>
<td>14.95</td>
<td>38.14</td>
<td>22.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>To explain difficult concepts (e.g. polysemy)</td>
<td>6.19</td>
<td>20.62</td>
<td>32.47</td>
<td>34.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>To explain grammar points</td>
<td>11.34</td>
<td>18.56</td>
<td>36.60</td>
<td>25.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average Score

3.4 0.974  Moderate

*SD= Standard Deviation  *MOT= Most of the Time  *ET= Every Time  *LOF = Level of Frequency  
*N = 194

The data analysis shows that the teachers code-switched at a high level of frequency in order to promote the teaching process, such as for explaining new vocabulary (mean=3.64), negotiating meanings (mean=3.61), making sure students understood the teacher (mean=3.59) and introducing culture (mean=3.47). In addition, they code-switched when they had to comment on students’ answers (mean=3.33) or explain
difficult concepts and grammar to students (mean=3.14 and mean=3.00, respectively); however, these three statements were ranked at a moderate level of frequency. It is possible that the frequencies of CS were directly linked to the content taught in the classroom. After all, since not every teacher needs to teach grammar or explain difficult concepts in every class, they may not be required to code-switch for such purposes.

4.2.2 Teachers’ CS for Classroom Management

Table 4.7 Teachers’ CS for Classroom Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean Value Rank</th>
<th>Questionnaire Item</th>
<th>Frequency(%)</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>LOF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In class, I switch from Chinese, Thai, and English...</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>MOT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>To maintain classroom discipline</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>10.31</td>
<td>26.80</td>
<td>39.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>To encourage students’ participation in teaching process</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>11.34</td>
<td>26.29</td>
<td>32.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>To give classroom instructions</td>
<td>6.70</td>
<td>8.25</td>
<td>30.41</td>
<td>31.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>To explain the rules of the game</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>8.76</td>
<td>34.54</td>
<td>37.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>To open the class</td>
<td>7.73</td>
<td>34.02</td>
<td>33.51</td>
<td>15.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average Score: 3.46

*SD= Standard Deviation  *MOT=Most of the Time  *ET=Every Time  *LOF = Level of Frequency  *N= 194

The data in Table 4.7 shows that the teachers’ CS for classroom management had a high utilization rate, as evidenced by the average mean score of this function (mean=3.46). The most frequent use of CS was for maintaining classroom discipline (mean=3.71). In addition, the teachers always used Thai and English to encourage students to join teaching activities (mean=3.64). The teachers also often used CS to explain games and activities. Meanwhile, CS for opening a class was used at a moderate level (mean=2.84). It can be inferred that teachers use CS more frequently in difficult teaching tasks (e.g. giving classroom instructions) and less frequently in simple tasks (e.g. opening a class).

4.2.3 Teachers’ CS to Facilitate Social Relationships between Teachers and Learners
Table 4.8 Teachers’ CS to Facilitate Teacher and Learner Relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean Value Rank</th>
<th>Questionnaire Item</th>
<th>Frequency(%)</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>LOF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In class, I switch from Chinese, Thai, and English...</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To build/strengthen social relationships with students</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>25.77</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MOT</td>
<td>42.27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ET</td>
<td>24.23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>To give praise/feedback regarding students’ performance</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>9.28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>28.35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MOT</td>
<td>29.38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ET</td>
<td>27.32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average Score</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>1.048</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*SD= Standard Deviation    *MOT=Most of the Time     * ET=Every Time     *LOF = Level of Frequency     *N = 194

As shown in Table 4.6, the teachers code-switched between Chinese, Thai and English very frequently to build and promote personal relationships between themselves and their students. Although there were only two items from this function contained in the questionnaire, this item ranked the highest among the 14 statements, with the other item (mean=3.63) ranking fifth among the 14 items. Obviously, teachers’ CS plays a significant role in facilitating social relationships between teachers and students.

4.2.4 Summary of Teachers’ CS Purposes and Frequencies
The average mean score of CS for curriculum access was 3.4, while the average mean score of CS for classroom management was 3.46. At the same time, the average mean score of CS for facilitating social relationships between teachers and learners was 3.72. Among the three functions, CS for the function of facilitating teacher-student social relationships was the most frequently used, followed by CS for classroom management, and CS for curriculum access.

5. Conclusion
CS is an inevitable phenomenon in foreign language classes (Fareed, Humayun & Akhtar, 2016), and Chinese language classes in Thailand are no exception. The Chinese teaching classroom in Thailand is a special case of trilingual conversion as investigated. According to the data from the first part of the questionnaire, most of the native Chinese teachers were considered novice teachers in the sense that they had only one or two years of TCFL experience in Thailand. Although they had received some formal pre-job training, which included training in Thai language before coming
to Thailand, only a few were able to communicate fluently in Thai. Meanwhile, all of the teachers had passed the national-level English proficiency test for college students, specifically CET-4 or CET-6, indicating that most of them could speak English well. As for their teaching settings, the majority of their teaching contexts were in primary and secondary schools with students who were at a beginner level of Chinese. The findings of the present study suggest that Chinese teachers’ CS between Chinese and Thai is integral to teaching when students have limited proficiency in the target language. Along the same lines, Chinese teachers’ CS between Chinese and English is unavoidable when the teachers have limited proficiency in students’ L1. As a result, Chinese teachers always shifted from the target language (Chinese) to students’ mother tongue (Thai), and English was also sometimes used to facilitate teacher-student communication. The results reveal that teachers usually switch among these three languages in order to achieve various goals in Chinese language classrooms in Thailand. As mentioned by Ferguson (2003), there are three primary functions of teachers’ CS. The first function is CS for curriculum access where the aim is to deliver content knowledge (in this case, explaining the meaning of vocabulary and difficult concepts, checking students’ comprehension, introducing Chinese culture, and explaining grammar points). Second is CS for classroom management, which is beneficial for maintaining good classroom discipline (i.e. giving classroom instructions and explaining the rules of games). The last function is CS for building rapport and maintaining social relationships between the teacher and learners, which includes giving praise or feedback on students’ performance. The findings show that among the three functions, CS for facilitating teacher-student social relationships was the most frequently used, followed by CS for classroom management, and CS for curriculum access.

5.1 Recommendations and Future Considerations
The findings of the present study are expected to help language teachers improve their understanding of the appropriate use of CS in classroom discourse, which in turn can facilitate their teaching practices. The following recommendations are made for further research. In order to collect more intuitive data, data collection through observation can be adopted. Through observing classroom teaching, the researcher can make detailed records of teachers’ CS practices and typical examples of teachers’ CS can be enumerated.

References
Analysis of Thai Chinese Teachers’ Language Background] (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Shanghai International Studies University, Shanghai.


A CORPUS-BASED STUDY OF ENGLISH SYNONYMS: GOAL, PURPOSE AND AIM

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Abstract
The corpus-based study aims to examine the similarities and differences of three synonyms which are goal, purpose and aim, by focusing on three aspects: lexical meaning, grammatical patterns and collocations. The English dictionaries, Longman's Dictionary of Contemporary English and Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, were used in this study to compare the lexical meaning of the synonyms while the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) was used to collect the data from two hundred concordance lines to analyze the grammatical patterns and collocations of the synonyms. The results show that these three synonyms share the same core meanings, have some similar grammatical patterns and also occur with some collocations in common. However, there are some different points in specific grammatical patterns shown from the data in concordance lines, and the collocations (especially verb) are strong collocations for each. Furthermore, these synonyms have the same core meaning yet they cannot be interchangeable in any context, especially in academic contexts, that prefer use of purpose to goal and aim.

Keywords: Corpus, Corpus-based, English synonym, Synonym
1. Introduction

Since English is the most widely spoken language in the world, it can act as the world language for communication among many nations and countries. It has become a lingua franca, or the language that is used by people who have different native languages (Harmer, 2008). Apart from the grammatical patterns, vocabulary plays an important role in language learning. Verghese (1989) stated that the language is delivered to communication by the use of meaningful words of its own language so that teaching vocabulary could be immensely important in teaching English as a second language. There are also many vocabulary aspects included in teaching English. Liu and Espino (2012) said that synonyms have been a benefit to language users as word choices to convey the message more effectively. With proper contexts and interlocutors, they have some meanings that can be used interchangeably.

Among the English synonyms, the words ‘goal’, ‘purpose’ and ‘aim’ are found amongst the top 3000 most common words in English. (Education First, 2018). This study will focus on the investigation of these synonyms in order to see the similarities and differences among these three words by using dictionaries and corpus data. Corpus-based studies have been increasing in many topics and areas in an attempt to study the linguistics features of many languages. The studies are commonly focused on lexis and grammatical patterns in the language uses (Sinclair, 2004; Stubbs 2007; Granger & Meunier 2008; Shao 2017).

The synonyms are very hard to exclude from their near-synonyms. Many linguists and professionals in the language fields have been struggling to distinguish various synonyms (Edmonds & Hirst 2002; Divjak 2006; Lee & Liu 2009). Shao (2017) pointed out that the use of dictionaries only shows meaning and information with the same results. This is very challenging for the L2 users because when they are conveying a message, the information and examples from the dictionaries may not be sufficient. On the other hand, the corpus data can provide the language uses in various types of context, giving the authentic use that would help the language users to pick up the suitable synonyms with specific contexts.

In the study, the similarities and differences between three synonyms in terms of meanings, grammatical patterns and collocations will be investigated by compiling the data from the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2005), Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2009) and Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA).
2. Literature Review

2.1 Synonyms

The synonym is defined as a word or expression that has the same or nearly the same meaning as another in the same language in Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (OALD, 2005); for example, the words ‘big’ and ‘large’ are synonyms because they have the same meaning. Also, from the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDOCE, 2009), it means a word with the same meaning as another word in the same language. A number of researchers have defined the terms synonyms in many aspects.

Since English is the language that has originated from Anglo-Saxon and other languages which are French, Latin and Greek, this origin of English language means it has come up with numerous numbers of vocabulary (Palmer, 1981: 89). He stated that the synonyms are the words that are identical and can be interchangeable in any kind of context; it is hard to find the words that can fulfill these criterion. Greebaum (1996:420) explained that “synonyms are the words that are identical or similar in meaning and that can be interchangeably in at least one context.” Palmer (1981. 89-91) also provided the points to differentiate the synonyms as follows:

- words come from different dialects (cowshed /byre)
- words used in different styles (nasty smell/ obnoxious effluvium)
- words that share the same cognitive meanings but different evaluation and emotional meanings. (hide/ conceal)
- words that are collocationaly restricted (rancid butter)
- words that have similar meanings and some of their meanings are identical. (govern, direct, control, determine)

Ullman (ibid. 143) found out the substituent test to examine the synonyms as to whether they are interchangeable. If one word can be replaced by the other word without causing the change of literal meaning and senses of use, they are synonyms. However, even if some of the words have the exact same meaning they cannot replace one another in every context. For example, the word deep and profound can be used with sympathy but we can only use deep with water.

2.1.1 Strict and Loose synonyms

Not only has the synonym been defined in different meaning, it also can be theoretically divided into categories which are strict synonym and loose synonym. The strict synonyms are the words that have the same meaning and can be replaced with each other in any kind of context and structures without causing any changes of meaning or sense of the meaning (Jackson & Amvela, 2000: 66). He also stated that there is no word like a strict synonym in English because the word that is a strict
synonym would be lost or literally cut off. For example, the French words mouton, which meant exactly the same as the word sheep subsequently dominated as the meaning of meat of sheep instead while sheep remained the meaning of the animal. Meanwhile, the loose synonyms are more various. Jackson & Amvela, (2000: 94) identified the loose synonyms as the words that have the same meaning which can be replaced with each other in some similar context but not to all contexts. They may share the same sense of use but cannot be replaced in every context. They also could replace each other in some wider contexts of one another but not all in all contexts. For example, the words mad and insane have the same core meaning, which is mentally ill. They can sometimes be used interchangeably in some contexts; however, the word mad can sometimes be used as meaning angry. In this situation, the word insane cannot replace the word mad.

2.1.2 Criteria for distinguishing synonyms

Grammatical pattern
The grammatical patterns are the pattern of the structure of the words in the sentences. Some words have identical meanings but cannot be used to replace each other in the sentences since they do not share the same grammatical patterns. (Thonbury, 2002, p. 122). For instance, the words say and tell both mean to speak or tell something or someone (OALD, 2005) but they have different grammatical patterns. The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2005) presented the grammatical patterns of the words ‘say’ and ‘tell’ as follows:

- tell someone something
- say something
- say something to someone
- say something about

The word ‘tell’ can be followed by a person as an object while the word ‘say’ cannot be followed by a person as a noun. These grammatical patterns difference means say and tell cannot be interchangeable.

Some synonyms that have the similar meaning are used in different grammatical patterns when they are put into sentences. For example, the word ‘same’ and ‘identical’ as an adjective. The word ‘same’ could be placed in front of a noun to modify a noun only while the word ‘identical’ can be placed before nouns or after verb to be. (OALD, 2005).

Collocations
The synonyms can occur with some words or phrases only; collocation is also very important. Collocations are a combination of words in a language that happen very often and more frequently than would happen by chance. (OALD, 2005). For example, the word ‘crime’ is collocated with verb ‘commit’, the word ‘perfume’ is always used
with the verb ‘wear’ (OALD, 2005). Lewis (2000) defined collocation as the phenomenon that words co-occur together naturally and significantly. Hill (2000) has divided collocations into four categories as follows:

3. Methodology

3.1 Instrument


3.1.2 Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) : Concordance lines

3.2 Data collection and analysis

The data for this study was collected from two sources to investigate the findings for the research questions. They were the practical learner’s dictionary, the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (OALD, 2005) and the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDOCE, 2009). These dictionaries provide the basic lexical information such as lexical meaning, part of speech, pronunciation, synonyms and various example sentences to make the learners understand the vocabulary clearly. If choosing a noun, these two dictionaries will provide that the word is countable or uncountable.

Moreover, along with the dictionary information the data was also compiled by the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) to search the keyword (‘goal’, ‘purpose’ and ‘aim’ for this study) to explore the uses of synonyms which basically shared the identical meaning. The concordance lines from the COCA provide the authentic uses of the vocabulary in many contexts. This information will be investigated for the answers to the research questions.

From the investigation using the English dictionaries, the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English and the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, the research found that these three words are nouns that can function as a subject or object. The core meaning where they are co-occurrence from the dictionaries is ‘something that you hope to achieve’ (OALD, 2005). However, they also have other meanings that can be used specifically. For instance, the word ‘goal’ can also mean that ‘a point that is scored for this’ (OALD, 2005) or ‘the area between two posts where the ball must go in order to score in games such as football or hockey’, (LDOCE,2009). The word ‘purpose’ can be used as a plan or aim to do something. (LDOCE,2009), while the word ‘aim’ could function as an uncountable noun and is used specifically with the meaning ‘the action or skill of pointing a weapon at somebody/something’. These
results from the data show these words make it clear that the language users have to be concerned about the similarities and differences when selecting the word. You have to select the word that can be used with the proper and specific context.

4. Findings and Discussion

The data of this study was compiled from three sources: Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English and the concordance lines from the COCA. According to the collected data, in order to analyze the synonyms goal, purpose and aim the results provided many kinds of data which were compared in tables to show the distinguishing factors for each topic.

Table 1 The meaning from dictionaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOAL</td>
<td>1. (in sports) a frame with a net into which players must kick or hit the ball in order to score a point.</td>
<td>1 [countable] something that you hope to achieve in the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. the act of kicking or hitting the ball into the goal; a point that is scored for this.</td>
<td>2 [countable] the area between two posts where the ball must go in order to score in games such as football or hockey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. <strong>something that you hope to achieve</strong></td>
<td>3 [countable] the action of making the ball go into a goal, or the score gained by doing this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PURPOSE</td>
<td>1. [countable] the intention, aim or function of something; the thing that something is supposed to achieve</td>
<td>1. [countable] the purpose of something is what it is intended to achieve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. purposes [plural] what is needed in a particular situation</td>
<td>2 [countable] a plan or aim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. [countable, uncountable] meaning that is important and valuable to you</td>
<td>3. [uncountable] a feeling of determination to achieve things in life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. [uncountable] the ability to plan something and work successfully to achieve it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIM</td>
<td>1. [countable] the purpose of doing something; what somebody is trying to achieve</td>
<td>1. [countable] something you hope to achieve by doing something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. [uncountable] the action or skill of pointing a weapon at somebody/something</td>
<td>2. [uncountable] someone’s ability to hit what they are aiming at when they throw or shoot something</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

and differences of the three synonyms in terms of meanings, grammatical patterns and
collocations. This table shows the total data which will be used to compare the similarities and differences by each topic.

From the corpus data, the grammatical patterns that have been used among ‘goal’, ‘purpose’ and ‘aim’ have both similarities and differences. Table 2 will provide the similar and different patterns of the synonyms.

**Table 2 The grammatical patterns of the synonyms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GOAL</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>AIM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A : Similar Patterns</strong></td>
<td>adjective + goal</td>
<td>adjective + purpose</td>
<td>adjective + aim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>goal + v.to be + to Infinitive</td>
<td>purpose + v.to be + to Infinitive</td>
<td>aim + v.to be + to Infinitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>goal of + noun</td>
<td>purpose of+ noun</td>
<td>Infinitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>goal of + gerund</td>
<td>purpose of + gerund</td>
<td>aim of+ noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B : Different Patterns</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>for such a purpose</td>
<td>take aim at</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the comparison in terms of grammatical patterns, these three synonyms have mainly similar patterns as countable nouns. However, the word ‘purpose’ is mostly used in the academic contexts while the word ‘aim’ is used in general topics, especially in reporting news, whereas the word ‘goal’ is used in more general topics.

This study also focuses on the collocations or the words that mostly co-occur in various contexts. It is also important to examine the words that can be used with these three synonyms in order to provide the most accurate use of the language. Since these synonyms function as nouns, the words that always co-occur with them are always verbs, adjectives or prepositions. The collocations that will be provided for the synonyms are from the dictionaries and concordance lines in Table 3.
Table 3 The collocations of the synonyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>GOAL</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>AIM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>achieve, reach, commit to,</td>
<td>serve, suit to, fulfill, add,</td>
<td>take, change,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>make, focus on, remain,</td>
<td>joint, grace, defeat</td>
<td>achieve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fulfill, support, begin with,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>count, spot, expertise with,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>agree with, cross, score</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjective</td>
<td>main, primary, ultimate,</td>
<td>main, major, direct, same,</td>
<td>triple, unequivocal,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>common, original, future,</td>
<td>sole, real, whole, original,</td>
<td>fundamental,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>next, important, outcome,</td>
<td>holy, primary, fundamental,</td>
<td>paramount,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>reasonable, traditional,</td>
<td>intended, principal, entire,</td>
<td>explicit,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ambitious, original, tangible,</td>
<td>medical, unconscious,</td>
<td>rehabilitative,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>realistic, immediate, long-</td>
<td>subconscious, ostensible,</td>
<td>limited,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>term, short-term, realistic,</td>
<td>indissoluble, useful, practical</td>
<td>legitimate,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>achievable, ambitious, modest</td>
<td>and the possessive adjectives</td>
<td>declared,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and the possessive adjectives</td>
<td></td>
<td>political,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preposition</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>for, on</td>
<td>practical,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compound</td>
<td>goal difficulties, achievement</td>
<td></td>
<td>theoretical,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>goal, goal participants,</td>
<td>goal, goal setting, goal keeper,</td>
<td>central, moral,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>goal perspectives</td>
<td></td>
<td>critical, whole,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>basis, direct,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ultimate, final</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the comparison of the collocations of these synonyms, we can show the result that in some contexts where the three of these synonyms are used as the core meaning, they can be interchanged since all of them mainly share the same grammatical patterns and also some basic collocations.

However, the three words are considered to be loose synonyms; they cannot be interchanged in every context, especially in academic writing. The word ‘purpose’ is used in academic contexts while the words ‘goal’ and ‘aim’ are used in general topics.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Summary of the study

The objective of the study was to investigate the three synonyms, goal, purpose and aim in terms of lexical meanings, grammatical patterns and collocations in order to compare the similarities and differences. The synonyms were chosen from the lists of the top 3000 most common words in English which could cause confusion when choosing the words to use with proper context among the second language learners.

The data in this study derived from three sources. The meanings of the synonyms were compiled from two dictionaries, which were the English dictionary, the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English and the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, to examine the similar core meaning from each word while the
grammatical patterns and the collocations were compiled from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) by selecting the first two hundred concordance lines. The data was presented in the tables divided into each aspect to identify the similarities and differences.

5.2 Summery of the findings
The result of this study can be summarized into certain aspects to answer the research questions as follows:

5.2.1 The definitions of the synonyms: goal, purpose and aim from the two dictionaries revealed that they have shared the same core meaning, which is something that you want to achieve’, but they also have some specific meanings of each which convey different meanings.

5.2.2 Most of the grammatical patterns of these synonyms are the same. However, some words have more specific patterns.

5.2.3 These three words share some of the common adjectives and verbs that are collocated, but mostly they have different collocations.

5.3 Discussion
From the research questions, the study focused on the similarities and differences of the three synonyms goal, purpose and aim, in terms of lexical meaning, grammatical patterns and collocations. The results presented the similarities and differences in those aspects among these three synonyms.

5.3.1 The lexical meaning
The results from the dictionaries showed that these three words have the same core meaning, which is ‘something that you want to achieve’, but they also have some specific meanings of each which convey different meanings. This means that these three synonyms can be used to replace each other in some contexts where they shared the same meanings but they cannot be used interchangeably in every kind of context since they have other specific meanings that convey a different sense of use. From this result we can see the correspondence with the meaning of synonyms that Palmer (1981) provided; the meaning of the synonym as the “words that have similar meanings and some of their meanings are identical.”

5.3.2 Grammatical Patterns
From the comparison of the data that was compiled from the concordance lines and focused on grammatical patterns, this presented both similarities and differences. Even where the synonyms did share some similar grammatical patterns, some of them still have a dominant pattern which cannot be replaced
by the others. According to Ruenroeng (2014), her findings from the study of synonyms to see their comparisons concluded that grammatical patterns are not the same in the focused synonyms. Even if there are some patterns which are commonly used among the synonyms, there are still the patterns that have been used specifically by each one. The result is similar to the result from this study.

5.3.3 Collocations
Since the synonyms are focused in their part of speech as countable nouns, the collocations that mostly come along with them are collocations and verbs. The adjectives that tend to be used with the three synonyms are main, and primary which occur among the use of goal, purpose and aim frequently, while the verbs which co-occur between these words are divided in pairs. The verb ‘fulfill’ is regularly used with ‘goal’ and ‘purpose’ but could be found in use with ‘aim’. On the other hand, the verb ‘achieve’ was mostly used with ‘goal’ and sometimes used with ‘aim’ but could not be found in use with ‘purpose’. From these examples it can be concluded that there are some words that collocated with them but the context that they occur in was different.

From the analysis above, in many aspects which can provide the answers for the research questions, it can be concluded that the synonyms in this study are loose synonyms since they share some core meanings, grammatical patterns and collocations. However, there are also many differences that have been drawn from the data in each aspect from these synonyms which separate them from being used to replace each other in some contexts.

5.4 Conclusions
This study has investigated the use of English synonyms goal, purpose and aim in terms of their lexical meaning, grammatical patterns and collocations by collecting the data from contemporary dictionaries and concordance lines. The results showed that these synonyms share the same core meaning, provide many similar grammatical patterns and also have some collocations in common. However, there are some different points in specific grammatical patterns that have been shown from the data in concordance lines and the collocations (especially for verbs) are strong collocations for each.

To conclude, these synonyms have the same core meaning yet they cannot be interchangeable in any context, especially in academic contexts where the preferred use is for purpose instead of goal and aim. This result should be mentioned in
classes since the learners should know the similarities and differences between the synonyms that are used in many contexts, and the details obtained not just from the dictionary.

5.5 Recommendations

From the results and conclusions of this study, there are some recommendations for further research study.

5.5.1 The further research should specify the data when searching from the COCA in order to widen the scope of the results with the information that will be shown in concordance lines. There are some words that could function in more than one part of speech. The researcher should be concerned about the singular and plural form of the keywords.

5.5.2 The researcher should study in more than three aspects to investigate the similarities and difference of the synonyms since some words are very similar to each other. There might be some specific aspect where they are different from each other so the study should be focused on many criteria.

5.5.3 This study could be beneficial the teacher who teaches English as second language, or to L2 learners who are either confused or interested in these synonyms. The teacher can point out the similarities and differences of these synonyms from the study to inform the students who may have to use these words in their study or in real life.

References


CO–THAI TEACHERS OPINIONS ABOUT CULTURAL DIFFERENCES WORKING WITH FOREIGN TEACHERS IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN BANGKOK

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Abstract
The demand for learning English with foreign teachers in Thailand has been increasing significantly every year. Many schools or language institutions have conducted many English programmes in order to support the students in English language learning. To satisfy the goal, many foreigners are hired to work in schools and language institutions. All of them come from different countries with various cultural backgrounds, so to work with these people, Thais need to understand the differences. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the opinions from co-Thai-teachers about cultural differences on working with foreign teachers in private schools. The findings revealed that the participants expressed a high level of agreement that their foreign teachers should learn about Thai culture in order to work with them more effectively. To work together, both Thai and foreign teachers needed to adapt themselves to each other. Even though working with various foreign teachers with different cultures is not easy, most of the participants claimed that they had good relationships with their foreign teachers. In addition, when they had problems working with foreign teachers, they preferred to talk through the problems, exchanged some ideas with them, and tried to find the better solutions together.

Keywords: Cultural differences, Opinion, Co-teachers, Foreign teachers
1. Introduction

Now it is the period of using English worldwide and English is also used in communicative devices by many people around the world (Crystal, 2008). There are many countries have seen the significance of using and learning English, including Thailand. The Thai government realizes the significance of learning English for Thai students, so they have tried to push many English programmes into the Thai education system to develop students’ English proficiency. Many private schools in Bangkok which provide English Programmes (EP) or Mini English Programmes (MEP) are interested in hiring a language institution to conduct those programmes because they have both foreign and Thai teachers who are qualified to teach English. Each foreign teacher has different points of view on working with Thais and a different cultural background. In order to work effectively in the company which contains many nationalities, both foreign and Thai teachers need to understand those differences. Each country has its own culture which is different from other countries. Americans or British are known as Westerners whereas Thais are classified as Southeast Asians or Asian people. In the interaction between Asians and Westerners, expectations and behaviour are quite different. In addition, when we learn about different cultures from the book, or even from other people, what we have heard and what we see in the real situation still does not make us understand the differences more clearly. For instance, most Thai people know that foreigners do not mind about pointing at something with their feet, but Thais still think it is rude when they see the foreigners doing that (Kriengsak Niratpattanasai, 2005).

It is really necessary to understand the different ways of working and adapt themselves for people who have to work in various cultural background environments. Samovar and Potter (2003) claimed that to meet people from various countries, the highly required understanding of cultural differences is worthwhile to learn. Therefore, co-Thai teachers who teach English along with various foreign teachers in private schools should open their minds and see the significance of learning those differences. It is important to adapt themselves in order to work effectively. Moreover, to teach and work with different foreign teachers from different countries, they have to encounter many conflicts, especially when they have to interact with other people who have different cultures, because people commonly focus more on their own interests and try to avoid or ignore others (Gudykunst, 1994).

2. Literature Review
2.1 Team Teaching
According to Goetz (2000), team teaching is the group of two or more teachers who share the same group of the students; they are working together in order to conduct the lessons, to plan or evaluate the students’ progress. Buckley (1998) also states that as a team, teachers should work together to design the syllabus, setting goals of a course, preparing the lesson plans, teaching the students and evaluating them. There are two broad categories of team teaching:

Category A: two or more instructors who teach the same group of the students within the same time and in the same classroom.

Category B: the instructors who work together but they do not necessarily teach the same group of the students nor necessarily at the same time.

For this study, team teaching of category A is the focus. There are six models of team teaching have been classified by Maroney (1995) based on the personalities or strengths of the learners as well as the philosophies or strengths of the team teachers. Category A team teaching usually involves a combination of the following models.

(1) Traditional Team Teaching: Co – teachers who are in the same classroom, enthusiastically share their skill and instruction of the content to teach students.

(2) Collaborative Teaching: In order to work together in teaching material or designing the course, co – teachers should be able to discuss or exchange the ideas and theories in front of the learners.

(3) Complimentary / Supportive Team Teaching: The situation takes place when one teacher takes the role in teaching the content to the students while the other teacher takes charge providing follow – up activities which related to topics or study skills.

(4) Parallel instruction: This situation occurs when the students are divided into two groups and each teacher is responsible to use the same content to teach different groups.

(5) Differentiated Split Class: The class is divided into smaller groups based on learning needs of the students. Each teacher offers instruction to meet students’ learning needs in each group.

(6) Monitoring Teachers: There one teacher is responsible to instruct the whole class while the other teacher monitors students’ learning progress and behaviour, and circulates around the room.
2.2 Culture and Communication

2.2.1 Culture
Culture varies across geography and nations. It is really difficult to explain what culture is because the concept of culture is so complex with many different levels and elements. People from around the world cannot avoid the effects of cultural differences. Cultures and values influence the important roles in an international setting. In order to work effectively with different people from different countries, a good understanding about their culture, values and different behaviours is very important (Kriengsak Nirapattanasai, 2005, pp. 3-14). There are many definitions of culture which are given by many scholars; these are some examples as follows:

Singer (1998) defined culture as,

“A pattern of learned, group-related perceptions – including both verbal and nonverbal language, attitudes, values, belief systems, disbelief system and behaviors that is accepted and expected by an identity group.”

In addition, Barnett and Lee Leinonen, 2011 stated that,

“A group’s shared collective meaning system through which the group’s collective values, attitudes, belief, customs and thoughts are understood.”

Thailand has its own language, which relates to its own culture as Brown (1994) has shown, “a language is a part of culture and a culture is a part of language; which means we cannot isolate language from culture or separate culture from language, both of them have the significance that are connected together. People are not just making conversation with each other, they also learn new culture from interlocutors automatically. However, due to the abstraction of the culture, it is not easy to understand what culture is. In order to live or work together in various cultural backgrounds, people need to adapt themselves and keep trying to understand the complex elements of the cultures no matter how hard it is.

2.2.2 Communication
This is a processing to convey messages from one person to another through a channel, a two-way process. Kreitner and Carlerm (2010) have defined communication as “The communication process is a chain make up of identifiable links. Links in this process include sender, encoding, medium, decoding, receiver and feedback.” In order to process successfully in communication, there are 5 factors in the process which are sender, message, channel/medium, receiver and feedback.

(1) Sender is the first person who starts the conversation, sends a message or develops ideas in order to lead it to other persons.

(2) Message: it can be symbolic, ideas, written, verbal or nonverbal, etc. from the sender that intends it to be conveyed.
(3) Channel/Medium: it will be carefully selected by the sender in order to convey effectively to the person who will get the message.
(4) Receiver is the last person who gets the message from the sender; how the message can be defined depends on the competence and background knowledge of the receiver.
(5) Feedback is important for communication as it guarantees that the receiver has interpreted the message accurately.

2.3 Cultural Differences
In Thailand, as English teachers at schools or in the Language Institutions, to work with the foreigners seems to be ordinary for those teachers. In order to work effectively together they need to understand the differences between the people from other countries, and one of the most common issues that they need to consider is the differences about each culture. According to Bovee and Thill (2005) the confusion from people in communication or working is caused by cultural differences. Each person from each country has its own identity of the culture, and more understanding about other cultures may lead to more comfortable working environment. Furthermore, Neuliep (2003) suggests that cultural differences may make the people from other countries who speak the different language misinterpret the spoken words because sometimes the voice, facial expressions or gestures are the causes which make the misunderstanding. Moreover, Bovee and Thrill (2005) claimed that to understand the cultural differences from working with other people from other countries in the same company, to learn about the differences is important and useful. They are six main types of cultural differences which are considered below.

2.3.1 Contextual Differences
Contextual differences can be classified into high – context cultures and low – context cultures. High – contextual cultures focus on non – verbal communication such as actions and environmental setting to convey the meaning but low context cultures focus on verbals being used in communication.

2.3.2 Legal and Ethical Differences
They also can be divided into low – context cultures and high – context cultures which are based on the people who come from different countries and cultures. With low – context cultures, the laws and the written words are a major concern for people. For high – context cultures, people seem not to focus on such ethics. As mentioned in Bovee and Thill (2005), “when conducting business contracts, an American would negotiate with all the concise details before signing the contract. In Asian cultures, the manager would first sign the contract as agreement to do business and later start to negotiate the details of the contract” (p. 72).
2.3.3 Social Differences
Working in each company, we should know the nature of that workplace and its system. Normally in some cultures, people work hard in order to reach the higher level positions but in some cultures those positions are preserved for a specific group of people only. For example, people from low – context cultures focus only on their job which they are given to do in a sufficient period of time but people from high – context cultures are more flexible with time, which might build more relationships in business.

2.3.4 Non – Verbal Differences
It is the way to send and receive the messages through body language. To convey the meanings through non – verbal differences, we should understand that people from each country may have different body language to represent the meanings. For example, a sign of “OK” is used generally in many countries as a sign of approval or acceptance, but in France, this sign means worthless or zero.

2.3.5 Age Differences
Senior people are treated as the important ones who should gain the respect from the younger people automatically in some countries, especially in Thailand. Thai culture gives high respect to senior people as the ones they should listen to for advice. However, to work with western colleagues, senior people may gain different responses from them and for those westerners who do not understand this culture, they may find it difficult to adapt themselves to the new workplace. For western culture, young people can confidently give their elders advice but Thai people may see this as rude. The hierarchical plays a significant role in Thailand, whereas western culture may not see the importance of that at all. This may lead to problems in communication or working together.

2.3.6 Gender Differences
Some countries treat men as superior and they are chosen easily and more frequently to be the leaders. However, not all the countries have those visions; in lots of countries men and women are equally treated the same and have the same responsibility in order to create a good working environment.

2. Methodology

3.1 Research Design
This study was a mixed method one, to increase accuracy and reliability as well as reduce bias, both quantitative and qualitative methodology were used to analyze the data (Dörnyei, 2003). The study investigated Co-Thai teachers’ opinions on working with foreign teachers and also how they dealt with the problems which were caused by cultural differences.
3.2 Participants
The participants of the study were Co-Thai teachers who taught English in private schools in Bangkok. All of them worked in the company called Fun Language which contained around 50 foreign teachers from different countries, such as the United States, UK, South Africa, etc. A total of 30 participants were purposefully selected. Their age ranged from 23 – 40 years old. They had experience in teaching the students in kindergarten, primary and secondary schools. In addition, all of the participants had interaction with foreigners and were involved in their cultures.

3.3 Research Instruments
3.3.1 Questionnaire
The questionnaires were designed to investigate the co–Thai teachers’ opinions about cultural differences on working with foreign teachers and how they deal with the cultural problems. All the questionnaires were adapted from many previous studies such as Orathai’s (2005) which studied about cross-cultural problems faced by Thais who deal with Western colleagues, Samorn’s (2009) which referred to intercultural communication of American, Japanese and Thai employees working in international organizations in Thailand, Saetae (2010) whose study about a survey on opinions of Thai employees in the multinational companies in Bangkok concerned ability to use English for work and working with foreigners, and Warunya’s (2015) which studied English communication problems of Thai employees in a multinational company. To ensure about the validity and quality of the questionnaire, a pilot testing was conducted with the five most experienced co-Thai teachers at the company. Their comments and suggestions were useful to modify the questions so the quality was increased.

3.3.2 Interview
In order to get more insightful information, ten participants were selected to answer the interview questions. Semi-structured interviews were used to gather the information from the participants. The semi-structured interview was one of the common research methods that we could use. According to Cousin (2016, p 71) “Semi structured interviews allow researchers to develop in-depth accounts of experiences and perceptions with individuals.” Face to face interviews might gain more details and using semi-structured interviews allowed some flexibility that might be needed sometime during the interview. In addition, to study the differences about the attitudes from the interviewees, using this method we could compare and analyze in deeper detail. Questions could be added during the interview and the interviewees also have opportunities to speak freely on the topics.
3.4 Data Analysis

3.4.1 Questionnaires

The data from the questionnaires was analyzed as follow:

Part I, the personal information of the participants was analyzed by the percentage and frequency which is shown in descriptive tables.

Part II, opinions toward cultural differences and how co-Thai teachers deal with problems cause by cultural differences. The frequency, percentage and mean were used to calculate the results.

Part III, the written statements from the open-ended questions were analyzed as a qualitative content to investigate the opinions from co-Thai teachers toward cultural differences and how they dealt with the cultural problems. The data was coded into themes and concepts based on the objectives and research questions.

3.4.2 Interview

The data from the interview was used to support the data from the questionnaires. The findings from the interview showed more insightful information which related to the topic. First, all the data from the interviews was transcribed into English. Then, the data that was linked to the objectives and research questions was coded into themes and concepts. The data was summarized and presented to support the questionnaires and to answer the research questions. Some important points from the participants were quoted to support the findings.

3. Results

3.1 Opinions from co-Thai teachers on working with foreign teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am always open to different cultures</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to adapt myself and try to understand people who have different cultures</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think understand other cultures can help me work more effectively with people who come from different cultures</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think my foreign colleagues should learn my culture so they can work with me more effectively</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think people who are in the minor cultures should adapt themselves to people who are in the major cultures</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think good relationship between my foreign colleagues and I is really important</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I think my foreign colleagues could adapt themselves well to Thai culture | 3.67 | 0.61 | High
---|---|---|---
I think my foreign colleagues know about Thai culture before they come to Thailand | 3.37 | 0.67 | Moderate
---|---|---|---
I think it is difficult to work with people who come from differences cultures | 2.43 | 0.73 | Low
---|---|---|---
I think my foreign colleagues always open their mind and accept Thai culture | 3.23 | 0.77 | Moderate
---|---|---|---
Total average mean score | 3.70 | 0.17 | High

According to table 1, the co-Thai teachers highly agreed that their foreign teachers should learn Thai culture in order to work with them more effectively. In addition, they showed to a high degree that they liked to adapt and try to understand people who had different cultures and understanding those differences could lead to more effectively working between co-Thai and foreign teachers. They moderately agreed that their foreign teachers knew about Thai culture before they came to Thailand or their foreign teachers did not open their mind to Thai culture that much. However, the differences about cultures were not too difficult for co-Thai teachers to work with their foreign teachers.

### 4.2 Abilities to deal with problems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When my foreign colleagues have problems at work, I am always willing to listen to and assist them</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I have problems on working with my foreign colleagues, I always try to figure out what my weakness is and how to improve myself</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with people from different cultures, I assume that a person who has a lower status should adapt him/herself to a person who has a higher status</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When there are some problems on working with people from different cultures, I think that giving a chance to exchange ideas or ask about those problems will help improve understanding</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think giving a chance to exchanging ideas in a workplace with foreign colleagues may weaken the dominant power and waste time</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I think learning cultures of my foreign colleagues can help me to work with them more effectively 3.90 0.71 Moderate
I think it takes a long time to learn and adapt myself to make friends with my foreign colleagues 3.90 0.55 Moderate
I think socializing more with my foreign colleagues improves my knowledge and leads to better understanding 3.13 1.04 Moderate
Working with foreign colleagues, I think avoiding conversation but using more writing will cause less problems 1.97 0.72 Low
Total average mean score 3.27 0.23 Moderate

Table 2 indicated that when co-Thai teachers had problems working with foreign teachers, they really preferred to ask about those problems or exchange ideas to find out the solutions. They also showed to a high degree that when their foreign teachers had problems at work, they would listen and help them. They tried to figure out what their weaknesses were and did not mind improving themselves. Co-Thai teachers moderately showed that even though it took a long time to make friends with their foreign teachers, learning about colleagues’ cultures made them work better together. Regarding the problems that occurred from working together between co-Thai teachers and foreigners, the causes were not from the ones who came from other countries only. People from other countries did not always need to be the ones who adapt themselves to Thais; both side should do the same and using more writing instead of talking to each other was not the appropriate option to avoid any problems.

4.3 Individual Interview

4.3.1 Relationship between co-Thai and foreign teachers
Most of the interviewees claimed that they have good relationships with their foreign teachers. Some of them did not like to work with their close friends, some treated their foreign teachers differently when they were in the classroom and outside the classroom, but some of them had the same relationship when they worked together or hung out after work. The reasons that affected their relationship were as follows:

4.3.2 Problems about cultural differences on working with foreign teachers
All co-Thai teachers understood that to work with foreign teachers who have different cultures, adaptation from both sides was needed in order to work effectively together. Some of them said, as they were working in Thailand, foreign teachers should try harder to adapt themselves to Thai people, especially to students. Some interviewees explained that they did not mind adapting themselves to foreign teachers because they were not confident enough to suggest the foreign teachers adapt more to Thai culture.

4.3.3 Ability to deal with problems
Most of the interviewees agreed that when they had problems working with foreign teachers, they always tried to find solutions and explained to the foreign teachers what they should do as teachers working in Thailand. Opening their mind and talking about the problems face to face seemed to be the best way. However, the ways to deal with problems depend on the personalities of both sides, Thai and foreign teachers.

4. CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion
The study explored the opinions of co-Thai teachers about cultural differences on working with foreign teachers and how they deal with those problems. The following conclusions could be drawn from the discussion above.

All of the participants were female and mainly aged 21 – 25 years old. Almost all of the participants held a bachelor’s degree and their salary per month was between 10,000 - 15,000 Baht. They all had experience with working with foreign teachers of around 1 – 3 years and also had worked with different foreigners, usually more than 12 of them. Most of the foreign teachers were from the USA, UK and South Africa. In addition, all participants had various teaching experiences with kindergarten, primary and secondary levels.

On working with foreign teachers who came from different countries and had different cultures, their foreign teachers should try to learn about Thai culture in order for all to work effectively together. Understanding and adaptation were needed from both sides, Thai and foreign teachers. Even though working with various people from many countries and having different cultures, most of the co-Thai teachers mentioned that they still had good relationships together and they did not mind having to adapt themselves to their foreign teachers.

Giving a chance to exchanging ideas or asking about the problems would help improve misunderstandings when working with foreign teachers who had different culture from co-Thai teachers. Most of the participants always explained to their foreign teachers when they saw their foreign teachers did something wrong based on Thai culture. However, to explain or give suggestions, they also needed to find the reasons to support their words.

5.2 Limitations of the study
The study was conducted in only one company which sometimes meant opinion focused on their working style based on the policy of that company only. In addition, the sample size was quite small, only 30 participants. Therefore, the results might not cover the whole range of problems of working with foreign teachers.
All of the participants were female so the results lack information from male co-Thai teachers.

The results came from co-Thai teachers only, which meant seeing only the opinions from the Thai side.

5.3 Recommendations for further study

Further study should be conducted from a variety of workplaces which have Thais and foreigners working together, such as in international schools.

A larger size of the participant sample should be considered; perhaps a researcher could invite more participants from other language institutions or schools.

Further study should include foreign teachers as participants so there could be another point of view.

References


Saetae, J. (2010). A survey on opinions of Thai employees in the multinational companies in Bangkok concerning ability to use English for work and working with foreigners, Language Institute, Thammasat University Bangkok, Thailand.


NON-NATIVE FOREIGN ENGLISH TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING (CLT) IN EFL CLASSROOMS

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Abstract
The purpose of this study was to investigate non-native foreign English teachers’ perception about CLT, problems in the implementation of CLT, and possible solutions to solve these problems. 36 non-native foreign English teachers from Thai public schools under BMA were participants of the study. Research tools were written questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The results revealed that the participants had positive attitudes towards CLT and were more concerned about the importance of group/pair work activities in CLT. The three broad categories of problems were: 1. Problems of learners includes low motivation, language barriers, comprehension level, and learning language through memorization and repetition, 2. Problems of teacher; lack of practical knowledge of using CLT, lack of enough preparation and lack of teacher assessment on a regular basis, and 3. Education system related problems; limited teaching hours, big sized classes, examinations based on grammar and memorization, the lack of support from the school, and the mindset that English is just for appearances. They suggested that teachers should be up-to-date, motivate learners, making them aware of English as the global language, using different activities, providing what they need and avoiding using Thai; and assessment of teachers on a regular basis. Furthermore, they suggested minimizing class size, providing more hours and including communicative skills along with
grammar in the examination system can help to overcome education-system related problems.

Keywords: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), teachers’ perception, Non-native Foreign English teachers (NNFET), Thai public schools.

1. Introduction

English is a global language, which is used as a tool of communication among the people of the world, in different languages and cultures. With the rapid development in science and technology, and economies, English has become the most prominent language and fulfills the communicative needs of people. English is used as the medium of international communication. Along with communication, English plays a vital role for the development of all countries in terms of their economy, information technology, politics, education and cultures (Carter & Nunan, 2003).

With globalization, teaching and learning English is widely spreading in the world. The vision and definition of teaching English language is changing. Currently it emphasizes the role of learners and communicative ability. The method must make the learners creative and reflective. So, during the 1970s, a significant approach emerged in the field of language teaching named Communicative language teaching (CLT) Nunan (2003). Communicative language teaching or communication approach is an approach which emphasizes interaction as a goal of teaching. This approach is based on a needs-based approach. Learners interact with the partners and instructors in the target language. Mainly two aspects are emphasized in this approach, i.e. active and creative interaction and use of authentic materials (1987, p.159); any materials such as newspapers, magazines, stories which are not designed for academic purpose. CLT comprises task-based language teaching (TBLT) and learner-centered education. As Nunan stated, task-based language teaching is based on the learning experiences of the learners. Whatever the learners learn in the class should be based on their real lives. Meaning and fluency are emphasized over forms and accuracy of language. According to the task-based language teaching, the teacher is regarded as facilitator of learning process rather than an instructor. According to Lightbown and Spada (1023) in communicative, content-based and task-based language teaching, learners not only get a huge range of input but they also get the opportunity to learn in different roles and participant organization structure through the activities like role play and group work. This makes the learners able to produce and respond to a wider range of communication functions. Because of this reason, all over the world CLT has become the most popular teaching approach in the ELT field.

Thailand is also one of the non-English speaking countries and English is taught as a foreign language. English is perceived as an essential lingua franca which links
Thailand culturally, intellectually and commercially with other ASEAN countries and the rest of the world and has been the official working language after the establishment of ASEAN in 1967 (Baker, 2012). This step of Thailand makes English not only a core academic subject of study but also a medium of communication. So Thai students are encouraged to learn English to become successful in communicating with the people of all countries around the world. With this fact The Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (A.D. 2008) has included English as a foreign language essential as an area of the core curriculum. The aim of including English as a foreign language is to make Thai learners able to communicate in real life situations and seek the knowledge of different learning areas using foreign language. CLT is the approach, which is intended to be applied in the EFL classroom to achieve the communicative goal.

Although English is regarded as a prominent language and Thai students study English for many years, most learners have low proficiency in English language (Ministry of Education, 2008). Many researchers with their studies support this fact. For example, Kaewmala (2012) claims that even though the English language has been introduced to the Thai learners since they were in their primary years at school, it has been unsuccessful and ineffective. Additionally, many studies conducted at different times have proven that the English proficiency of Thai students is very low in comparison to the students of other countries and they are not able to communicate in daily life with foreign teachers even in the very common and basic communicative skills.

With the increasing spread of English language in Thailand, teaching English has become one of the most popular jobs for both native and non-native English speak. Every year thousands of foreign English teachers, both native and non-native, are hired to teach English in the public and private schools to make the Thai learners able to communicate fluently in the target language in real-life situations. Nevertheless, very few studies have been conducted to investigate these teachers’ perspectives and experiences regarding teaching English in Thailand.

Since CLT is recommended as a teaching method in the curriculum to teach English, many researchers are interested in conducting their research on CLT regarding its effectiveness in Thailand, teachers’ and students’ perceptions about CLT, and recurring problems in the implementation of CLT in the classrooms. Studies have been recently done in the case of Thai teachers by Inprasit (2016) and Kwon (2017) to explore Thai native teachers’ perception about CLT, and by Ulla (2018) who conducted the research study to explore Filipino teachers’ experiences and perceptions about teaching English in Thailand as a foreign English teacher. However, as the numbers of non-native foreign EFL teachers from different
countries are increasing in Bangkok, they have a very significant role to achieve the communicative goals determined by the education policy of Thailand. As the researcher herself is also experienced in teaching as a non-native foreign teacher in a Thai government school, and facing different problems in the course of teaching, the researcher is interested in this particular topic of study. As the teacher is the key in the classroom and teaching is the reflection of their beliefs about the teaching methods and approach, it is very important to explore the perceptions of the non-native foreign English teachers about CLT and what problems they are facing while applying it in the classroom. Therefore, this research study is very important as it attempts to explore the non-native foreign English teachers’ perceptions, surveying teachers who are from different countries like the Philippines, India, Bhutan, Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda, and Netherlands about CLT, problems in the course of CLT application, and the solutions they think to be useful to overcome the challenges in all these issues.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Communicative language teaching (CLT) is the most common current approach and popular among both the teaching professionals and applied linguists. It is based on the communicative competence model of Richards (1998). “Communicative competence” means “the knowledge of rules of grammar, vocabulary and semantics, and rules of speaking --- the patterns of sociolinguistic behavior of the speech community” Hymes (1972). Regarding communicative competence, Canale and Swain (1980) described this through four aspects as presented below:

- Grammatical competence: Grammatical competence refers to the ability to produce and understand the meaning of a language using grammatical rules and lexemes.
- Sociolinguistics competence: refers to the ability to use language, which is appropriate to the social context; time, place and social relationship.
- Discourse competence: it means the ability of the language user to produce language in sequences maintaining cohesion and coherence
- Strategic competence: Strategic competence refers to the learner’s ability to use communication strategies when communication breaks down.
2.1.1 Characteristics of CLT

CLT is a theory rather than a methodology. There is no rigid and fixed method of implementing it in a classroom. The concepts characteristic of CLT are different based on the views of the researchers. Therefore, they will be categorized based on individuals. There are four agreed characteristics of CLT (Kumar, Philip, & Kalaiselvi, 2013), Liu (2015), Desai (2015), Sekiziyivu & Mugimu (2017). The characteristics of CLT are divided into the following four parts.

The first one is materials: Materials are taken as an important factor in the classroom. Kumar et al. (2013) stated that instructional materials play a vital role to promote the use of communicative language. Language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks, which are performed in the class through real information and activities. Materials must be useful for students. Desai (2015) states the tasks that are designed for the learners have meanings and purposes. Sreehari (2012) (as cited in Sekiziyivu & Mugimu, 2017, p.12) explains authentic materials, which create an authentic context, can help learners to develop their communicative competences.

The second one is activities: Richards & Rodgers (1986) (as cited in Desai, 2015, p.49) states that communicative activities engage learners in communication and use communication as information sharing, negotiation of meaning and interaction. Activities should be varied. Liu (2015) explains various communication activities such as games, role-plays, simulations and problem-solving tasks give students an opportunity to practice communicating meaning full in different contexts and roles. Larsen-Freeman (1986) (as cited in Liu, 2015, p.1049) stated, “Activities in the communicative approach are often carried out by students in small group”.

The third one is learner center: In CLT classrooms students have to play an important role, rather than the teacher. Desai (2015) claims that students are expected to participate in communication process actively. Kumar et al. (2013) states that students are part of communicative activities and take responsibility for their own language skill development. Breen and Candlin (1980) (as cited in Liu, 2015, p.1049) claim that the student role is to negotiate between the self and other students. In CLT, classroom teacher roles are not as important role as the student role. Nunan (2013) explained teachers should be concerned with how much they are talking in class and let students talk in the class. A teacher play the roles of a coach, a guide, a facilitator and a friend. Liu (2015) states that teacher roles are to organize activities to facilitate the communicative process in the classroom. Kumar et al. (2013) claimed that the teacher is not only a facilitator but also needs to be an independent participant in the group. Teachers support students by use of appropriate learning strategies, and using a range of available tools and resources.
The last one is accuracy and fluency: Nunan (2013) claimed that at the beginning and intermediate level, teachers should give an opportunity to students to develop both their fluency and accuracy. Desai (2015) states that students can try to use language accurately and appropriately because the aim of CLT is to make learners attain communicative competence. Moreover, all four skills are important in CLT. Kumar et al (2013) explained that classroom activities should help students to improve all the four skills.

2.1.2 Application in the Classroom
There are four characteristics of CLT. Teachers use materials to motivate students to speak and help students to develop their communicative competences. Teacher should provide numerous tasks and activities such as games, role-plays, simulations and problem-solving tasks to share information, negotiate for meaning, and interaction. Teachers teach students by using learner centers. The role of teachers is to be a coach, a guide, a facilitator and a friend. The role of students is to negotiate with themselves and other students to speak more in class. Teacher should provide students tasks to develop fluency and accuracy.

2.1.3 Teachers’ Role in CLT
Though the learners in CLT should be more active and creative, there is no less important role of teachers in CLT (Littlewood, 1981). Teachers should not interfere while the creative communicative activities are going on. According to Littlewood (1981) the roles of teachers in the CLT are as follows:

- Teacher as a source of guidance and help: Teacher helps and provides when the students cannot produce appropriate language items in a given situation. Littlewood called it as a psychological support. This kind of teachers’ role specially helps the learners with difficulties to learn as they may be slow or shy to achieve communicative goals.

- Teacher as a monitor: Teacher points out the students’ strengths and weaknesses areas without interfering in students’ communicative activities. Teachers should use some signs to indicate learner weakness and needs in their learning. Teachers also can maintain a balance between pre-communicative and communicative activities, which helps to encourage the students.

- Provider of more exercises: In some cases, the teacher in CLT provides more activities. He/she discourages students from using their first language in the communicative activities. Though errors are taken as a part of learning, sometimes s/he may correct these immediately to prevent students from forming it as a habit.
According to Larsen Freeman (2011), the significant role of the teacher in the CLT is facilitator who facilitates to establish the situation to enhance communication. A teacher is also regarded as an advisor and monitor. Teacher plays a vital role in the case of students’ errors during more accuracy-based activities.

According to Breen and Candlin (1980), in CLT the teachers’ roles are described as follows:

1. Teacher as a facilitator.
2. Autonomous participant within the learning-teaching group.
3. Organizer of resources and a resource him/herself.
4. Teacher as a guide to provide guidance in the context of classroom activities.
5. Learner and explorer.

From all the evidence, we can say that though the teacher’s role is less powerful in comparison to previously developed traditional teaching methods and approach, teachers’ role cannot be assumed as under a shade. The teacher plays crucial roles to develop students’ communicative skills in the target language in the real life situation.

2.1.4 Students’ Role in CLT

The role of the learners is viewed as significant in CLT, which focuses on enhancing the learners’ communication skills rather than mastery over the rules of language. As Richard mentioned in his book entitled ‘Communicative Language Teaching Today’, students themselves must be responsible for their learning to achieve communicative goals. During the activities, whether in pair work or group work, students are supposed to listen to their friends instead of the teacher being a model. Students should cooperate with their friends. They should participate actively rather than being passive and depending upon the teacher in the classrooms where the teacher appears only as a facilitator.

2.1.5 Activities

As Richard (2006) proposed, the classroom activities are categorized into three types. The first one is Information-Gap Activities, the second is Jigsaw activities and the third is other activities. Task-completion activities, information-gathering activities, opinion-sharing activities, information-transfer activities, reasoning-gap activities and role-plays are categorized into other activities.

**Information gap activities:** Generally, in real communication, people communicate to each other to obtain information from the second person that the first person does not possess. This kind of lack of information is known as information gap. Students in the CLT communicate for obtaining information, which should reflect genuine real life situation communication.
Jigsaw: In such activities, students are divided into different groups and each group has a part of necessary information. They have to communicate meaningfully and practice together to find out needed information and complete their tasks.

Task-completion activities: The participants are focused on using one’s language resources to accomplish tasks in such activities such as games, puzzles, games map reading.

Information-gathering activities: As name suggests the students have to collect information using interviews and surveys.

Opinion-sharing activities: The students have to express themselves regarding values, beliefs and opinions, such as ranking tasks.

Information-transfer activities: In such activities, the learners grasp the information from the provided resources and they have to present it in another way.

Reasoning-gap activities: The students have to create or built up new information out of given information.

Role-play: The students are assigned different roles and they have to act on the given situation. Role-plays may be done between two or more students.

2.2 Problems and Challenges in CLT Practice

As CLT emerged in the native English-speaking context, there may occur some challenges in the course of applying it in an EFL or ESL situation. Holliday (1994; and Sullivan (1996), as cited in Noori (2018) stated that CLT emerged in one region and application in another region has its challenges. Numerous studies in various countries have shown that there occur some problems and challenges in course of the application of CLT in relation to different categories, such as problems related to teachers, students, education system of the nation, and problems related to CLT itself. In one study, Noori (2018) stated that the challenges faced in Afghan EFL classes were more because of the students and educational system in comparison to teacher related problems. The findings showed that the large class size, low level of English proficiency of students and traditional grammar based examination system are the challenges in the application of CLT in Afghanistan.

From all the evidence it is apparent that in CLT, despite being the most appropriate approach in English language teaching and learning, there occurs challenges regarding the application of CLT in the real classroom. These challenges are aroused from all the aspects which are directly involved in teaching. CLT teachers, students, education system and CLT itself all have some potential challenges. As an EFL
teacher, all the problems should be taken into consideration and worked out for the best result of CLT.

2.3 Native English Speaking Teachers (NEST) and Non–Native English Speaking Teachers (NNEST)

As English is rapidly expanding across the world, billions of personnel are involved in the field of ELT. Therefore, both native and non-native speakers of English choose their career to be English teachers. According to Hymes (2009) in China, 500,000 secondary school teachers and in Thailand 63,450 teachers are teaching. However, there is always an unanswerable question about whether NEST or Non-NEST teach English better. According to Medgyes (1992) there is significant differences between NEST and Non-NEST. Non-NEST can never be like NEST as their nature is norm dependent and the English which they learn is only the imitation of native users. As a result, nonnative English teachers are less likely to be creative. Medgyes distinguishes native and nonnative teachers of English, stating the ‘ideal NEST’ possesses a high degree of proficiency in the learners’ mother tongue in contrast to the ‘ideal non-NEST’ near-native proficiency in English.

Medgyes (1992) also states that as far as teaching English is concerned there is not only one factor, i.e. language competency, involved. In the field of ELT there are other determining factors for the successful teaching, like age, sex, experiences, motivation etc. With this fact, there is no question who is better in ELT. Both NEST and non-NEST teachers of English have equal potentiality to teach English successfully in the ELT classroom.

It is obvious that in Thai schools, Thai government is expanding English language teaching and bilingual programs. In 1995, The Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) brought an initiative of Bilingual Programs for the establishment of English programs in both public and private Thai schools across the nation. There are mainly four core subjects, which are taught using English as a medium of instruction: science, mathematics, English and physical education. Usually, EP or Bilingual schools hire foreign teachers to teach these subjects in English. Over the past decade, the number of migrant English teachers in Thailand has been growing constantly. The schools are more attracted to hire ‘non-native’ English speakers from ‘outer-circle’ English-speaking countries in order to meet the growing demand. Primarily, these teachers come from the Philippines and a variety of African countries with a British colonial history, and are often more qualified than their colleagues from ‘inner-circle’ countries, yet are paid less than their ‘native-speaking’ counterparts (Hickey, 2014). Floris (2013) stated that though most of Thai schools and universities prefer to hire native English speaking teachers who are from the UK, the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, there is still a number of
nonnative English speaking teachers who are hired to help the local Thai teachers teach English. Among the non-native English-speaking teachers, Filipinos are on the top list. The hiring of these Filipinos as ASEAN local-teachers to teach English in the region adds up to an increase of the non-native English language teachers and to a growing number of immigrants in Thailand.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design
Mixed approach research design was applied in the study. Mixed methods research is defined as “the collection or analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study in which the data are collected concurrently or sequentially, are given a priority, and involve the integration of the data at one or more stages in the process of research” (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003, p. 212). As a quantitative data collection method, a questionnaire was applied which was followed by in depth semi structured interviews.

3.2 Population, Sample and Setting
36 non-native foreign English teachers working in public schools under the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) in Bangkok Thailand hired through Click English Network (CEN); teacher-hiring agency were the participants of the study. They were from India, The Philippines, Bhutan, Nigeria, Cameroon, Netherlands, Ghana and Uganda. Participants were selected for the study using convenience sampling considering geographical proximity, available time and sources. Of the 36 participants, 6 non-native participants were selected to participate in the follow up interviews on the basis of their working experience and considering their nationalities.

3.3 Research Instruments
As this study employed a mixed approach, both quantitative and qualitative research instruments were used. As a quantitative research tool, there was a written questionnaire and interviews were used as a qualitative research tool.

3.3.1 Written Questionnaire
The first research tool was the written questionnaire, a set of 40 questions with a 5 point Likert scale, from strongly disagree to strongly agree; certain numbers were allocated to those scales, namely, (Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), neutral (3), disagree (4), and strongly agree (5). The questionnaire included mainly three parts. The first part was designed to collect the participants’ demographic data. The second part consists of a set of 40 questions; 24 questions regarding teachers’ perceptions about CLT and 16 questions from 25 – 40 regarding problems and challenges in the course of applying CLT in the classrooms. A 24 item ATCAS, originally designed by
Karava- Doukas (1996), was adopted to explore the participants’ perceptions about CLT. This section consists of five sub- categories, namely, group work /pair work (which has four items), the place and importance of grammar (which has six items), the role of the learners in the learning process (six items), the role of the teacher (four items), and the quality and quantity of error correction (six items). A five-level Likert scale was used to rate the items, ranging from 5 points, strongly agree, to 1 point, strongly disagree. A 120 score is the indication of most favorable attitude by scoring the highest score in all 24 items which is 5, a score of 24 is the indication of the least favorable, and 72 is the middle score which indicates uncertainty or neutral attitudes in the 24 items.

3.3.2 Interviews
A semi-structured interview was designed for more in- depth information of CLT. For the interview, 9 ‘interview guide’ questions were developed. The reason for using semi- structured interviews is it has a structural overall framework but allows for greater flexibility within the framework. The interview involved a list of open –ended questions regarding different issues related to CLT in the context of Bangkok, Thailand.

3.5 Data Analysis and Interpretation
The results from the 5-point Likert scale were analyzed using statistical analysis software program SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). From the results of each question, mean score and standard deviation (SD) were calculated numerically and tabulated along with detailed descriptions.

The audio-recorded data from the participants was transcribed and read for many times to grasp the main themes expressed by the researchers, and analyzed applying thematic analyses - “a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data” according to Braun and Clarke (2006). Thematic analysis provides enough room for flexibility as it organizes and describes data in detail.

4. Findings and Discussion
4.1 Perceptions of Teachers about CLT

Table 4.1 Descriptive Statistics of the Participants’ Overall Perception of the Five Sub- Scales of CLT
With reference to Table 4.1, the average scores of each principle of CLT were 3.75 for “place/ importance of grammar”, 4.25 for “group / pair work”, 3.70 for “the role of teacher in the classroom”, 3.62 for “the role and contribution of learners in learning process”, and 3.44 for “quality /quantity of error correction.” Results show that the highest mean score was “group/pair work” while “quality/quantity of error correction” was the lowest. In a combined category of participants, the mean scores of the entire category was not less than 3. The results suggested that the NNFE teachers had more concerns and most favorable attitudes toward group/pair activities than the other principles of CLT.

The findings from the questionnaire survey revealed that participants of the study had positive attitudes towards CLT as a whole. Participants had a high degree of agreement with all five sub-classes of CLT. The five sub-classes were place /importance of grammar in CLT (M = 3.75, SD =.42), group work and pair work (4.25, SD =.32), the role of the teachers in the classroom (M =3.70, SD=.45), the role of the learners in the learning process (M=3.62, SD=.38) and quality/quantity of error correction (M=3.44, SD =.44). In addition, among the five sub-classes, group/pair work was measured at very high degree of agreement. It suggested that the participants were concerned and most had favorable attitudes towards importance of group and pair work activities in CLT.

4.2 Problems of Implementing CLT
Table 4.2 Descriptive Statistics of the Participants Overall Perception of Challenges of CLT of the Four Sub-Classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub Classes</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-related problems</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students-related problems</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education system-related problems</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLT-related problems</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As Table 4.2 illustrates, the mean score of each category, and shows that NNFE teachers have challenges in the implementation of CLT in the classrooms. It is clear that there are significant differences in scores of student-related problems and other categories. The participants reported that the most challenging area was “student-related problems ($M = 4.25$) followed by education-related problems ($M=3.71$), CLT-related ($M=3.65$) and teacher–related problems. This finding suggests that students’ proficiency of English should be upgraded. For this, the teacher should motivate the learners to learn English, making them aware of the global importance of English. Along with this, there should be reform in the education system. The education system should focus to develop communicative competence rather than linguistic knowledge. The size of the classes should be reduced and the examination system should be reformed from measuring grammatical competence to measuring communicative competence by including listening and speaking as well.

The findings of the problems of implementing CLT were extracted from both the questionnaire survey and interview sessions as well. In the questionnaire, the problems were categories in four sub-classes: i.e. teacher-related problems, student-related problems, education system-related problems and CLT-related problems. The findings revealed that the most challenging area was ‘student-related problems ($M=4.25$, SD=.61) with a high degree of agreement among participants, followed by education-related problems, CLT–related problems and teacher-related problems. Among the problems related to students, participants had a high degree of agreement that students with low motivation avoid participation in the classroom.

### 4.2.1 The Results from the Interviews of Challenges of CLT

#### 4.2.1.1 Problems of Learners

The findings of the questionnaire corresponded with the interviews in that the participants were much focused on the problems related to the learners. The findings revealed different areas of learner-related problems, namely, motivation and interest of the learners towards English language learning, language barriers and comprehension level, and local culture of learning language through memorization and repetition. The participants stated that the students lack motivation towards learning English. Students also had the habit of learning through memorization and drills. It was also found that the English language proficiency level was very low. Therefore, their comprehension of English is very weak. They also stated that as English is used as a foreign language, outside the classroom learners don’t have the opportunity of using English in their lives.
4.2.1.2 Problems of Teachers

In the case of using CLT in the classroom, some problems were related with the teachers also. However, teachers related problems were not considered very serious in comparison to other problems. This finding supports the results of the questionnaire. It was revealed that not all the teachers, but some, have lack of knowledge how to use CLT in a real classroom and do not prepare for the class. It was found that there is no provision for assessing teachers on a regular basis.

4.2.1.3 Problems of Education System

From the findings of the study, education related problems were categorized into three different categories. The first one was the curriculum and class size. Foreign English teachers have only an hour in a week and at the same time in the Thai public schools generally, class size is big and it is very difficult to manage the classroom and provide the equal opportunity to every student to speak in the classroom. Because of the very limited teaching hours, the students cannot get enough time to practice English. Secondly, the examinations, which are mostly based on memorization and grammar, have no place for listening or speaking evaluation. In addition, respondents also mentioned that there is no exam schedule for English conversation and the grading system is not based on what the learners deserve. The last problem was support from the school and attitudes towards English conversation. The school provide very limited materials and the schools really do not expect excellency from the foreign English teachers. Foreign teachers are for only the namesake, or English is only for fun.

4.3 Solutions to Problems

Some solutions to overcome the problems of CLT were extracted based on the findings from the interviews.

4.3.1 Solutions to Problem of Learners

The participants suggested some of the solutions to solve the problems of learners. As the learners do not use English outside the classroom, the teachers must encourage the learners to use more English inside and outside the classroom. For this, teachers should motivate them by making them aware of English language and its importance. Different fun games, group work and pair work should be used in the classroom as a way of teaching English.

4.3.2 Solutions to Problem of Teachers

Participants suggested that teachers need more training how to use CLT effectively in the classroom. The teachers should co-operate with other teachers and students. They also suggested that just anyone from a foreign country cannot be teacher, so there
should be careful selection in the case of selecting teachers. The findings also suggested that teachers should keep up to date themselves and there must be teacher assessment.

4.3.3 Solutions to Problems of Education System

The participants suggested that the curriculum of ‘conversation’ should be changed and should have at least three hours a week. The subject should be considered equal to other Thai subjects. The number of the students in the classroom should be less so that it will be possible to evaluate each and every student’s performance. They also suggested that the traditional way of learning and teaching should be changed. Most importantly, the exam system should be changed.

5. Conclusion

In Thailand, English is learnt and taught as a foreign language and CLT is regarded as a key teaching approach suggested by the National Curriculum. To achieve the communicative goals, not only Thai, but also foreign teachers from different English non-native contexts also work as English teachers. From the results of the study, it can be summarized that in most of the schools they are just hired for show. Though they have positive attitudes towards using CLT in the classroom, there are many factors, which are hindering use of CLT in the classroom properly. Many challenges are created from the student side; the attitudes of the learners towards foreign teachers are different and they take them as not serious and do not take proper part in the learning process. The students also have very low proficiency level of English.

The education system also the reason which creates challenges to apply CLT in the classroom. The class size is too big, so the teachers cannot evaluate students’ performances well. In the same way, the foreign English teachers cannot get any kind of support from the schools regarding materials and resources. For the English communication subject, the foreign teachers get opportunity to meet their students only one hour a week. The limited hour provided to the teachers is also one of the major challenges in the course of implementing CLT in the classroom. Most importantly, the examination system which focuses on grammar testing is another challenge.

For the successful implementation of CLT in the classroom, and to make learners able to communicate in English well, teachers should motivate learners in their English learning. The teachers, not only in the classroom but also outside the classroom, should support the learners. The schools should support the foreign teachers in the case of providing materials and other needed resources. Hiring foreign teachers should not be only for namesake. They should be provided with more hours in a
week. The examination system should be focused on communicative skills as well as grammar.

5.1 Recommendations for Future Research

This study was conducted based on only BMA schools in Bangkok, Thailand. The participants of the study were only 36 nonnative foreigner teachers. The researcher tried to find what the participants’ perceptions were through their self-reported responses. So for future research, it is recommended to explore the practice of CLT in the real classrooms.

The researcher applied a questionnaire and an interview as research tools. Therefore, for the future, a researcher can use observation to explore the correlation between what they perceive and practice in the real classroom.

The researcher also recommends research in other schools of Thailand, and to include the students as participants as well. Studies should include a greater number of participants.

References


A CORPUS BASED ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH SYNONYMOUS VERBS: PREDICT AND FORECAST

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Abstract
This study aimed to explored the collations of two English synonymous verbs: ‘predict’ and ‘forecast’. Four hundred concordance lines of ‘predict’ and ‘forecast’ were obtained from the Corpus of Contemporary of American English (COCA) for collocation analysis. The result of information of ‘predict’ and ‘forecast’ were compared and investigated in order to see the similarities and differences. The results showed that the two synonymous verbs shared some core meanings and can be used interchangeably in some particular context. However, the collocations of the verb ‘predict’ had a wider range of themes which implied that they can be used in more variety of situations.

Keywords: Synonyms, Corpora, Corpus-based data, Collocation

1. Introduction

Vocabulary knowledge is essential to language learning and language use. When language learners increasingly encounter more words in the target language, they may face problems arising from attempting to distinguishing words with similar meaning or synonyms. There are mainly two types of synonyms: strict synonyms and loose synonyms. Strict synonym denotes to two words which have an exact meaning and
can be used interchangeably in every context. In contrast, loose synonyms refer to two words that have overlap meanings, and they cannot be used interchangeably in the exact context (Palmer, 1976). Most synonyms can be used interchangeably in several contexts.

However, in some situations, there are only some certain words that can be appropriately used to describe the sense of meaning and the intention of the speakers or writers. This is because one word has more than a single meaning, and its meanings depended on the context in which it they are used (Gennari, MacDonald, Postle & Seidenberg, 2007). Therefore, if language learners are not aware of the meaning of the word in context, they may misunderstand the message. Vice versa, if they cannot select an appropriate word for the context which they are sending the message, miscommunication or error can occur. Since language learners heavily depend on their instructors for language explanation, explaining the similarities and differences of synonyms to foreign language learners is considered as one of the main problems in teaching English (Aroonmanokun, 2015).

In recent years, corpora have been used English language teaching field. Several research studies were conducted to explore the usage of corpora in English language teaching (Garcia, Flowerdew & Aston, 2010; Jones and Waller, 2015). Several dictionaries were developed through the use of corpora despite the limited space preventing those data to be present in the hard copy dictionaries (Aroonmanakun, 2015). Thus, concordance lines from corpus can provide examples of the word usage in authentic context. More importantly, corpus data also enable language teachers to observe and compare similarities and differences between synonyms regarding the meanings, collocations and etc.

This study aims to investigate the differences and similarities in usage of the two synonyms: ‘predict’ and ‘forecast’ in Corpus of Contemporary of American English (COCA), especially in terms of their collocations. The word ‘predict’ is present in the corpus of Thai national English test, or English test of the Ordinary National Educational Test (ONET). The use of this word is still unclear to the learners, especially for those in Mathayom 1-3 levels, as it may be used in many context and the meaning is also similar to the word ‘forecast’. The result of this study may provide teachers and learners information about the differences and similarities of the synonyms ‘predict’ and ‘forecast’ and how they may be used in the appropriate context. Furthermore, this study may be used as an example for a language teacher to learn how to incorporate corpus data into their English teaching in the classroom.
2. Literature Review

2.1 Corpora

Corpus (or corpora in plural form) was defined by many researchers over time. Initially, corpus is defined by Sinclair (1991 as cited in Jones and Waller 2015) that it is “a principled collection of texts. It can provide us with data of many types but it cannot tell us why a particular pattern is used” (p.15). Woolard (2000), referred to corpora as ‘huge banks of data’ which provide evidences for research, modern dictionaries, and teaching materials. O’Keeffe, McCarthy and Carter (2007) described that “corpus is a collection of text in both spoken and written English language which is stored on computer system software” (p.1). The core of each corpus is concordance lines or the sentence(s) which the word appear in authentic material gathered by each corpus. In corpus software, there is a core tool used to explore every occurrence of words or phrase, and it is called ‘concordancing’. In a concordance line, there is the highlighted keyword presented in the center of each line (O’Keeffe, Mc Cathy and Carter, 2007; McCarten, 2007).

In term of using corpus program in language teaching, accessing to the language data based on corpora can help the teachers and language learners to explore the uses of language in authentic context. In addition, corpora can potentially influence English language teaching and learning by providing a number of examples and evidences in corpora can give teachers and learners a clearer and research-based answer (John and Waller, 2015).

2.2 Synonyms

Palmer (1977) defined that the set of words that have the sameness in meaning are considered synonyms. Synonyms can be classified into two types (Palmer, 1977); (1) strict synonyms and (2) loose synonyms. A true or strict synonyms can be used interchangeably in every environment but they are very rare, and they are used in a context interchangeably, for example, stubborn and obstinate (McCarthy, et. al, 2010). Other synonyms do not share the exact meaning and differs in many aspects, including the sense of meaning and collocations. These synonyms which overlap in meanings and they cannot be used interchangeably in the exact context are referred to as loose synonyms (Palmer, 1977). In order to select the appropriate word for the context, knowledge of the sense of meaning of each word and the environment in which it usually occurs is needed.

Word and its meaning are one of the most important issues for language learners (Bhatt, 1989). To identify meaning of a word, the environments of the word in the
context are focused on (O’Keeffe, Mc Cathy and Carter, 2007). Some synonyms can occur in similar environment. For example, Gu (2017) conducted the analysis between two words; obtain and gain. In term of semantic prosody, gain and obtain, both of them occur with positive words and used to describe positive action e.g. gain popularity, gain confidence. However, the meaning of some words in a synonym group may change its meaning when occurring in different environments. As in the comparison of two words quick and fast by Aroonmanakun (2015), they can co-occur with some nouns such as quick answer, quick assessment, fast attack, and fast ball. However, quick and fast have different features in term of meanings: quick is used in the sense of quality of and action while fast is used to show the manner of an action. It is perceived that one word is not able to use by only deciding or judging from the use of another (Margolis, 1978).

2.3 Collocations

Words which occur in the environment of the synonyms the most are their collocations. Collocations are groups of words which frequently and co-occur together in a predictable way (Hill, 2000; Woolard, 2000). Scholars attempted to classified collocations in different ways. Benson (1986) classified collocation into two types; lexical collocation and grammatical collocation. Lexical collocation is the collocation comprising two or more function words; e.g. adjective + noun e.g. enormous house, adverb + adjective e.g. extremely beautiful, verb + noun e.g. undergo an operation. Grammatical collocation combines content words and function words. For example, verb + preposition e.g. go with, preposition+ noun e.g. in reality. Hill (2000) classified collocations into 4 types which are (1) unique collocation, e.g. in reality. shrug one’s shoulders, (2) strong collocation, e.g. rancid oil, (3) weak collocation, e.g. the word ‘good’ which can be co-occur with many words (4) multi-strength collocation which is the words that learner may usually misuse.

2.4 Teaching English synonyms and its problems

Synonym is considered as one of many factors that can cause words more difficult to study (Laufer, 1990 as cited in Webb, 2007). Laufer describes why synonyms are considered as one of the main factors that may reduce the chance in learning vocabulary for two reasons. First, learners may get confused in the situations that some synonyms can be used to replace the other synonyms in some context. Another reason is problem in learning new words as learners may avoid learning new words that have the exact or similar meaning. In other words, they may try to avoid the mistakes from using new words that have overlapping in meaning. Therefore, it is important for both language learners and teachers to explore the meanings of each word and its environment.
**Research question:** What are the differences and similarities in term of collocation of the synonymous verbs: ‘predict’ and ‘forecast’?

3. Methodology

3.1 Design of the Study

This present study is a corpus-based study which aimed to investigate data of two loose synonyms: ‘predict’ and ‘forecast’ from the Corpus of Contemporary of American English (COCA). Four hundred concordance lines (200 from each word) from the corpus were extracted and analyzed for their collocations. Two online dictionaries: Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDOCE) and Merriam-Webster Dictionary were used to provide the basic information about definition of each word. The similarities and differences in terms of their basic information of meaning and collocation of language in each context of ‘predict’ and ‘forecast’ were gathered for comparison.

3.2 Materials

3.2.1 Corpus of Contemporary of American English (COCA)

Corpus of Contemporary of American English (COCA) is used as a main source to obtain data in this study. COCA corpus is a large general corpus which contains data of more than five hundred millions of American English words retrieved from both spoken and written texts. Its software is widely known as the program which can analyze a word rapidly (Timmis, 2015). For this reason, Corpus of Contemporary of American English (COCA) is selected as the main material in order to provide data for analysis procedure in the study.

3.3 Target Words

Two English synonymous verbs: ‘predict’ and ‘forecast’ were the target words selected to be analyzed in the study. One of the two words, ‘predict’, is a high frequency word. It was found in Ordinary National Educational Test (O-NET) which students in Mathayom one and over may encounter (National Institute of Educational Testing Service, 2018). Moreover, the word ‘predict’ is also included in the academic word list (Heatley, Nation & Coxhead, 2002; Cobb, 2002). These evidences show that the word ‘predict’ has high frequency.

The word ‘forecast’ may have lower frequency than ‘predict’ and is not in the O-NET test. However, the search for the synonym of ‘forecast’ in online dictionaries results in the word ‘predict’ being used as the definition of ‘forecast’. Therefore, it
can be implied that ‘predict’ and ‘forecast’ has overlap meanings. For these reasons, the words are selected to analyze to find out the differences of these two synonyms: ‘predict’ and ‘forecast’ by using COCA corpus software program.

It is also to be noted that only the verb forms of the two verbs were investigated in the present study and both infinitive and past forms were included in the study. Hence, 100 concordance lines from present tense of ‘predict’ and another set of 100 concordance lines from past tense ‘predicted’. The word ‘forecast’, on the other hand, is an irregular verb which does not change the form in past tenses. Therefore, 200 concordance lines with the verb ‘forecast’ were retrieved from COCA for the study. In addition, half of the selected concordance lines was in active form and another half was in passive form.

3.4 Data Collection

The basic information of two synonyms: ‘predict’ and ‘forecast’ were retrieved from two online dictionaries, Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDOCE) and Merriam-Webster Dictionary to compare the definition and senses of each word.

For the concordance line retrieval, each word was typed into the word search box, and concordance lines with the highlighted the target word appeared. Later, the concordance lines of each word from COCA were explored manually to select the ones that present ‘predict’ and ‘forecast’ in verb forms only. The concordance lines were arranged chronologically and only the top ones were selected.

3.5 Data Analysis

The concordance lines of the two words were analyzed for the tense of the verb, the voice of the verb, the collocation and the part of speech of the collocated words. The information of predict and forecast are recorded in the table of each word. Afterward, the information from the data of each word was compared with each other to identify the similarities and differences of the words that usually collocated with ‘predict’ and ‘forecast’. Furthermore, the collocations of both words were also grouped into themes in order to explore the range of collocations which can be found for each synonym.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Basic Information of Predict and Forecast

4.1.1 Definition of Predict and Forecast from Online Dictionaries
To provide the basic information about the definition and senses of ‘predict’, the definition this word was drawn from two online dictionaries which are Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDOCE) and Merriam-Webster Dictionary. The following is the table showing definition of predict from the two online dictionaries.

**Table 4.1: Comparison of the Definitions of Predict from the Two Online Dictionaries: LDOCE and Merriam-Webster Dictionary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Word</th>
<th>Definitions from LDOCE</th>
<th>Definitions from Merriam – Webster</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Predict     | (a) to say that something will happen, before it happens  
            | (b) to say what you think will happen | (a) to declare or indicate in advance  
            |                                      | (b) to make a prediction |

**Table 4.2: Comparison of the Definitions of Forecast from the Two Online Dictionaries: LDOCE and Merriam-Webster Dictionary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Word</th>
<th>Definitions from LDOCE</th>
<th>Definitions from Merriam – Webster</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Forecast    | (a) to make a statement saying what is likely to happen in the future, based on the information that you have now  
            | (b) to make a statement saying what is likely to happen in the future, based on information that is available now | (a) : to calculate or predict (some future event or condition) usually as a result of study and analysis of available pertinent data  
            |                                      | (b) to indicate as likely to occur  
            |                                      | (c) to calculate the future |

**4.1.2 Tense and Voice Occurrence**

In this study, to analyze two English synonyms; ‘predict’ and ‘forecast’, collocation of each verb is concentrated on as the main criterion, and tenses and voices are also discussed as the provided information.
Table 4.3 Comparisons of Tenses and Voices Frequency of Predict and Forecast

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Active (200)</th>
<th></th>
<th>Passive (200)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tense</td>
<td>Token</td>
<td>Tense</td>
<td>Token</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predict</td>
<td>1. Present Simple</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>1. Present Simple</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Present Perfect</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2. Present Perfect</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Past Perfect</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4. Past Perfect</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Future Simple</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5. Future Simple</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forecast</td>
<td>1. Present Simple</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>1. Present Simple</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Present Perfect</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2. Present Perfect</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Past Perfect</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4. Past Perfect</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in table 4.3, both ‘predict’ and ‘forecast’ mostly occurred in present simple tense, and followed by the past simple tense, present perfect, past perfect, and future simple tense respectively. In the same way, present simple tense was the main tense found in ‘predict’ and ‘forecast’ concordance lines, followed by past simple, present perfect, and past perfect respectively.

From the results regarding voices found in ‘predict’ and ‘forecast’, the numbers of tokens with active voice and passive voice of ‘predict’ and ‘forecast’ were dramatically different. The word ‘predict’ was found to have double the number of concordance lines in active form comparing to the passive voice form. In contrast, the numbers of passive voice in ‘forecast’ is found more than the number in active voice. This suggests that despite being loose synonyms, ‘predict’ is usually found in active voice while ‘forecast’ is usually found in passive voice.

4.2 Collocations of Predict/ Predicted and Forecast in term of Frequency of Occurrences

‘Predict(ed)’ and ‘forecast’ show some similarities in their collocation. The results of this study indicated that the part of speech of the words mostly collocated with the two verbs: ‘predict(ed)’ and ‘forecast’ are nouns. In addition, some of the adverbs also collocated with the two synonyms. To see more details about the collocation of the two synonyms, the list of top-ten highest frequently found collocation of each verb are presented.
4.2.1 Noun collocations

As seen in this part, ‘predict’ and ‘forecast’ presented some differences in term of the frequency of their collocations. However, they also have some similarities, which will be presented in the following part.

Table 4.4 The Noun Collocations of Predict (ed) and Forecast

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collocations</th>
<th>Tokens</th>
<th>Predicted Collocations</th>
<th>Tokens</th>
<th>Forecast Collocations</th>
<th>Tokens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>risk</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>result(s)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>temperature(s)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>growth</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>value</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>day(s)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outcome(s)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>direction(s)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(earth) quake</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strength</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>strength</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>snow</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>impact(s)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>temperature(s)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>weather</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>behavior</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>length</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>hurricane</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>value</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>consequences</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>highs</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>effect</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>mutations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>rain</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>probability</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>insertions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>growth</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>revenue</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>credibility</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>temperature(s)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The noun collocations of ‘predict’ and ‘forecast’ also occur with a series of adjectives. The following table presents the adjectives frequently found with these noun collocations.

Table 4.5 Adjectives occurred with Noun Collocation of Predict(ed) and Forecast

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predict</th>
<th>tokens</th>
<th>Predicted</th>
<th>tokens</th>
<th>Forecast</th>
<th>tokens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>future</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>shear</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cell</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>day(s)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>future</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lateral</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>weekend</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>similar</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>full</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>long-term</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>short-term</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in this table, ‘future’ is an adjective that could be co-occurred with noun collocations of both ‘predict’ and ‘forecast’. In addition, there were some adjectives usually used in the sense of time or length of time such as long-term, short-term, days, and weekend. This could be inferred that noun collocations of the two verbs: ‘predict’ and ‘forecast’ are mostly in the sense of ‘predicting/forecasting something in advance or in a period of time.’

According to the results of ‘predict(ed)’ and ‘forecast’, the collocations of the two synonyms are different in term of their meanings and characteristics. The noun
words that co-occurred with ‘predict(ed)’ and ‘forecast’ were grouped into different categories as follow:

The collocations of the word ‘predict’ can be categorized into eight groups: (1) group categorized in term of their levels, (2) economy and businesses, (3) medicals, (4) engineering and construction, (5) science and experiments, (6) weather, (7) laws, and (8) politics. On the other hand, the themes found in forecast collocations, they were classified into only two categories: weather and natural disaster.

As seen in table 4.6, ‘predict(ed)’ and ‘forecast’ shown the clear differences in term of the groups of their collocation. ‘Predict’ had much more categories of collocations than ‘forecast’. This could be inferred that ‘predict’ could be used in various contexts or situation, while ‘forecast’ could be used in limited fields. However, both of them can be used interchangeably in the one context, ‘weather’. This proves that ‘predict’ and ‘forecast’ shared some similarities in term of their collocations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO.</th>
<th>Groups of collocations in Predict(ed)</th>
<th>Groups of collocations in Forecast</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>levels</td>
<td>weather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>economy and businesses</td>
<td>natural disaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>medicals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>engineering and construction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>science</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>weather</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>laws</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>politics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.2 Adverb collocations

As seen in table 4.7, the two synonyms share some similar collocated adverbs. The high frequent words, ‘accurately’, ‘correctly’, ‘safely’, and ‘certainly,’ tended to be used in the sense of ‘predict/forecast something confidently or surely’. However, there are some adverbs found with low frequency. The low-frequency adverbs are found in the different sense of usage, and each word can be categorized into different themes/contexts.
### Table 4.7 The Adverb Collocations of Predict (ed) and Forecast

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Predict</th>
<th></th>
<th>Predicted</th>
<th></th>
<th>Forecast</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collocations</td>
<td>Tokens</td>
<td>Collocations</td>
<td>Tokens</td>
<td>Collocations</td>
<td>Tokens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accurately</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>correctly</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>accurately</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>correctly</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>safely</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>currently</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reliably</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>already</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>partly</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fully</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>substantially</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>virtually</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>safely</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>hardly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>previously</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>certainly</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>uncertainly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>initially</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inherently</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>adequately</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>exactly</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>definitely</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>satirically</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>inaccurately</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>obviously</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>theoretically</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>recently</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>previously</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>previously</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>correctly</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In term of adverb collocations of ‘predict(ed) ’ and ‘forecast’, it was found that some high frequent adverbs could be collocated with both ‘predict(ed)’ and ‘forecast’, and they gave the similar sense of meaning such as ‘predict accurately’ and ‘forecast accurately’. In addition, the two verbs ‘predict(ted) and ‘forecast’ were also found with several adverbs, and each words could be used in some same context/situation. For example: accurately predict/forecast, correctly predict/forecast, reliably predict/forecast, certainly predict/forecast, definitely predict/forecast, obviously predict/forecast, theoretically predict/forecast. From the examples, although some adverbs were found only once, their meaning or sense of usage can prove that they could be used interchangeably in similar context.

### 5. Conclusion

The two synonymous verbs: predict and forecast was compared in terms of collocations by using 400 concordance lines from COCA, the results of the study suggest that they share some similarities but also has different range of collocations.

‘Predict’ and ‘forecast’ were considered as loose synonyms. ‘Predict’ and ‘forecast’ also showed the differences in characteristics of their collocations, and they could be analyzed into several themes. The noun collocations of ‘predict’ vary. These words can be categorized into eight categories which were (1) group categorized in term of their levels, (2) economy and businesses, (3) medicals, (4) engineering and construction, (5) science and experiments, (6) weather, (7) laws, and (8) politics. For forecast collocations, they were classified into only two categories: (1) weather and (2) natural disaster. These results could be concluded that in various contexts or situations ‘predict’ could be used variously while ‘forecast’ could not. When focusing on the nouns which generally occurred with ‘predict’ and ‘forecast’, ‘forecast’ was
commonly co-occurred with the words in the field of weather, disasters, while the words that collocated with ‘predict’ gave more general senses.

However, ‘predict’ and ‘forecast’ also shared some similarities in term of both noun and adverb collocations. Firstly, the results showed that ‘predict’ and ‘forecast’ could be categorized into theme of ‘weather’. The word ‘temperature’ was collocated with both ‘predict’ and ‘forecast’, and it was found in the context of ‘weather’. It could be concluded that they could be used interchangeably in the same context. Secondly, in adverbs collocations which are ‘accurately’, ‘correctly’, and ‘certainly’ they could be collocated with the two synonyms: ‘predict’ and ‘forecast’, and they had the similar senses of meaning or usage. In addition, adjectives usually co-occurred with noun collocations of both ‘predict’ and ‘forecast’ were quite similar. They gave the same meanings when they presented with the nouns. Finally, both of the two synonyms commonly presented in present simple tense and past simple tense, followed by present perfect, past perfect, and future simple tense respectively.

In conclusion, the result of this corpus study ‘predict’ and ‘forecast’ had close meanings, and in some context, they used the same core meaning to describe words. Although ‘predict’ and ‘forecast’ shared similar meanings, but it did not mean they could be used interchangeably in the exact context. Also, the findings of collocation analysis from COCA showed some differences between two words that ‘predict’ was used in various contexts or situations, while ‘forecast’ was used slightly different in the context of weather or disaster. Finally, in term of tenses and voices, both predict and forecast tended to be used in the present simple tense and past simple tense in both active voice and passive voice.

6. Implication of the Study
The results from the present study can be integrated to English language learning and teaching. In the part of English language learners, the results from this study may provide information about the usage of a pair of loose synonyms. Studying the similarities and differences of the synonyms can help the language learners use English language more accurately and naturally. Data from corpora may provide more examples and details about language uses than dictionaries; therefore, English teachers can apply corpora or data from corpora in English language class.

7. Recommendations for the Further Research
This present study focused on the synonymous verbs, and used collocation as a criterion in order to distinguish the similarities and differences of the target words. Two hundred concordance lines of each word were collected from COCA corpus online program. The following are the recommendations for the future research.
First, the future study should study more than two synonyms, and explore in different part of speech such as adjective, noun, or adverb. Then, to investigate more data, the future research should collect data from more concordance lines in each word. Finally, investigating data from different corpora such as British National Corpus: BNC, The CANCODE (Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse English), and Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE ) which are the ELT-field corpora may provide more data than using only one corpus program. From these corpora, they might be used to investigate, compare and contrast various language data.

References

Benson, Morton. (1986). The BBI combinatory dictionary of English: a guide to word combinations. Amsterdam ; Philadelphia: John Benjamins,


HIGH-FREQUENCY CONTENT WORDS AND COLLOCATIONS IN ELT RESEARCH ARTICLES: A CORPUS-BASED STUDY

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Abstract
English Language Teaching (ELT) is a field that has many technical terms and some of them only appear in the ELT field. Therefore, this corpus-based study was aimed to investigate high-frequency content words which are used in ELT research articles, to examine collocations of the highest frequency content word, and to explore ELT terminology in the high-frequency content words. The source of the corpus data were randomly selected from 100 research articles from the ELT Journal. The AntConc software and the Vocabprofile program were used to collect the data and the Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics was used to be the source for comparing ELT terminology. The corpus data were analyzed and presented as frequency, percentage, and quartile.

The findings revealed that content words in OWL were found 76% in the research articles; the first 328 content words (in the first quartile) had high frequency. The highest frequency content word was “ELT” which collocated most frequently with nouns; for example, textbook(s), classroom(s), materials, journal, and context(s) in “ELT + noun” pattern. Only 74 content words in the high-frequency content words in the first quartile belonged to ELT terminology. According to the results, language teachers should point out the importance of collocation pattern and the use of abbreviations for shortening speech or writing.
Keywords: content word, corpus, collocations, ELT, Outside Word List (OWL)

1. Introduction

English is an important communication tool for people around the world. It is a second language in the school syllabus in many countries and it is used as an official language in some countries. Moreover, people who know and are able to speak English will have preference in the chance to get a good job in an international company (British Study Centre, 2018). In addition, English is used in different areas such as English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) for non-native speakers (NNSs) (Braine, 1999; Strevens, 1977).

Teaching language has always changed and developed, and so has English Language Teaching (ELT). Methods and techniques of ELT have been adjusted in order to be appropriate to the needs of the students, as in this view:

   English Language Teaching is based on the idea that the goal of language acquisition is communicative competence. It adopts concepts, techniques and methods in the classroom for recognizing and managing the communicative needs of the language learners. English language teaching may refer to either: Teaching English as a foreign language, Teaching English as a second language, or Teaching English as a first language (Wikipedia, 2018, para. 1).

Pan and Xu (2011) revealed that vocabulary is one of the most important parts in learning language when they said: “vocabulary is one of the three essential components that constitute language knowledge, and vocabulary teaching is an essential part in English language teaching.” Panjanon and Soranasathaporn (2016) had that same view; they stated that knowing vocabulary is an important basis for constructing a sentence that tells a complete thought. Therefore, learning and teaching vocabulary is significant for language learners.

Vocabulary in each subject area has different meanings, usage and difficulty. Furthermore, conducting research and reading research in any field usually requires use of their particular technical terms or terminology. Thus, knowing terminology in such a field will help readers to understand easily.

The present study investigated and examined high-frequency content words that are only nouns and collocations that are used in ELT research articles in the international *ELT Journal*. The high-frequency words, in addition, were investigated to show whether they are integral to ELT terminology. One hundred articles in the *ELT Journal* were used in order to get the information. Moreover, this study only focused
on content words that are nouns and in OWL (Outside Word List) and only the highest frequency content word was observed its collocations.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Corpus
Brazil (as cited in Timmis, 2015) described a corpus as “a collection of used language”, which means language that happened in reality. Moreover, Timmis (2015, p.2) indicated, “a corpus is not just a collection of naturally occurring language in the form of isolated words or sentences randomly collected; it consists of spoken and/or written texts.” O’Keeffe, McCarthy & Carter (2007, p.1-3) explained “a corpus is a collection of texts, written or spoken, which is stored on a computer.”

2.1.1 Corpus in ELT
A corpus is usually associated with language teaching (Campoy-Cubillo, Belles-Fortuno, & Gea-Valor, 2010) and corpus data represents how language or words are used in context and how they are used differently (Huang, 2011; Kilgarriff, 2014).

According to Leech (as cited in Timmis, 2015, p. 9-10), there is a way that teachers provide corpora materials for students; it consists of language samples in reality that shows in concordance lines. Students can explore and observe to get, for example, the grammar rules, collocations, or meanings of Key Word In Context (KWIC). This way is Data-Driven Learning (DDL) (Huang, 2011; Timmis, 2015; O’Keeffe, McCarthy & Carter, 2007).

2.1.2 Collocation
Cambridge Dictionaries Online (2018) defines collocation as “the combination of words formed when two or more words are often used together in a way that sounds correct.” Lewis (2001) described collocation as “words which are statistically much more likely to appear together than random chance suggests.” However, he found that this definition is unhelpful. He, therefore, gave a definition of collocation as the natural co-occurrence of a word. In addition, “collocations are not absolute or deterministic, but are probabilistic events, resulting from repeated combinations used and encountered by the speakers of any language.” For instance, we say rancid butter but not *rancid bread (O’Keeffe, McCarthy & Carter, 2007, p.59).

*Lexical collocation* is a group of words that composes of a noun, an adjective, a verb or an adverb. It does not contain grammatical elements.
Table 1: Types of lexical collocation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of lexical collocation</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>verb + noun</td>
<td>set an alarm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noun + verb</td>
<td>alarms go off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adjective + noun</td>
<td>regular exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noun + noun</td>
<td>a bouquet of flowers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adverb + adjective</td>
<td>strictly accurate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verb + adverb</td>
<td>appreciate sincerely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Benson, 1985; Bahns, 1993; Moehkardi, 2002; Faghih & Mehdizadeh, 2013)

Phoocharoensil (2010) noticed that it is difficult for English learners to determine which words co-occur with each other because of the arbitrary nature of language, and while reading and listening, learners should observe collocation patterns because it is useful for improving English skills.

This study will only observe two lexical collocation patterns, adjective + noun and noun + noun, because these patterns are words that are placed next to each other. Thus, they are easy to investigate.

2.1.3 Word List

Corpus word lists can be divided into three categories: General Service List (GSL), Academic Word List (AWL), and Outside Word List (OWL) (Virata Panjanon & Songsri Soranasathaporn, 2016).

1. General Service List (GSL)

The General Service List or GSL is “a list of about 2000 high-frequency words that were deemed important for second language learners” (Browne, 2014). Michael West created it in 1953. Browne (2014) developed, updated, and expanded words in West’s GSL to be useful pedagogic insights; it is known as the New General Service List (NGSL), which approximately contains 2800 high-frequency words.
2. Academic Word List (AWL)
Averil Coxhead developed the Academic Word List (AWL). It contains 570 word families which were compiled from written academic text and are outside the West’s GSL. Thus, it is specific to academic contexts and it is helpful for those who work in an academic area (Coxhead, 2000).

3. Outside Word List (OWL)
The Outside Word List (OWL) covers technical terms in the disciplines. They do not occur in West’s GSL and Coxhead’s AWL. Coxhead and Hirsch (2007) described how to identify words to separate them from GSL and AWL. First, they used the Range program to specify all words appearing in the disciplines outside GSL and AWL. Next, they used range, frequency, and dispersion criteria in order to get words outside GSL and AWL.

2.2 ELT Terminology
English Language Teaching, or ELT, is a discipline that has its own special terms and concepts (ELT Concourse, 2018). Richards and Schmidt (2002) compiled, created, and developed a dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics. They described ELT terminology is involved in areas of language teaching and applied linguistics; for example, language acquisition, methodology, TESOL, ESL, EFL, sociolinguistics, and psycholinguistics.

2.3 Content Words
Nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs are usually classified as content words. Content words, thus, are also called open classes because they are always and easily able to add to; they are “added to constantly as new words come into use” (McCarthy, 2002; Timyam, 2010). Moreover, Beare (2018) stated, “content words give us important information required for understanding.” So, it can be said that content words are words that contain the most important information. He also described that there are other content words that are important for understanding: “these include negatives like no, not and never; demonstrative pronouns including this, that, these and those; and question words like what, where, when, how and why.” Nevertheless, McCarthy mentioned that researchers have to be careful about determiners because they look like nouns, a singular-plural contrast, and pronouns. According to Downing and Locke (1992), “noun” is the most important element of constructing a sentence and is able to convey the main idea of a sentence more than other elements. Therefore, this study will focus on content words that act as a noun. Moreover, the combination of words can help writers to shorten a phrase or a sentence. Hence, this study will study compound nouns because they are used as a noun.
2.3.1 Compound nouns

Compound nouns are a combination of two or more words; generally, they have two parts. The first part, the back word, is the keyword or headword; it conveys “what kind of object or person it is, or what its purpose is.” Another part, the ahead word, acts as a modifier of the back word (EF Education First, n.d.). There are three ways to write compound nouns: as a single word, as two words, and with a hyphen. Examples are icecream, ice cream, ice-cream (Brinton, 2000). Compound nouns can be formed from many parts of speech as follows.

Table 2: Compound Elements of Compound Nouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compound elements</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>noun + noun</td>
<td>bedroom, water tank, tea pot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verb + noun</td>
<td>driving license, drawbridge, crybaby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adjective + noun</td>
<td>greenhouse, software, highway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adverb + noun</td>
<td>onlooker, bystander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preposition + noun</td>
<td>in-group, outpost, overcoat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noun + verb</td>
<td>rainfall, haircut, bus-stand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noun + adverb</td>
<td>hanger-on, passer-by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verb + adverb</td>
<td>lookout, take-off, drawback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adjective + verb</td>
<td>dry-cleaning, public speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adverb + verb</td>
<td>output, input, overthrow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Brinton, 2000; McCarthy, 2002; EF Education First, n.d.; Pasaangkitdotcom, n.d.)

2.4 Acronyms and Initialisms

Acronyms are words created from merging the first letters or the main parts of words and are sounded as a single word. They are often names of organizations and long or frequently referenced terms; for example, NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), and NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), RAM (random access memory), SAT Scholastic Achievement (or Aptitude) Test(s), laser (light amplification by the stimulated emission of radiation), scuba (self-contained underwater breathing apparatus), and radar (radio detection and ranging). The last three acronyms are from everyday vocabulary; they are used by speakers who may not know they are acronyms.

While acronyms are pronounced as a word, initialisms are not. Initialisms refer to an abbreviation derived from the initial letters of words and pronounced as a string of letters. Examples include FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation), OMB (Office of Management and Budget), CEO (chief executive officer), PC (personal computer),
FAQ (frequently asked questions), DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid), LED (light-emitting diode), and GPA (grade point average) (Timyam, 2010; Tuten, 2017; New World Encyclopedia, 2016).

Bloom (2000) revealed that both abbreviations are useful for shortening speech and writing but useless if they are overused. Moreover, he stated that the abbreviations are valued for writing a paper; however, the writers should be careful about overuse of the abbreviations in order to prevent misunderstanding by the readers or listeners.

3. Methodology

3.1 Source of the Corpus
To carry out this study, research articles from the international ELT Journal will be used to analyze information of high-frequency content words and collocation. One hundred research articles from 2009 to 2018 will be selected by using random sampling.

The ELT Journal publishes quarterly. It is a journal that is concerned with English Language Teaching (ELT) which covers a second, additional, or foreign language, or an international Lingua Franca. It provides research articles that are relevant to academic disciplines; for example, applied linguistics, education, psychology, and sociology. Furthermore, it is like a tool used for discussion and exchange about the principles and practice of the way English is taught and learned across the world. Moreover, Scimago Journal & Country Rank (SJR) ranked Education and Language and Linguistics articles of the ELT Journal in Quartile 1 (Q1). It, thus, is a reliable and standard journal.

3.2 Instruments
There are three instruments that are used to analyse the corpus data as follows:

1. AntConc software
   AntConc is a concordance program that was developed by Professor Laurence Anthony. It is used to compile and show words in concordance lines; in addition, it can analyze words in corpora and build word lists by frequency ranking. Many researchers use this software for language analysis both at word level and sentence level. It is suitable for those who start to experiment or do small research.

2. VocabProfile
   VocabProfile was originally developed by Paul Nation and Batia Laufer, and then Tom Cobb developed the software to be available on the Lextutor website (https://www.lextutor.ca). This software can separate word lists into GSL, AWL, and OWL. Moreover, Laufer and Nation (as cited in Panjanon and Soranasathaporn, 2016)
stated that VocabProfile software is useful for vocabulary learning because it has a vocabulary database that is suitable for a variety of levels of learner knowledge.

3. **Microsoft Excel**
Microsoft Excel is used to record the data and collect, calculate and arrange the data in table format. It also creates graphs or charts to present the data.

### 3.3 Procedures
This part explains about the procedures for the data collection of this corpus-based study.

1. Download 100 research articles from *ELT Journal* by using random sampling after that convert the files into *text file*; it will not include pictures and their description, tables, references, footnotes, acknowledgements, and researcher’s name.
2. Build word list from ELT research articles by using *word list* function in *AntConc* program; it can compile a large amount of data and can show word frequency. Then, select only content words, which are nouns, from the word list in order to further classify.
3. Classify word list into GSL, AWL, or OWL by using *VocabProfile* program. After that, use *New General Service List* (NGSL) and *New Academic Word List* (NAWL) function to classify the word list types.
4. Examine high-frequency content words in OWL by ranking them in order, highest to lowest. Use, then, quartiles to divide the content words into 4 groups; the words in quartile 1 (Q1) are high-frequency content words.
5. Analyze the highest frequency content word in Q1 to find its lexical collocation by using *concordance* function in *AntConc* program.
6. Identify and compare the high-frequency content words: are they in ELT terminology? At this step, *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* will be used for examining and comparing.

### 3.4 Data Analysis
This study analyzed the corpus data as follows:

1. High-frequency content words in ELT research articles from the *ELT Journal* were analyzed by using frequency, percentage, and quartile. Moreover, the *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* was used as the resource for examining ELT technical terms in the high-frequency content words.
2. Collocations of the highest frequency content word were analyzed by using frequency and percentage.

4. Findings and Discussion
4.1 High-Frequency Content Words in ELT Research Articles
Content words, which are nouns, from 100 ELT research articles were found; there were 3,572 word tokens. They were divided into three groups; the General Service List (GSL) had 1,196 tokens, the Academic Word List (AWL) contained 651 tokens, and the Outside Word List (OWL) consisted of 1,725 tokens. As can be seen from figure 1, content words in OWL have the highest percentage (48%); they have almost half of all content words. They are followed by words in GSL (34%) and words in AWL (18%).

Figure 1: The coverage of content words in ELT research articles

It is noticeable that content words in AWL had the lowest percentage even though the content words were collected from academic research articles. It is probably because they were articles of a journal in a specialized field; therefore, most of the collected corpus data are words in a particular context. Consequently, content words in OWL, which mostly cover the content words of this study, were analyzed in order to obtain high-frequency content words.

After getting content words in OWL, they were distinguished by using New General Service List (NGSL) and New Academic Word List (NAWL) functions in the VocabProfile program. These functions contain new updated word lists, thus the program can show words that are actually in OWL.

Figure 2: The coverage of content words in OWL that are classified NGSL and NAWL
It can be clearly seen that OWL has the highest percentage (76%) and it is followed by NGSL and NAWL, which have 12% of each. The 1,314 words of OWL, which were separated from NGSL and NAWL, were divided into 4 quartiles as shown in table 3.

Table 3: Quartile deviation of OWL classified NGSL & NAWL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quartile 1 (Q1)</th>
<th>Word Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quartile 2 (Q2)</td>
<td>329 – 656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quartile 3 (Q3)</td>
<td>657 – 985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quartile 4 (Q4)</td>
<td>986 – 1,314</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As mentioned earlier, most of the content words of this study are specialized words as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Top 50 content words in OWL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>Word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>ELT</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>lingua franca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>EFL</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>ELF</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Englishes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>proficiency</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>NSs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>TESOL</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>repetition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>DDL</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>corpora</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>CL</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>trainees</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>EP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>American</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>LDF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>engagement</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>mindset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>pedagogy</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Authenticity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>NNS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>excerpt</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>EAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>fluency</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>storyline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>GE</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>European</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>NNEST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>NNES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>AWE</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>notebooks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>informants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>genre</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>cohesion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 presents the first 50 content words in OWL of this study. As can be clearly seen, there are many acronyms and initialisms. It is significant why they are high frequency.

Acronyms and initialisms are abbreviations that are used for “organizations and long or frequently referenced terms.” Abbreviations are used for referring to something that is easily understood for both speakers or writers and listeners or readers in the fields; for example, ELT stands for English Language Teaching and TESOL means Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. Thereby, many fields, including the ELT field, have a lot of acronyms and initialisms in order to simply and quickly communicate.

Figure 3 shows a graph of the frequency of every five-word rank of the top 100 content words in OWL. As can be seen from the graph, the frequencies of the first five words sharply decrease. They are different from other words that slowly drop. It can be said that these words: ELT, EFL, ELF, proficiency and TESOL are the first 5 content words that are more used in ELT research articles.

4.2 Collocations of the Highest Frequency Content Word
According to table 5, “ELT” is the highest frequency content word in OWL and it was examined for its lexical collocation. There are two patterns that were analyzed—adjective + noun and noun + noun. 298 concordance lines of the word “ELT” were observed the lexical collocations. Figure 4 shows that the word “ELT” is often in the noun + noun pattern; there are 78% items. In this pattern, ELT can be preceded by a noun (noun + ELT) or is followed by a noun (ELT + noun).

Figure 4: The Lexical Collocation's Percentage of "ELT"

The pattern of “ELT + noun” occurred 159 times while another pattern appeared just 18 times. Table 6 presents the top 5 nouns that occur in the “ELT + noun” pattern.

Table 5: Top 5 nouns which are in “ELT + noun” pattern

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Frequency (times)</th>
<th>Examples from concordance lines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Textbook(s)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>- … are wide gaps between pragmatics research and ELT textbook development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Classroom(s)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>- … that may help solve these difficulties in the ELT classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>- This is problematic given the key role that ELT materials play in the learning and teaching...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>- … the opportunity to edit this Special Issue of ELT Journal and believe the articles in the collection...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Context(s)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>- In the ELT context, McDonough (2006) found that a postgraduate...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As mentioned earlier, the word “ELT” mostly occurred in noun + noun patterns of lexical collocation. It is like the noun + noun pattern of compound nouns. According to the examples from concordance lines in table 6, for example, *ELT textbooks*, *ELT classroom*, and *ELT contexts*, “ELT” acts as modifier of the back words (headword). It tells what the headword is about; it is like an adjective that modifies a noun. It demonstrates that many writers use a lot of compound nouns in their writing, probably because of the limitation of words in an article.

4.3 ELT Terminology in the High-Frequency Content Words

Regarding the content words of Quartile 1 (328 words), they were examined to see whether they were ELT technical terms by comparing with the *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*. The result shows that 74 words from this quartile appear in this dictionary. There are 23 percent that are less than half of all content words in quartile 1 (see figure 5). As can be seen from Appendix A, there are a lot of names of countries and languages or nationalities because they were studies about language learning of many countries. Therefore, ELT words of this study have a small ratio.

Figure 5: The coverage of content words divided into ELT terminology and other

5. Conclusions

This research was aimed at examining high-frequency content words in OWL that are used in ELT research articles, and to observe whether these are in ELT terminology; furthermore, the highest frequency content word was investigated to see its collocations. Corpus data of this study was compiled from the *ELT Journal*. 
The discussion can be summarized as follows:

1. There were 328 words that had high frequency in ELT research articles. Most of them were acronyms and initialisms; they are popular to use in many fields. In addition, the highest frequency content word was “ELT”, which is an initialism.

2. There were clear collocation patterns and “ELT + noun” mostly occurred. “ELT” often co-occurred with *textbook(s)*, *classroom(s)*, *materials*, *journal*, and *context(s)*. It was placed and used like a modifier or an adjective of the co-occurred nouns.

3. There were only 74 words from 328 words (in quartile 1) that were ELT technical terms. Because the sample articles were research articles about the language learning of many countries, there were many words about country, language, and nationality.

5.1 Recommendations for Further Research

There are 3 points for recommendation for further research.

1. Source of the corpus data can be from more varied sources. It can be compiled from ELT textbooks or presentational papers. Moreover, the corpus data can be gathered from many journals; for example, the *International Journal of English Language Teaching (IJELT)*, the *TESOL Journal (TJ)* or others.

2. Size of corpus data can be extended by collecting the data from more than 100 research articles. The researchers can do more analysis of the frequency of content words and a variety of words.

3. One or two ELT dictionaries can be added in order to be the source for comparing the high-frequency content words because they may be in other ELT dictionaries but not appear in the *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*

5.2 Pedagogical Implication of the Study

According to the result of the collocations of the highest frequency content word, language teachers should teach, show, and drill students in how to form the “Noun + Noun” collocation pattern, and how the two nouns function in this pattern, in order to construct a sentence correctly.

In addition, teachers should point out the importance of the use of abbreviations to students because of the widespread use of them in many subject areas. When students face them, they will be able to understand easily.
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CULTURAL CHALLENGES OF INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH TEACHERS IN A SCHOOL IN BANGKOK, THAILAND

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Abstract  
It is widely observed that cultural norms are reflected in the behavior of students in various educational contexts. More specifically, in the context of Thailand, Thai culture naturally impacts students’ behavior in the classroom. International English teachers who lack of knowledge and sensitivity to Thai culture may encounter difficulties in a Thai classroom. This may lead to less than ideal teaching and learning outcomes. This study aims to explore how international English teachers struggle with cultural challenges occurring in Thai classrooms. In-depth data were collected from both international English teachers and Thai students. Semi-structured interviews with eight international English teachers were employed, and a questionnaire, which was distributed to two hundred and seventy-nine Thai students, was utilized. The findings of this study reveal that there are five Thai cultural values (collectivism, interpersonal relationship orientation, face-saving, kreu ng jai value, and power distance) that clearly influence Thai students’ participation in the classroom. These cultural values might cause international English teachers to mistakenly conclude that Thai students are passive learners. Thai students in the study expressed that their classroom behavior was most influenced by interpersonal relationship orientation, followed by kreu ng jai, collectivism, power distance, and face-saving.
Keywords: Cultural challenges, international English teachers, collectivism, interpersonal relationship orientation, face-saving

1. Introduction
According to Kambutu and Nganga (2008), cultural misunderstandings might occur when teachers and students have different cultural backgrounds since teachers normally use their own cultural values as a standard in their classes. This can cause teachers to misjudge their students (Ramsey, 1998). In language classrooms where international English teachers are in charge, cultural differences are normal to occur (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996). Teachers who lack knowledge and sensitivity to their students’ culture may encounter difficulties in the classroom, which may lead to less than ideal teaching environments and outcomes (Phutsiri, 2014).

This study aims to explore international English teachers’ difficulties in terms of cultural challenges while working in Thailand. Moreover, in order to help international English teachers understand Thai students, this study also investigates the impact of the Thai culture on Thai students’ behavior in class from the students’ point of view. Finally, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What are cultural challenges experienced by international English teachers while working in Thailand?
2. What are Thai students’ attitudes towards international English teachers with respect to cultural challenges?

2. Literature Review
Guided by the above research questions, the literature relevant to this study includes an overview of culture and the impact of Thai culture on students’ learning behavior.

2.1 The definition of culture
In a broad sense, culture could be defined as “the way of life of people in a specific society” (Foster, 1962, p.12). Vrânceanu and Leca (2015) further explain that culture is the way people think, hear, see, and understand the world; thus the same world could be interpreted differently by people from different cultures. For this reason, individuals from different cultures have different reasons to feel happy or angry and have different responses to those feelings (Boonnuch, 2012). In an educational context, Thai culture also impacts how Thai students behave in class (Devenery, 2005; Phutsiri, 2014). Thus, the next part of this class discusses the impact of the Thai culture on students’ learning behavior in class.
2.2 An impact of Thai culture on students’ learning behavior

2.2.1 Collectivism

Thailand has been described as a highly collectivist country (Hofstede, 2001). This can be seen in the fact that Thai people appreciate social harmony and are sensitive to losing-face situations (Darwish & Huber, 2003; Prpic & Kanjanapanyakom, 2004; Phutsiri, 2014). Thai people often employ silence as a tool to preserve social harmony in their society (Komolsevin, Knutson, & Datthuyawat, 2010). This cultural value is obviously reflected in students’ behavior in the classroom. However, this tendency may cause some foreign teachers from more individualistic countries to label Thai students as passive learners because of their poor participation in class (Deveney, 2005; Prpic & Kanjanapanyakom, 2004). Phutsiri (2014) also adds that normally collectivist students need classmates’ support before they speak up in class.

Hofstede (1980) explains another aspect of collectivism - that collectivist people normally take care of each other and have a close relationship within their group. They prioritize harmonious relationships rather than competition (Darwish & Huber, 2003; Prpic & Kanjanapanyakom, 2004). In a classroom context, students from collectivist cultures prefer group work rather than individual work since this allows them to help each other (Grossman, 1984). Therefore, teachers from individualistic countries misjudge Thai students as dependent learners (Deveney, 2005).

2.2.2 Interpersonal Relationship Orientation

Komin (1991) proposes a concept called “smooth interpersonal relationship orientation” to understand Thai values related to the collectivist dimension. This concept refers to the belief that people should take other’s feeling into consideration (Boonnuch, 2012). Thai society values a harmonious and peaceful life (Wisadavet, 1996). To preserve social harmony, people are required to be polite and avoid criticizing others (Komin, 1991). For this reason, indirect messages of criticism are preferred so as to soften any negative effects (Komin, 1991).

2.2.3 Face-Saving Value

“Face” is normally defined as one’s image, status, and pride in a society (Cosgrove, James, & Zhao, 2015). Hence, face-saving refers to an individual’s effort to keep a good image (Phutsiri, 2014). Based on Deveney’s study in 2005, students fear looking foolish and losing face if they cannot supply correct answers in class. Hence, they employ silence as a tool to help them listen to the teacher carefully and also to save themselves from losing face (Deveney, 2005). In contrast, among people from more individualistic societies, fear of losing face is not as important and may be perceived as a weakness (Hofstede, 1991). Thus, teachers who do not understand this Thai cultural value might misjudge Thai students as being passive, diffident, and lacking in motivation (Deveney, 2005).
2.2.4 Kreng jai Value
Klausner (1993) and Komin (1991) define kreng jai as the effort to avoid causing the other person discomfort and the reluctance to hurt others’ feelings. Phutsiri (2014) observed kreng jai in the classroom in the tendency for students to avoid bothering teachers by not asking questions and accepting what teachers requested them to do.

2.2.5 Power Distance
Thailand has been ranked as a high power-distance country (Hofstede, 2001). This means inequality is accepted as a fact of life (Hofstede, 1991). Age, social status, and positions of people in the society are given high importance (Hofstede, 2001). This can be seen from the fact that Thai people respect seniority (Boonnuch, 2012; Hofstede, 1991; Wisadavet, 1996). In Thai culture, teachers are considered of relatively high status in society (Phutsiri, 2014). Expressing ideas, asking questions (Adamson, 2003), contradicting, or criticizing teachers in public (Phutsiri, 2014) is seen as inappropriate (Baker, 2008; Prpic & Kanjanapanyakom, 2004). In contrast, according to Hofstede (1980, 1991) and Samovar and Porter (2004), in a low power-distance country, where people place less emphasis on inequalities and hierarchical relationships, students are encouraged to initiate and ask questions in class (Phutsiri, 2014). Oh and Nussli (2014) reveal that when Korean students try to respect foreign teachers by listening carefully without asking any questions nor participating in discussions, the teachers may misinterpret that behavior as a lack of attention and enthusiasm.

3. Methodology
3.1 Research Design
This study was a mixed-method study which combined qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and different samples. In order to access the Thai students’ points of view, quantitative inquiry was utilized in a questionnaire. On the other hand, in order to understand international English teachers’ cultural issues while teaching in Thailand, qualitative inquiry was implemented in an interview.

3.2 Settings
The target school was a Thai school located in Bangkok. The school provides two types of academic programs, a Thai-medium program and an English-medium program, for Thai students from Mathtayoms one to six (Years 7 to 12).
3.3 Participants
The participants were divided into two groups; the teacher participants and the student participants.

3.3.1 The teacher participants
Eight international English teachers were selected. Four of them were teaching in the Thai program. They came from France, the Philippines, and the Republic of Ghana. The other four were teaching in the English program. They came from the Philippines, the United Kingdom, and the United States. These eight participants taught between Matthayoms one and six. All of them had at least one year of English teaching experience in Thailand.

3.3.2 The student participants
Two hundred and seventy-nine students who were studying between Matthayoms one and six were chosen. In order for the researcher to cross check the data with the teachers’ interview results, student participants who studied English with the teacher participants were required.

3.4 Instruments and Data Collection
3.4.1 Semi-structured interview
Semi-structured individual interviews were employed with the eight teacher participants in order to provide deeper understanding of international English teachers’ cultural challenges while working in Thailand. The data from this instrument were considered as the primary resource of this study.

3.4.2 Questionnaire
A questionnaire was distributed to the student participants to compare and contrast with the interview results. The questionnaire was divided into three parts: the participants’ background information, students’ attitudes of cultural challenges when studying with the international English teacher participants, and open-ended questions.

3.5 Data Analysis
A descriptive analysis was employed for the questionnaire data (i.e. frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation). The Likert scale was applied to determine the student participants’ opinions with their international English teachers in terms of cultural challenges. The results as mean values were classified into five levels:
- 4.21 - 5.00 represents “Strongly Agree”.
- 3.41 – 4.20 represents “Agree”.
- 2.61 – 3.40 represents “Neutral”
- 1.81 – 2.60 represents “Disagree”
- 1.00 – 1.80” represents “Strongly Disagree”
Semi-structured interview data were analysed by a content analysis. The data in the questionnaire were determined and analyzed together with the data from the semi-structured interviews. The researcher compared and contrasted the results from the questionnaire and the interviews to investigate any similarities and differences between both perspectives and with related theories and previous studies.

4. Findings and Discussion

There are five cultural characteristics in this study that clearly affect Thai students’ behavior in the classroom: collectivism, interpersonal relationship orientation, face-saving value, *kreng jai* value, and power distance.

4.1 Collectivism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 The students’ attitudes towards their international English teachers regarding their collectivism aspect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collectivism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I feel more comfortable listening to rather than expressing my opinions to my international English teacher when s/he is teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I think it is not fun to participate in my international English teacher’s class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I am happier when my international English teacher assigns group work than when he/she assigns an individual assignment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I do not like my class when my international English teacher assigns an activity in which I have to compete with my classmates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I like my class when my international English teacher allows me to express my opinions through a group discussion in class rather than speaking up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 1, Thai students expressed a neutral attitude towards their collectivism. However, this Thai cultural value was an overt example of Thai students’ behavior in international English teachers’ eyes. Six international English teachers agreed that the majority of Thai students participated lightly in class. The teachers revealed that even when the students did not understand what the teachers taught, they rarely asked the teachers for clarification. Consistently, the students also
accepted that they preferred to listen to the teachers rather than to speak up in class. They normally wait for another student to answer before they participate in class. These results are consistent with Phutsiri (2014) who reveals that collectivist students need support from their classmates when they have to participate in class. For this reason, the international English teachers in this study judged Thai students negatively as being passive learners. In terms of assignment, the results are consistent with Grossman (1984) since both the teacher and the student participants strongly agreed that the students preferred group work rather than an individual assignment. However, the teacher participants misjudged Thai students as being immature and unconfident learners. This result is supported by Deveney (2005) who points out that teachers from individualistic countries could misinterpret collectivist students as being dependent learners.

4.2 Interpersonal Relationship Orientation

Table 2 The students’ attitudes towards their international English teachers regarding their interpersonal relationship orientation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpersonal Relationship Orientation</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Level of Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. My international English teacher makes me feel that I can express my opinions when I do not agree with him or her.</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My international English teacher makes me feel that I can be honest about his or her teaching style.</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. My international English teacher makes me feel that expressing my opinions against my classmates is acceptable.</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall 3.64 0.67 Agree

According to Table 2, the student participants felt that they expressed their disagreement towards international English teachers and their classmates. The teachers in this study explained that some students concealed their disagreement towards the teachers whereas some revealed their disagreement towards the teachers. However, with regard to Thai culture, the teachers reported that the students expressed their disagreement in a friendly and polite manner. This aligns with Boonnuch (2012), who points out that Thai people care greatly about how their behavior or words might impact others’ feelings (Boonnuch, 2012). Thus, people tend to avoid criticizing others (Komin, 1991). In this regard, international English
teachers in this study viewed Thai students as non-confrontational learners. Moreover, one teacher participant revealed that he encountered difficulties when he tried to encourage the students to express their disagreement in a debate class.

4.3 Face-Saving Value

Table 3 The students’ attitudes towards their international English teachers regarding their face-saving value

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Face-saving</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Level of Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I rarely answer questions in class and am afraid of being criticized by my international English teacher if I make a mistake.</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I think that I will lose face if I have to ask my international English teacher for any clarification of the lesson that I do not understand in class.</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. When my international English teacher asks a question, I wait until someone else speaks first so I have more confidence to do so.</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I rarely ask questions in class and am afraid of being criticized by my international English teacher.</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. When I do not understand a lesson, I tend to ask my classmates instead of my international English teacher because I am afraid that I will lose face if I do not understand what my international English teacher explains.</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It appears that the face-saving value was the most controversial cultural aspect in this study as the results from international English teachers and Thai students were reported differently. While all of the teacher participants strongly agreed that Thai students were afraid of losing face, the students reported through the questionnaire that they felt neutral about losing face (Table 2). However, the students revealed in the open-ended question that they were afraid of losing face. The teachers in this
study strongly agreed that the students’ fear of losing face was clearly evident when they had to participate in class. Since the students try to display their intelligence to the teacher, their desired image could be destroyed either when they were not able to deliver the right answers or when they asked simple questions in class. This corresponds with Deveney (2005) who explains that if students cannot give the right answer in class, they fear being seen as foolish and losing face. Thus, Thai students employ silence as a shield to protect them from losing face. The teacher participants perceived students’ fear of losing face negatively as they viewed it as a passive attitude. This is supported by Hofstede (1991) who indicates that people from individualistic cultures view losing face as a weakness; hence, foreign teachers might view Thai students as passive learners (Deveney, 2005).

4.4 Kreng jai Value

Table 4 The students’ attitudes towards their international English teachers regarding their kreng jai value.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kreng Jai</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Level of Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I am willing to do what my English international teacher requests because I do not want to hurt her/his feeling.</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. When I have any problems, I am afraid to tell my international English teacher directly because I do not want to bother her/him.</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. When I feel uncomfortable or have a problem, I use silence as a tool to avoid bothering my international English teacher.</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I ask my international English teacher only valuable and important questions because I think it bothers them if I ask too many questions.</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall</strong></td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 4, although, the student participants reported that they exhibit kreng jai to international English teachers, Thai students’ kreng jai value did not display overtly in the teachers’ eyes. Half of the teacher participants could notice students’ kreng jai behavior clearly whereas the other half said the students displayed
krenjai under some conditions. For the overt example of krenjai, the teacher participants reported that Thai students tended to ask their friends to help them explaining when they did not understand the lessons rather than ask the teachers since they tried to avoid obstructing the teachers while teaching in class. This aligns with the students’ results and Phutsiri (2014) who explained that the students thought asking too many questions was bothersome to the teachers. Thus, the student asked their international English teachers only valuable and important questions. Another way for Thai students to display krenjai towards the teachers was accepting any requests from the foreign teachers because they did not want to hurt the teachers’ feelings. This finding is similar with Phutsiri (2014) who reveals that Thai students tend to accept what the teachers request to preserve the teachers’ feelings.

In terms of the less overt examples of krenjai toward the teacher participants, the students expressed their krenjai under some conditions. This could be seen when the students asked the teachers for help. Only academic problems were raised, not personal problems. To explain this behavior, Thai students might feel comfortable to ask international English teachers for academic help. At the same time, they feel krenjai to ask the teachers to help them solve their personal problems. The teachers’ interviews were compatible with the students’ results since the student participants reported that they felt neutral about asking their international English teachers for help as it might be bothersome to the teachers.

4.5 Power Distance

Table 5 The students’ attitudes towards their international English teachers regarding their power distance aspect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power Distance</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Level of Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I believe that what my international English</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teacher teaches is always right.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A good student should listen quietly without</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interrupting the international English teacher in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I normally call my international English teacher</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by her/his first name (i.e. Teacher Edward instead</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of Teacher Norton)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. When I walk past my international English teacher</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wai (palms together in respect).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The cultural aspect has to be analyzed carefully since the results from the teacher and the student participants were different. While the teacher participants totally agreed that Thai students showed great deference towards the teachers, overall, the students felt neutral about power distance between them and international English teachers (Table 5). The teachers in this study reported that Thai students show their respect towards the international English teachers by being obedient and treating them politely. This aligns with the students’ results as the students reported that they believed that the teachers were always right. These findings are compatible with what several scholars had discussed. According to Phutsiri (2014), teachers are respected and have higher societal status. It is believed that expressing ideas, asking questions (Adamson, 2003), contradicting, or criticizing teachers in public is not appropriate (Baker, 2008; Pripic & Kanjanapanyakom, 2004). However, from the international English teachers’ point of view, this type of student behavior hinders the students from learning as they miss out on the advantages of being engaged rather than passive learners. This is supported by several scholars. Hofstede (1980, 1991) and Samovar and Porter (2004) who point out that people from a lower distance culture place less importance on hierarchical status in a relationship. Having innovative ideas and asking questions in class are accepted and encouraged (Phutsiri, 2014). Thus, foreign teachers who do not understand this aspect of Thai culture might misunderstand these students as being passive learners.

However, since the students reported that they felt neutral about the power distance relationship between them and international English teachers, the way that the teacher participants treated the students could explain the results. Since the teachers believed that power distance would make the students scared of them, there was less student participation in class. As a result, the teacher participants tried to lower the power distance between the teachers and the students by building an informal relationship with the students. This caused the students to feel more comfortable with their international English teachers even though the teachers’ higher status and the students’ subsequent deference was still evident.

5. Conclusion
Thai cultural values naturally impact Thai students’ behavior as displayed in the classroom. These five Thai cultural values - collectivism, interpersonal relationship orientation, face-saving value, *kreng jai* value, and power distance - shape Thai students to show less participation in class. This has led to a tendency for
international English teachers who lack knowledge and sensitivity to Thai culture to misunderstand Thai students as passive and non-confrontational learners with little initiative.

According to students’ attitudes towards their international English teachers regarding their cultural challenges, interpersonal relationship orientation was ranked at the highest score, followed by kreng jai value, collectivism, power distance, and face-saving value.

5.1 Recommendations and Future Considerations

The present study employed semi-structured interviews and questionnaires to collect and analyze data. Future studies are recommended to include other qualitative methodology instruments such as classroom observations, student interviews or teachers’ reflection in order to obtain information in a natural setting. This will yield more in-depth understanding of cultural challenges.

References


THE DEVELOPMENT OF –ED ENDING VERB
PRONUNCIATION OF NINTH GRADE STUDENTS USING –ED ENDING UNO GAME CARD

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Abstract
Because of differences in English and Thai language phonetics and phonology, it has often been found that Thai learners experience difficulties in the English pronunciation of sounds that they are not familiar with especially, final sounds. Thus, this study aims to improve 12 ninth grade students’ pronunciation of the final sound of -ed ending verbs in English. The UNO -ed ending card game was created and used as a learning tool. The participants were asked to take a pretest and a posttest before and after the treatment. The findings show that all participants had a statistically significant improvement in their pronunciation after playing the card game. Furthermore, the interview reveals that the participants had favorable opinions towards the card game and claimed that it helped them improve their pronunciation and also increase their confidence when speaking English.

Keywords: -ed ending verbs, pronunciation, game, card game, learning tool, UNO
1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Significance of the Study

For many years in Thailand, we have taught English as a foreign language (EFL), which means that Thai people learn English only in a classroom and have no opportunity to use it in daily life. That is why so many students have difficulty speaking English even though they can write with good grammar and receive satisfying scores on an English test. The most common problem found in Thai learners is difficulty in pronunciation, especially final sound and stress (Winaitham and Suppasetseree (2012), Plailek (2012), Navayuth (2013), and Saeng-in (2017)).

Previous studies claim that an advisable method in teaching speaking and pronunciation is to teach English as a communicative language. And this Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) paradigm will create an authentic experience and provide an opportunity for learners to use the language in a real-world context (Nunan (2003), Lightbown and Spada (2016), and Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2015). Therefore, with the above-mentioned reasons, the researcher decided to use a card game to develop Thai learners’ pronunciation, focusing on -ed ending verbs, which is one of the many problems Thai learners face. Aside from enhancing -ed ending pronunciation, this study also provides one of the solutions to other problems concerning the pronunciation of Thai learners, such as stress, intonation and rhythm.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

This study aims to enhance -ed ending pronunciation of Thai learners using a card game as instructional media.

1.3 Research Question

Can the use of a card game as an instructional media improve the –ed ending pronunciation of Thai learners?

1.4 Definition of Terms

1.4.1 The pronunciation

The pronunciation of -ed ending verbs which has three different sounds; /d/, /t/, /Id/
1.4.2 The participants

Twelve ninth-grade students that had difficulty pronouncing -ed ending verbs

1.4.3 The card game

The card game, whose rules are based on the famous UNO game, which the researcher designed in order to use as an instructional medium

1.4.4 The pretest and posttest

The pretest and posttest on the pronunciation of past tense regular verbs

2. Review of Literature

2.1 The Definitions of Pronunciation

As mentioned in *English Grammar Today*, pronunciation is the way humans say words. It differs depending on which parts of the world the speakers are in. (Carter, McCarthy, Mark, and O'Keefe, 2016). We call the way people pronounce words differently ‘an accent’. Although most people think that pronunciation is the way we say words, Richard and Schmidt, the authors of the *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* defined it differently. They said that pronunciation is not like articulation, which is the process of using our speech organs to produce sounds. Besides, they put an emphasis on the listeners rather than the speakers. That means that pronunciation is the way the listeners recognize sounds that the speakers say (Richard and Schmidt, 2010). When the speaker produces sounds, the listener will assess what the speaker says.

2.2 The Importance of Correct and Clear Pronunciation

As a learner and a speaker of English language, we need to know how to pronounce words correctly and clearly so that we can effectively communicate with other users of English, otherwise, the communication will fail and the misunderstanding will occur. The success in communication depends on the correctness and clearness of our pronunciation, not our accent. Our accent is just a sign that allows others to assume where we come from. Therefore, we should change our perspective and consider English as an international language. Nunan (2003) stated that some people believe the pronunciation that native English speakers use is the most acceptable. However, Lightbown and Spada (2016) argued that as a teacher, one should not focus only on one accent or the accent that native English speakers think is the best. Learners should put more emphasis on learning how to effectively communicate with the interlocutors that they are likely to meet and interact with in their real life, not just native English speakers.
2.3 The Factors that affect Thai Learners’ Pronunciation

One of the many factors that cause inaccuracy of pronunciation is the first language of learners. Especially when the characteristics of L1 are very different and have few things in common with L2, learning the second language will be more challenging and problematic. The study of Winaitham and Suppasetseeree (2012), claimed that the most common pronunciation problem found in Thai learners is the English pronunciation that contains tones, intonation, and rhythm of the Thai language. The reason is, according to Nimphaibule (1996), that the learners instinctively compare the Thai sound system with the English one. Thus, they tend to use their L1 sound that is similar to the L2 sound because it is easier and more comfortable to produce. This, sometimes, leads to unsuccessful communication.

The study of Atthaphonphiphat showed that one of the most common problems in pronunciation is the fact that learners cannot pronounce sounds that don’t exist in the Thai language due to the different sound system. Another two factors that cause unsuccessful pronunciation are a negative attitude towards the English language and a lack of frequent use since Thais don’t use English as a second language but as a foreign language.

The sounds the researcher is highlighting on in this study are the -ed ending sounds of past tense regular verbs. Ann Baker (2006) indicated in the book *Ship or Sheep?* that besides the articulation, in phonetics terms, we can characterize sounds into voiced and unvoiced sounds. If we pronounce voiced sounds, our vocal cord vibrates. We can feel the vibration when placing our fingers on our throat. On the other hand, if we pronounce unvoiced sounds, our vocal cord doesn’t vibrate because air can travel out of our throat and mouth freely. All vowel sounds in English are voiced sounds, but some consonants are voiced and some are unvoiced.

The consonant that are voiced are /b/, /d/, /g/, /ʒ/, /dʒ/, /ð/, /l/, /m/, /n/, /r/, /v/, /w/, /j/, and /z/. The consonant that are unvoiced are /k/, /t/, /p/, /s/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/, and /θ/ (Marla Yoshida, 2014)

The final sounds of past tense regular verbs pronunciation are as follows,

1. If the verb ends with voiced consonant (except /d/) or vowel, the -ed ending is pronounced as /d/.

For example, 
- cleaned is pronounced as clean/d/
- smelled is pronounced as smell/d/
- played is pronounced as play/d/
2. If the verb ends with an unvoiced consonant (except /t/), the -ed ending is pronounced as /t/.
   For example,  
   stopped is pronounced as stop/t/  
   packed is pronounced as pack/t/  
   finished is pronounced as finish/t/  

3. If the verb ends with /t/ and /d/, the -ed ending is pronounced as /Id/.
   For example,  
   wanted is pronounced as want/Id/  
   needed is pronounced as need/Id/  
   decided is pronounced as decide/Id/  

The problem that the learners face is not because the Thai language doesn’t have these final sounds, but because we don’t emphasize final sounds in Thai as clearly and obviously as in English. That is why Thai learners usually omit the English final sounds, which are essential tools that help distinguish which word is being pronounced.

2.4 The Pronunciation Teaching Approaches and Related Studies

2.4.1 The Pronunciation Teaching Approaches

David Nunan stated in his Practical English Language Teaching book that pronunciation teaching in an ESL or EFL classroom has changed over time. In the early period, around 1940 – 1959, there was the age of “listen and repeat”. The learners’ roles were to listen, memorize, and imitate what the teacher had said. The main objective of this teaching approach was that learners were able to imitate sounds and speaking patterns from a teacher. The next stage was around 1960 – 1979. In this age, a teacher taught learners to thoroughly ‘analyze’ individual sounds in English and find the way to pronounce them more clearly. They taught about articulation by showing learners some pictures or videos that instructs how to place lips, tongue, and teeth when producing sounds. Additionally, the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) was taught so that learners could learn about phonetics more easily and conveniently, as well as learn stress and intonation in a sentence or a paragraph level.

The latest changes have been from 1980 to the present. In this age, the teaching and learning practices apply communicative language teaching (CLT) and task-based language teaching (TBL) paradigms. The teacher briefly explains about the sound system, and concentrates more on classroom activities. In other words, the purpose of teaching and learning in this age is for learners to practice in real communication situation through classroom activities. The teacher’s role is to be a facilitator and to observe and assist students when they need help.
Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2015) mentioned that in a CLT classroom, teachers usually use games as teaching and learning instruments because learners feel it is more fun and are more willing to learn in this classroom than in the traditional one. If the game that the teacher has designed matches the objectives and content of a lesson, it will provide an opportunity for learners to use the language in real communication. The game that helps practice communication must include three elements, which are: 1. Information gap, where players do not possess all information and have to find out more information to fill in the gap; 2. Choice, where players have choices to answer; and 3. Feedback, where other players assess and give feedback to confirm whether the answer is correct.

2.4.2 Related Studies

Sung and Ching (2012) conducted a study about English teaching and learning using a card game to develop vocabulary scores in a TOEIC test of 8 Applied Foreign Language students from the Science and Technology University in the northern area of Taiwan. The game rules indicate that there are 60 cards in a card pile, and the participants have to draw 5 cards from it. Each card has 2 sides. One side has a meaning and the other has a phonetic symbol. The players have to guess the correct words in order to win the game. The researcher collected the data 6 times in 4 months. The result showed that participants’ scores had increased in every game. Moreover, the participants enjoyed the lesson and were more interested in learning English. They improved vocabulary and received better grades in English as well.

Kanisorn Saeng-in (2017) investigated whether colored flashcards help learners improve their -ed ending pronunciation. The participants were two classes of 3rd grade EAL (English as Additional Language) program students of Saint Andrews International School in Thailand. The grades of the students in the control group and of the experimental group were compared. The result showed that the students who learned vocabulary with flashcards had better grades than the other group. The result has a p-value that equals to .05 and is considered statistically significant. Also, the student satisfaction survey yielded the same result.

Fiantina and Gultom (2017) explored whether there is a significant effect when using a card game to improve vocabulary learning achievement of 53 first-year students of SMPN 5 Tapung junior high school in Indonesia. The participants were asked to take a pretest and posttest then a t-test was used to compare mean scores between a pretest and posttest scores. The finding showed that the mean scores of the posttest were higher than the pretest. Therefore, the participants had a significant improvement in vocabulary learning achievement by playing a card game.
Razali, Armin, Kudus and Musa (2017) developed a learning technique called “GOT IT” which includes two sets of a theme-based vocabulary card game. The study was intended to improve participants’ vocabulary retention. Twenty-five students from primary schools in Pulau Pinang in Malaysia, who had low scores in English tests, were selected to be the participants in this study. The mean scores from a pretest and posttest were compared to check if there is any statistical difference. The results revealed that the scores significantly increased in the posttest (p<0.05). Moreover, the researchers also found that during the experiment the participants actively and enthusiastically played the games. They also mentioned that they were interested in playing the games again in the future.

2.5 A Research Framework

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study investigates the development of 9th grade students’ pronunciation of -ed ending verbs. A t-test was used to compare pre-test and post-test scores. A qualitative data analysis was conducted by interviewing the participants to obtain more detailed information and to confirm the research questions.

3.2 Participants

The participants in this study were twelve 9th grade students who had difficulty pronouncing English -ed ending verbs. The researcher used a purposive sampling method to select the participants by asking fifty 9th grade students to do a pre-test. They were required to pronounce each -ed ending verb in the pre-test. The results from the pretest showed that students’ scores range from 2 to 6. The researcher selected the 12 students who had the lowest scores (between 2 – 4) to be the
participants in this study. Thus, these 12 participants possessed the quality - English pronunciation weakness - that the researcher required to answer the research question.

Additionally, the researcher asked 4 students to be gamemasters (GMs) to supervise, evaluate, and check whether the 12 participants mentioned above followed the rules and pronounced words correctly. In the pretest, the GMs’ scores ranged from 5 to 6. Although they did not possess the quality the research required, it could be interesting to see if they had any improvement despite being the players.

3.3 Research instruments, Data Collection and Data Analysis

3.3.1 Research instruments

Three research instruments were applied in this study. The first instrument was a pre and posttest on -ed ending verbs that the researcher carefully selected from the 1,000 most common English words. All twelve verbs in the pre and posttest were approved by three experts and yielded the IOC of 1.0. The second instrument was an -ed ending card game that the researcher designed and developed to be used as an instructional resource. The game rules are based on the UNO card game. The words used in the game were also selected from the 1,000 most common English words.

The third research instrument was an interview. After the lesson, all participants were asked to answer 5 questions: (1) How do you find this game? Please give reasons. (2) Practicing pronunciation with traditional exercises, or with both traditional exercises and the game, which one do you prefer? Please give reasons. (3) Do this game help you improve your pronunciation? (4) What are the advantages and disadvantages of this game? and (5) What are your suggestions to make this game better if it will be used in the future? The interview data was transcribed into text and coded.

3.3.2 Data Collection

The researcher collected the data in February, 2019. Fifty 9th grade students were asked to do a pretest on -ed ending verb pronunciation. For the researcher to assess students’ pronunciation, each of them had to pronounce each verb in the test. After receiving the results of the pretest, the researcher then selected twelve students who had received low scores (between 0 – 4) to be the participants in this study. The card game was played after a traditional lesson of -ed ending verbs. The participants could play as many rounds as they wished in order to find the winner, (the one who achieved a score of 100). After the game, a posttest was given, and the interview was conducted.
3.3.3 Data Analysis

The data collected from the test was analyzed using a t-test to compare the results yielded from the pretest and the posttest. Descriptive statistics are also used to describe and summarize the properties of the data.

4. Results

Research Question: Can the use of the card game as an instructional media improve participants’ -ed ending pronunciation?

4.1 The results from participants’ pretest and posttest scores

All 12 participants’ pretest and posttest scores are presented in Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1. It can be noticed that all participants’ posttest scores are higher than their pretest scores.

Table 1 Pre-test and Post-test scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Pretest Scores</th>
<th>Posttest Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1 Pretest and Posttest Scores Comparison
From the above evidence, the lowest score in the pretest is 2 out of 12 and the highest is 4 out of 12. On the other hand, the lowest score in the posttest is 4 out of 12 and the highest is 12 out of 12. Furthermore, it is interesting to see that there are five participants who were able to earn the perfect scores of 12. Additionally, a t-test was used to compare the means of participants’ pretest and posttest scores as shown in Table 4.2.

Table 2 t-test: Paired Two Sample for Means

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pretest Scores</th>
<th>Posttest Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>6.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>-0.48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesized Mean Difference</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Df</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t Stat</td>
<td>-8.35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P(T&lt;=t) one-tail</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t Critical one-tail</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P(T&lt;=t) two-tail</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t Critical two-tail</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* P < 0.05

From the above table, the participants’ pretest scores have a mean of 2.92 (\(\bar{X} = 2.92\)) and posttest 10.00 (\(\bar{X} = 10.00\)). There is a P-value of 0.00 which is less than 0.05, meaning that there is a significant statistical difference between the means of the pretest and posttest scores. Thus, the answer to the research question is that there was a significant improvement in the participants’ -ed ending pronunciation after learning with the card game.
4.2 The participants’ opinions and suggestions for the card game as an instructional media from the interview.

All twelve participants were interviewed one by one. Their opinions and suggestions for the card game as an instructional media are presented according to the interview questions as follows.

4.2.1 How do you find this game? Please give reasons.
All 12 participants had a favorable opinion of the card game. Three participants (25%) reported that they enjoyed the game because it was fun and helped to enhance their knowledge. Nine of them (75%) said that this game provided them the opportunity to practice pronunciation in a fun and interactive way.

4.2.2 Practicing pronunciation with traditional exercises, or with both traditional exercises and the game; which one do you prefer? Please give reasons.
There were two different answers to this question. Eleven participants (91.67%) preferred traditional exercises plus the card game, while there was only one participant (8.33%) who preferred only traditional exercises. Among the eleven participants who preferred the card game, three of them commented that learning with the card game was fun and they felt more relaxed with the lesson. Five of them mentioned that the card game promoted their problem solving and strategic planning skills and also encouraged them to think critically. And the last three claimed that the card game helped them learn faster and better, which is in contrast to the opinion of the only one participant who preferred the traditional learning approach.

4.2.3 Does this game help you improve your pronunciation?
All of 12 participants believed that their pronunciation improved. Five of them (41.67%) mentioned that the competitive environment of the game motivated them to improve their pronunciation: “To win the game, I need to be a better player by improving my pronunciation,” said one of them. Another three (25%) reported that they learned from their mistakes since they mispronounced words many times until they started to learn the correct pronunciation. Moreover, another two participants (16.67%) added that the card game increased their confidence when pronouncing words in English.

4.2.4 What are the advantages and disadvantages of this game?
The participants’ comments on the advantages of this game were that it provides the opportunity for them to actually pronounce English words in class. When comparing with the traditional approach, they claimed that this activity helped them learn faster and more effectively. It also required active participation from each
participant, thereby the learning was more fun and challenging. Moreover, for some participants who felt uncomfortable pronouncing English words in front of others, this game helped build up their confidence.

“I've never had the confidence to speak English in front of others because I was afraid that I’d make mistakes and they’d laugh at me. But in this game, everyone had to speak English, and each of them made mistakes a few times. So I felt more relaxed. I was not afraid to make mistakes in this game and started to learn from those mistakes I made.” said one of the participants.

However, this game has some disadvantages. Some participants reported that in the first round some players were afraid to pronounce words in front of other players; accordingly, this slowed down the whole game and it took too much time to end it. Nevertheless, it was getting better in the second round and the next round.

4.2.5 What are your suggestions to make this game better if it will be used in the future?

Not all participants gave suggestions, but every suggestion is worth taking into consideration. Some participants mentioned that there are too many rules while others argued that there should be more rules to make the game more challenging. Additionally, some participants suggested that more words and action cards should be added. They also wanted the rest of their friends to join the game and make it a real competition among classmates. Lastly, they were very fond of the artwork of the playing cards. They pointed out that the design of the cards was adorable and made the game entertaining.

5. Conclusions and Discussion

5.1 Conclusions

This study aimed to decrease difficulty in and improve 12 ninth grade students’ -ed ending pronunciation by using a -ed ending UNO card game. All 12 participants were given pretests to assess their background knowledge. After the use of the card game as an instructional media, posttests were taken by all participants. The test results revealed that the posttest scores of all participants were higher than their pretest scores. Additionally, regarding the t-test results, there was a statistical difference between the means of the participants’ pretest and posttest scores. Therefore, it can be concluded that there was a significant improvement in all 12 participants’ -ed ending pronunciation after the use of the card game. Furthermore, the answers from the interviews reported that all participants had a favorable opinion
towards the card game. However, there was only one participant who enjoyed the card game but preferred the traditional teaching and learning approach.

5.2 Discussion

The use of the card game as an instructional media corresponds with the idea of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. As Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2015) stated, using games in teaching and learning creates an enjoyable and pleasant learning experience for learners. If the designed game matches the objectives of the lesson, the teaching and learning will be more successful and effective.

Moreover, the findings from this study agree with the previous studies reviewed in Chapter Two, especially the study of Sung and Ching (2012). They used a card game to improve TOEIC scores of Applied Foreign Language students in Taiwan. The result showed that not only the participants’ TOEIC scores improved, all participants also enjoyed the lesson with the card game and preferred it to the traditional ones. Correspondingly, the study of Saeng-in (2017) indicated that using colored flashcards as an instructional tool improved -ed ending pronunciation of learners. The participants from the experimental group scored higher than those in the control group. Additionally, the teaching and learning satisfaction survey results suggested that the participants from the experimental group enjoyed the lesson more than those in the control group did.

Not only did the card game improve -ed pronunciation of the participants, it also provided the opportunity for the participants to speak English in a classroom, which normally hardly happens. In other words, teaching and learning in most regular-program classrooms put great emphasis on grammar lectures and standardized testing where accuracy is prioritized over fluency. On the other hand, this card game is a mix of accuracy and fluency-focused activity. It encourages players to speak English with other players in a friendly and relaxing atmosphere. Many errors were made during the game, but they didn’t obstruct the communication. Consequently, the participants were less afraid of making errors and had more confidence to speak. The accuracy was improved after a while.

Simultaneously, this card game promotes learner autonomy, a lifelong learning skill that results in lifelong success. In the process of doing this activity, each participant had to take control of his or her own learning while collaborating with other participants. Eventually, through trial and error, learning occurred. From the
findings, it has proven that the card game positively helps the participant learn, but quickly or slowly depending on individual differences.

Furthermore, the data from the interview reveals that 11 out of the 12 participants had positive opinions towards the card game and preferred it to a traditional learning and teaching approach. Nevertheless, there was one participant who thought differently. Although he agreed that the card game was fun, he preferred the traditional approach as he thought it helped him learn better. He was one of the students who had high scores in for his English written tests in midterm and final exams. However, in the pretest of this study (pronunciation test), he scored only 3 out of 12, which is rather low. This indicates that if a learner has high scores in a written test, s/he doesn’t always pronounce words correctly. Moreover, from the observation during the activity, the number of errors he made was more than for other players. He also took more time to learn the correct pronunciation than his peers did. Clearly, he had difficulty learning by this approach. Therefore, he preferred the traditional one. From this can be concluded that each learner has different needs and styles of learning. We, as teachers, should keep this in mind.

Additionally, it is interesting to discuss another finding. Before the activity began the researcher asked 4 students to be gamemasters (GMs). Their roles were to supervise, evaluate, and check whether the players followed the rules and pronounced words correctly. A game manual and answer keys were given to them to study before the game. The participants were divided into two groups and two GMs were assigned in each group. In the pretest, the GMs’ scores ranged from 5 to 6. However, not just the participants, the GMs were asked to take a posttest as well. It appeared that all GMs received perfect scores of 12 in the posttest. This indicated that aside from the participants, the GMs also improved their pronunciation even though they were not the players. This discovery lets us know that learning can be enhanced by applying peer assessment as a learning tool. Apparently, not only the peers who were evaluated but also the evaluators improved while evaluating their peers.

Finally, the artwork design of the playing cards also plays an important role in this study. The creative and appealing artwork on the cards can draw the players’ attention while doing the activity. Presumably, the more attractive the cards are, the more entertaining the activity will be.

5.3 Recommendations for Further Studies

For future research, there are three points to be considered. First, in the data collection process, the card game activity took a longer time than expected. Thus, if
this activity is to be carried out in the future, the lesson should be well-planned and proper allocation of time for each section should be utilized in order to maximize the research potential. Secondly, as stated in the interviews, the participants like beautiful card designs. Accordingly, the art design should be done carefully and creatively. It is recommended that the preferences of the participants should be taken into account. In other words, teachers should create their own custom-made playing cards that, if possible, also fit the participants’ preferences. For example, the card design can be based on the cartoon characters or celebrities they are interested in. Aside from the artwork design, the rules can be adapted to meet the participants’ needs and make the activity more meaningful.

Finally, this study was designed to improve only the participant’s -ed ending pronunciation. Applying the same rules, teachers could modify the card game to improve other features of pronunciation, such as stress and intonation, or other language features such as vocabulary (e.g. synonym, antonym, word choice or collocation).

References


USING QUIZLET IN VOCABULARY LEARNING: EXPERIENCES FROM THAI HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract
This study explored a group of sixty-two high school students’ opinions about the use of Quizlet, a learning application providing study and games features (e.g., electronic flashcards). The frequency of usage, benefits, and challenges that they experienced when using each feature of the application were also examined. Data from questionnaires and semi-structured interviews illustrated that the students (N=62) were satisfied (M=5, SD=0.94) with the use of Quizlet for their vocabulary learning. There were no signs that this application was distracting and interrupting their learning. In particular, Match was the most popular feature. Most of the participants revealed that this feature helped them to remember new vocabulary effectively with lesser time. However, the same participants mentioned the difficulties faced during the use of such an application. They shared the opinion that the Write feature was not helpful since it required them to spell the vocabulary according to the definition generated by the application. This paper further encourages more homogenous study on implementing Quizlet into teaching and learning in wider contexts.

Keyword: Computer-assisted language learning, CALL, Mobile-assisted language learning, MALL, Quizlet
1. Introduction

Vocabulary, which has been the object of several studies (Baptis, 2018; Komachali, 2012; Nikoour & Kazami, 2014), is a key component of language learning. Thus, vocabulary learning is considered to be the main part of language learning and usage (Lauger, 2017). Several researchers agree that there is not sufficient research carried out in the field of vocabulary learning in L2 (Folse, 2004; Hunt & Beglar, 2005) while plenty of effective meaning of vocabulary that they have studies remain unclear (De Groot, 2006). This leads to the reason why English language teachers need to teach vocabulary as the first skill for their students (Metha, 2009). There are many traditional techniques and methods that can help such as memorization, definitions, self-defining context, antonyms and synonyms (Metha, 2009). In addition to traditional techniques and methods, the twenty-first century offers more powerful sources to teachers and students when it comes to learning a language. The development of technology has drawn from several fields in the past decades and it has a major impact on the process of teaching and learning (Pavlik, 2015). Mobile phones nowadays are used by millions of people and they offer massive benefits to their users in every aspect of life. Smartphones particularly have become even more significant in people’s lives today as they can open new doors in terms of accessibility and portability (Sara & Seferoglu, 2010). There are plenty of software has been developed to make language learning more efficient for both teacher and students. Also, it can be concluded that the mobile phone is easier to use than the computer since most teachers and students always have them available.

This study aimed to investigate Quizlet, a mobile and web-based educational application that allows students to study information via learning tools and game, the opinion of Thai high school male students (N=62) regarding the use of Quizlet in their vocabulary learning. The study also focuses on the frequency of features used by the students and each feature’s benefits and challenges. Therefore, this leads to the research questions as follow; (1) To what extent are a specific group of Thai male high school students, who attended a summer course in a tutorial school, satisfied with using Quizlet to learn vocabulary? (2) Which Quizlet feature do the students use the most frequently? (3) What are the benefits and challenges the students experienced when using each Quizlet feature?

2. Literature review

In order to explore the students’ opinion toward using Quizlet as their tool in vocabulary learning, this chapter reviews published research and also the definition of the relevant terms, such as computer-assisted language learning (CALL) and mobile-assisted language learning (MALL).
2.1 Computer-assisted language learning (CALL)

Computer-assisted language learning or CALL is a method by which learners can improve their language skill through a computer (Knight, 1997; Mackintosh, 1998). It has been one of the technology approaches for both teaching and learning a language, offering enriched context for learning (Lomicha, 1998). CALL became one of the methods to help the teacher in utilizing language teaching and also improve student’s autonomy (Warchuer, 1996). CALL represents the computer-based methods for language teaching which appeared in the early 1980s (Dudeney & Hocky, 2007). The period of using CALL could be divided into three main phrases: behaviorist CALL, communicative CALL, and integrative CALL (Underwood, 1984; Abdollahpour & Maleki, 2012).

2.2 Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL)

From time to time, the 21st century has offered a powerful new technology that could help the teacher and learner to be free from these limitations of time and place. The evolution from Computer-assisted language learning to Mobile-assisted language learning or MALL could prove that the above statement is true. In the years of rapid progress, technology has been shrunk from the large scale of the desktop computer to mobile devices that are small but multifunctional and wirelessly networked. CALL was empowered by the evolution of MALL at the beginning of the 2000s.

The first advantages of MALL is portability. Since mobile devices are light and easy to carry, MALL can be taken together with the users anywhere and anytime. The second advantage is “Everywhere and Every time”. It could be claimed that MALL, compared to CALL, could be used anywhere and anytime. Users can carry the devices with them and use them at the time that they were available. The third one is the cost. Compared to a personal computer, MALL is cheaper than PCs or laptops because the learners can afford to learn through mobile phones. The fourth one is motivation and collaboration.

It can be concluded that although MALL was derived from the principle of CALL, it has become a big part of education. It has the capacity of providing learners with the opportunities for independent and targeted skills and immediate corrective feedback as had been done through CALL (Arani, 2010).

2.3 Quizlet

Quizlet was started by Andrew Sutherland in 2005 for a high school French class. It was created at first as a web-based vocabulary learning application. Nowadays, there are more than 40 million sets of vocabulary that users have created. Quizlet provides two kinds of vocabulary set. The first on, ready-made flashcards, allows students to use other’s set of flashcards. The second one, their own flashcards, allows users to create technical terms or professional English. So, users could learn the vocabulary that they prefer. Users also can upload the data from an Excel or .csv
file and when the file is uploaded, the system also checks whether the data has any conversion errors.

The features of Quizlet are demonstrated in Figure 1. It is divided into two big parts which are study and play. For study features, it can be divided into four features, and play features can be divided into two features (Quizlet, 2006; Baptise, 2008).

![Figure 1: Quizlet site map](image)

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants and settings

The participants in this study were sixty-two students, aged 16-17 years, whose native language was Thai. They were students in a Math-Science program in a private high school. The students attended a summer course in the tutorial school for 35 days. Vocabulary in the settings came from the previous test of their target school. The English department of the tutorial school had combined and listed up the set of vocabulary for each student.

3.1.1 Research questions

1) To what extent are a specific group of Thai male high school students, who attended a summer course in a tutorial school, satisfied with using Quizlet to learn vocabulary?
2) Which Quizlet features do the students use the most frequently?
3) What are the benefits and challenges the students experienced when using each Quizlet feature?

3.2 Data collection

Data collection instruments used in this study were a set of questionnaires and a semi-structured interview. Both of them were employed to illustrate the student’s opinion toward the use of Quizlet in vocabulary learning. The development of these aforementioned tools is discussed in the following sections.

3.2.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire was created in Thai since the participants were not used to academic language. It was employed to elicit the student’s opinion towards the use of Quizlet and the frequency and opinion about each feature they experienced in
using the application. To collect the data of student’s opinion, an online five-section questionnaire was administered (Pegnate, 2018; Lawrence, Batanieh & Hatch, 2018). The online questionnaire was divided into nine sections. Each section contained different ranges for the five-point Likert scale, according to the nature of the questionnaire items.

Section one and two collected demographic information and the participants who had previous experience of Quizlet. Section three was the satisfaction of using Quizlet. In this section, the participants were asked to rate their level of satisfaction in using Quizlet. Section four to eight were about the frequency of using and satisfaction towards each feature. The second question asked about the opinion towards the feature. Section nine was open-ended questions. There were two questions. The first question asked about the benefit of using Quizlet in vocabulary learning. The second one asked about the challenges that the participants experienced in using Quizlet in their vocabulary learning. The consistency between the items and the research questions were checked by the supervisor of this study.

To check for the reliability, the researcher decided to use the SPSS program to calculate for Crobach’s alpha coefficient of the questionnaire. Cronbach’s alpha could measure the reliability or internal consistency of a set of scale or test items (Goforth, 2015). The coefficient ranges in value from 0 to 1. The higher the score, the more reliable the generated scale is. The range of 0.7 gives an acceptable reliability coefficient (Cronbach & Sehvelson, 2004). The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient score of this study was 0.79 which was still acceptable.

3.2.2 Interview

Semi-structured interviews were employed in this research. This interview approach was mostly a guided conversation between the researcher and the participants (Kruher & Casey, 2000; Dusitnanond, 2007). This interview didn't have a rigid structure. It provided opportunity for the researcher to be able to explore topics with the participants for more information. The results by using this structure were flexibility. Moreover, this structure could help the researcher find out the participants’ thoughts, feelings, and opinions. In this study, an interview was conducted with participants who were the users of Quizlet. The questions were asked based on the participants’ experience using Quizlet.

3.3 Data collection procedure

The data collection was taken between March 1, 2019 and April 5, 2019. The first procedure was sending the consent form to the school principal. Previously the researcher had informed the school principal by having a meeting together. Also, the participants were given a consent form before attending the study. Secondly, the information about Quizlet was introduced to the participants in the first and second class of the course, which was on March 3-4, 2019. The participants were encouraged
to use Quizlet on their mobile phones for 30 days. Moreover, some of them were helped to install the application on their mobile phones. These participants were required to practice 500 vocabulary items which had occurred in the previous examination paper through the application. This procedure was summarized in Figure 2.

4. Findings and discussion

4.1 Background information of the participants (Demographic)

Background information of the participants: three groups of the participants (N=62), based on their level in the school, and also the participants who had experience in using Quizlet, are categorized as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of participants</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Number of the participants who had experience</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
<th>Percentage of the participants who had experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 10 (Mattayom 4)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 11 (Mattayom 5)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 12 (Mattayom 6)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3 Background information of the participants
Figure 3 shows that the total number of participants was sixty-two. The participants were divided into three groups based on their level in their own school. The number of Grade 10 (Mattayom 4) and Grade 12 (Mattayom 6) participants was equal, with twenty (32.3%) in each group. The highest number was in Grade 11 (Mattayom 5) with twenty-two (35.5%). In addition to these numbers, Figure 1 also shows the total number of participants was sixty-two. The participants were divided into three groups based on their level in their own school. Moreover, there are some participants who had prior experience using Quizlet for their vocabulary learning. As illustrated in Figure 5, there are twenty-one people, or 8.6 percent from the total number of people (62), that had used Quizlet before.

4.2 Participant’s satisfaction towards the use of Quizlet

The participants were asked to respond with their answers in question number 4 of the questionnaire in the first section (See Appendix 1). The mean score, including the percentage, was calculated through SPSS software and divided into five ranges of satisfaction as shown in figure 4:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range of satisfaction</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very dissatisfied</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4 To what extent are the participants satisfied with the use of Quizlet

The results showed that most the participants were satisfied with using Quizlet as their tool in learning vocabulary ($M = 4.53; SD = 0.24$). The results from the interviews showed similar findings to the ones from the questionnaire. The participants claimed that they were satisfied with using the application because it helped them enlarge their vocabulary recall. Moreover, the variety and flexibility of the flashcard categories allowed them to choose the sets that they preferred to play or learn first.

4.3 Participants favorite features

As illustrated in figure 4, the questionnaire data showed that, among five features, the students preferred the Match feature the most. It was noticeable that the most frequently used feature of Quizlet among this group of student was Match.
statistical data shows that *Match* had a level of using of “Twice a day” (\(M=4.45; SD = 0.92\)). On the other hand, there were three other features, *Learn*, *Test*, and *Flashcard*, that also rated as “Twice a day” respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Level of frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Match</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Twice a day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Twice a day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Twice a day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flashcard</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Once a day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Once a day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 4 The frequency of using each feature for their vocabulary learning*

According to the interview results, some students pointed out that using *Match* helps them to remember vocabulary more since they have to race against the limited time given. Accordingly, they must recognize it as fast as possible. However, the *Write* feature seems to be the least popular. From Figure 4, it can be concluded that *Write* was the one of the two feature that had a level of frequency.

### 4.4 Benefits and challenges the students experience using Quizlet features

#### 4.4.1 Benefits

According to the interview findings, most of the participants pointed out that the main benefits of *Quizlet* lay in its “everywhereness” as the application enables learners to learn through their devices whenever and wherever. In addition to that, *Quizlet* allowed the participants to create their own list of words. Accordingly, they were comfortable with the list they created. Some participants also pointed out the benefits of each feature. The participants stated that *Learn* feature helped them by repeating the vocabulary that they hadn’t been sure of yet. Also, the participants could adjust the options of the feature based on their needs. For the *Match* feature, most of the participants enjoyed using this feature. Most of them pointed that this feature provided not only vocabulary recall but also a challenging moment for them to try to beat their friends. For the option *Test*, most of the participants had a similar experience – that *Test* helped them to summarize after using other features.
4.4.2 Challenges

There are two parts of challenges of using Quizlet as the tool of vocabulary learning; the challenges of the whole application and the challenges of each feature that the participants have experienced by using the application as their tool in learning vocabulary. There are some participants who suggested that the whole application should have been developed in some particular aspects. It can be concluded that the participants felt that the application was still lacking some information, such as an option for correct choices of parts of speech. Since some words come with many possible meanings and parts of speech, the participants could find it confused. Also, they wanted the application to have more features for searching both the meanings and synonyms, the same as a standard dictionary did. Moreover, there were some participants who mentioned the challenges they experienced while using each Quizlet feature. Most participants had the same challenges through using it as their tool in vocabulary learning. The interview results confirmed the finding that the participants don’t like using the Write feature since the feature itself required the participants to spell the words. In addition, most participants also pointed out the Flashcard feature should have more information or pictures in a free version to help them understand the word more.

4.5 Discussion and conclusion

According to the participants’ satisfaction level towards the use of the application, the participants were satisfied with using Quizlet as their tool in vocabulary learning \((M=4.53; SD=0.24)\). The results from the research correlate with the findings of Lu (2008) who revealed the benefits of using MMS (multimedia message service) in learning. Her findings indicated that the post-test scores of the participants in the study were significantly higher up. The report was shown that the participants in the study had a positive attitude toward using MMS in vocabulary learning. Concerning the participants’ most favorite features, the results obtained from the questionnaire showed this group of student preferred the Match feature. The reason that Match feature became the highest frequency could be supported by the interview results – that participants used this feature as a game, in particular the pairing game. Accordingly, they could challenge their friends. This result related to “Gamification”, the application of game elements in non-gaming situation. For the benefits of Quizlet, the participants shared that they were able to use the pre-made set of vocabulary or they could create their own set based on the pre-made option. It means that Quizlet provided a chance to shorten or lengthen the number of vocabulary items in one list by themselves. The student could adjust the information as they preferred. In addition to that, the interviewed findings illustrated the benefits of using Quizlet are “everywhere.” This relates to the notion of “anywhere, anytime” (Metcalf, 2006). This learning can then happen in any places at any time. The students
also pointed the benefits of Quizlet in each feature, such as Learn, which helped them remembering the vocabulary in the list by repeating the vocabulary in the list until they could remember the words in a very short time and it helped students to maintain their memories. In different perspective, this application also had challenges. The participants suggested that the application should have added more certain choices of parts of speech to choose from. Also, it should have added another feature which could work like a dictionary inside the application itself. Moreover, the participants claimed that Quizlet required them to fill in too much information about vocabulary in the Write feature, such as parts of speech and definition. Additionally, some participants suggested that Quizlet should have added pictures or video in the Flashcard feature. This could help them remembering more vocabulary.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Limitations of the research

The limitation of this study was divided into three aspects. The first aspect is time constraint. Since the length of the participant’s class was limited. It was essential that the data collection period of this study must finished within 30 days since the length of the class was 35 days. Moreover, the variety of the participants’ demographic was the one of the limitations. The participants in this study were only males. Mindful of these limitations, practitioners and researchers in the field should apply the findings into specific contexts with caution.

5.2 Recommendations

According to the aforementioned findings, future studies can advance the fields of education and language leaning by testing and comparing the effects of different learning applications. There are currently available programs such as Anki, Brainscape, Diolingo etc. each with separate advantages and disadvantages to consider when implementing them into instructions. Moreover, future studies could also compare the effectiveness of applications based on the gender of the participants, investigating differences between male and female since they might provide different responses and opinions. Specifically, researcher and teachers who are interested in this field of CALL and MALL may consider investigating the use of technology among students with specific learning approaches to focus on areas such as conversation, reading or grammar learning.
References


PARENTS’ ATTITUDES TOWARDS MOBILE LEARNING AMONG YOUNG CHILDREN IN THAILAND

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Abstract
This study examined parents’ attitudes towards their preschool children’s use of mobile learning. Participants were 123 parents of preschool-aged children (age 3 – 6 years old) who resided in Bangkok, Thailand. The focus of the study was on investigating parents’ attitudes towards benefits and risks associating with preschoolers’ use of mobile learning at home. It also explored the ways parents protected their child from potential harm caused by mobile learning. The results showed that most parents displayed positive attitudes towards m-learning. They also believed in its advantages including improving children’s memory, supporting children's cognitive skill development, and creating a positive learning environment at home. Among those parents who had positive views, they still concerned over health problems relating to technology usage such as eye problem, radiation exposure, and technology addiction. They also agreed that m-learning may provide negative feedback if they allowed children to use technologies without parental supervision.

Keywords: Mobile learning, m-learning, young children, pre-schooler, Parents’ attitudes
1. Introduction

Nowadays, the Internet has dramatically revolutionized different fields. It creates borderless communication and allows people to access information easier. With consistent change of Internet, people will have the ability to provide and receive information effectively through mobile devices. Particularly, the reach of mobile technologies has extended to educational contexts and is considered as learning and teaching tools both inside and outside classroom. The main advantages of mobile devices lie in their portability, connectivity, functionality, and individuality in which desktop computer cannot (Chinnery, 2006). Mobile devices help learners to access information in collaborative manner regardless of time and geographical location (Kukulska-Hulme, 2009). Since the introduction of portable devices in 1970s and 1980s, mobile learning was created. Mobile learning had increased its popularity and shown significant achievements on improving education systems (Traxler & Vosloo, 2014).

Numerous types of communication technologies have emerged over the past two decades and present in children’s daily lives and activities, especially mobile technologies such as cell phones and handheld media devices likes iPods and iPads (Gutnick, Robb, Takeuchi, & Kotler, 2011). The development in mobile technology means that young children have an opportunity to access mobile devices anytime and anywhere, which increases media consuming activities such as watching videos, listening to music, and playing games. As the advancement of technology continues to grow rapidly, mobile devices have become an essential part of young children’s lives. Mobile games and mobile learning apps have been increasingly developed, specifically for preschool children. Most parents have positive attitudes towards mobile technologies and agree that mobile learning benefits their young children and improves their children’s cognitive skills. On the other hand, some parents are worried about drawback of smartphones as they can be harmful to their child’s physical and mental health (Genc, 2014).

The general purpose of this study is to explore parents’ attitudes towards their preschool-aged children’s use of mobile devices for learning. The study also aims at understanding parents’ concerns on the risk of using mobile devices and their practices to protect children from harmful contents caused by technology. The research questions are as followed:

1) To what extent do parents allow their children to use mobile devices at home?
2) To what extent do parents engage in their children use of mobile devices at home?
3) What are the parents’ attitudes towards their preschool children’s use of mobile learning?
4) What solutions do the parents use to protect their preschool children from potential harm caused by mobile learning?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Mobile learning
Mobile learning or m-learning refers to “any educational provision where the sole or dominant technologies are handheld or palmtop devices” (Traxler, 2005). It can also be defined as mobile technology devices or wireless devices that allowed learners to gain knowledge and access learning while on the move (Traxler & Kukulska-Hulme, 2005). M-learning was a learning which offers learners a type of learning with no specific place and gain benefits offered by mobile technologies (Ozdamli & Cavus, 2011). According to Peters (2005), m-learning was introduced after mobile devices became a major part of communication technology. M-learning is an innovative technology which is accepted by community. Some aspects of m-learning that are widely studied by scholars and educators include technology-driven, miniature but portable e-learning, connected classroom learning, personalized mobile learning, mobile training support, and remote development mobile learning (Traxler & Kukulska-Hulme, 2005). Nowadays, using mobile devices for educational purposes is becoming normal expectation for learners (Lan & Huang, 2012). Due to limited class time, m-learning is one of the channels that helps compensate time constraint. With the emergence of internet technologies, m-learning can help design learning activities in order to motivate learners. Furthermore, learning activities which are carried out through mobile devices are found to support students’ social and cognitive abilities development (Montrieux, Vanderlinde, Schellens, & De Marez, 2015)

2.2 The use and benefits of m-learning
M-learning is supported by the help of mobile devices that gives access to learning process. It appears that mobile technology enhances learning environment in classroom and beyond. M-learning provides several benefits and makes learners expose learning resources through many channels. The boundaries of classroom are no longer prevail because the content is pervasive which can be accessed from anywhere. Learning activities were not limited only in classroom and learners were able to connect with teachers, learning resources and other learners everywhere (Bornman, 2012). There are many education channels for learners and teachers to acquire and share information such as YouTube, games, and apps. The report showed that there were more than 180,000 educational apps in Apple’s App Store as of February 2019 (Apple, 2019). As of May 2019, the education apps became the third
most popular downloaded app in the Apple (Statista, 2019). Thus, m-learning provides enormous possibilities in closing the gap between learners and teachers and to overcome the distance of learning.

M-learning also supports alternative learning environments. Alternative learning environments are not a new concept. Many schools are interested in alternative learning such as blended learning. The idea of blended learning is growing in popularity. Blended learning combines different delivery media to promote learners’ motivation (Singh, 2003). In blended learning classroom, students use mobile devices to facilitate and enhance their learning. The online content allows learners to engage with concepts of interests and find resources to fit their needs. In addition, m-leaning allows personalized learning experiences for learners. Personalized learning is listed as one of the vital keys to develop great success of m-learning. M-learning has been specified as personal learning since mobile devices became popular and usually owned by a single person (Traxler, 2011). It helps learners to meet their personal goals in the study. For example, students can memorize more vocabulary through practice listening by text to speech software while they are relaxing at home. They are able to build their own learning environment according to their needs so that they have control over their learning (Mikroyannidis, 2013).

M-learning enhances preschool-aged children to engage learning and memorizing the learning content. The report showed that young children usually enjoyed learning while using mobile devices (Pudaruth & Bahadoor, 2011). Tablets were considered to be a good mobile device for young children. It provided user friendliness with little direction and did not have technological problems likes desktop computers (Holloway, Green, & Livingstone, 2013; Couse & Chen, 2010). Moreover, preschool learners enjoyed learning with iPad because there was no mouse or keyboard required (Verenikina & Kervin, 2011). However, it was also observed that mobile devices came with negative feedbacks. Children get distracted and concentrate only on the devices. Therefore, it was important to ensure that preschool children do no spend long time on technology and over excessive use (Druin, 2009).

2.3 Parents’ attitudes towards m-learning
Parents tend to be aware of both the positive and negative aspects relating to children’s use of technology. According to Lang (2013), the majorities of parents believed that mobile devices offered benefits to their children because it made learning fun and engaging. They also believed that mobile devices and mobile apps were effective tools to teach academic content and helped develop various skills. Similarly, the study by Genc (2014) revealed that parents usually held positive views
towards technology in preschool-aged children as it helps improve children's visual memory, motor skills, and cognitive skills. Nonetheless, a lot of parents showed concern over negative effective that digital technology might have on their children’s social lives as well as their health. Many parents reported in Preradović, Lešin and Šagud’s (2016) study that they were worried about obesity as their children’s active activities declined due to time spent on technology. Moreover, the increased screen time may lead to other health problems caused by exposure to electric and magnetic fields generated by mobile devices (Pownell & Bailey, 2003).

Another parents’ concern is parental involvement when children use mobile devices. Even though they agreed that mobile devices provided huge benefits, they also mentioned that parents should not leave their child with technology alone (Preradović et al., 2016). Plowman, McPake, and Stephen (2008), who conducted a two-year empirical experiment with children aged 3-4 found that children were self-taught by technologies, while parents did not participate much with their children when using mobile devices. When parents did not monitor their children’s use of technology closely, it was easy for children to be distracted from learning and switch to other activities such as watching movies or playing games (Mifsud, 2002). Parental involvement, therefore, plays a vital role in minimizing negative effect of technology on children. These parental involvement acts include not only limiting children’s screen time but also teaching them about online privacy to protect them from identity theft (Moscardelli & Divine, 2007).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design
This study is a quantitative research. A total of 123 parents of preschool-aged children (age 3-6 years old) was the sample of this study. All of the samples reside in Bangkok, Thailand, and their children were studying in various preschools around city. The sampling procedure in this study was one of the non-probability sampling strategies – snowball sampling which was best for surveying specific group. In addition, to connect with parents via Line and Facebook was beneficial regarding online questionnaire distribution and data collection. The parents’ attitudes towards their children’s use of m-learning were collected by online questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed based on previous studies by Chen & Tu, 2017; Mifsud, Vella, & Camilleri, 2013; Wu, Fowler, Lam, Wong, Wong, & Yuen Loke, 2014. It is divided into four parts. The first part is demographic information of parents and child, parents’ involvement, and duration of child’s using m-learning. The second part is the survey of child’s behavior on using m-learning during the past 3 months. Next, the third part focused on parents’ practices to protect their child from risk of m-learning.
The items in part two and three were 5-point Likert scale (i.e., never, rarely, sometimes, often, and always). The last part of questionnaire is open-ended questions which contain parents’ attitudes on advantages, disadvantages of m-learning and most frequently digital activities that allow child to use.

3.2 Data Collection
The survey study was held in March and April 2019. The questionnaire was an online questionnaire created on Google form. For the data collection, the URL of the online questionnaire was distributed to the subjects via Line group and Facebook. This technique enabled the researcher to collect data while maintaining confidentiality of the participants. The online questionnaire allowed the subjects to answer on their own convenience. To avoid mistranslation, the questionnaire was written in Thai. Initially, the parents had been informed on the purpose of the study by the first introduction paragraph of the questionnaire. All personal information of the sample was kept confidential. The data collection process was retrieved from Google form and took two months to complete.

3.3 Data Analysis
Quantitative data collected from the questionnaire survey was analyzed using Microsoft Excel 2016 with Analysis Toolpak function. The results are shown in frequency, number, standard deviation, average, sum, maximum, and minimum. The summary results were separately presented according to the aim of the study. The answers from the last part of questionnaire were discussed as qualitative evidence to the third research question.

4. Findings and Discussion
4.1 Demographic information of the respondents
Table 1 presents parents’ demographic information. The respondents were 74.8% female and 25.2% male. Over 79% of the parents were between the ages of 31 and 40. The questionnaires were predominantly completed by mothers (71.5%), fathers (24.4%), and guardians (4.1%). Almost all parents (N = 123, 91.9%) were married. Nearly all parents (N = 123, 87.8%) were in full time employment, 8.1% were stay-at-home parents, and 4.1% were part-time employment. Over 95% of the parents were graduated with Bachelor’s degree and Master’s degree or higher degree. Around 37% of the participating children were six years old. Almost all children (N = 123, 92.7%) were studied in bilingual school.
Table 1. Characteristics of the respondents (N = 123)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents’ characteristics</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>74.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 - 35</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 - 40</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>47.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 - 45</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 - 50</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 50</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education attainment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College or lower</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>82.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree or higher</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>91.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stay-at-home parents</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full time employment</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>87.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part time employment</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>71.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardian</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child’s age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>37.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of child’s school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International school</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual school</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>92.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thai government school</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstration school</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 2, the largest group of parents (N = 123, 56.1%) reported that their child spent 30 minutes to one hour using mobile devices. Over 41% of the parents allowed their child to spend time one-two hours using technologies. Only 2.4 percent of the respondents spent two-three hours watching screen media at home.
Table 2. Children’s screen time (N = 123)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children’s screen time</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 – 60 min</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>56.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 2 hours</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - 3 hours</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As presented in Table 3, the majority of parents (73.2%) allowed their child to use mobile devices under supervision. Around 9.8% of the respondents leave their child with mobile devices alone. Furthermore, almost all of them allowed children to spend time more than one-hour using technologies without parents’ control. Besides, some parents allowed their child to use m-learning with parents partially stay 25 percent of times (6.5%), 50 percent of times (7.3%), and 75 percent of times (3.3%).

Table 3. Pre-schoolers use of mobile devices according to adult supervision (N = 123)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time spent on parent-child technologies use</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>73.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the data shown in Figure 1, the largest number of three years old children (15.4%) and four years old children (18.7%) spent 30 to 60 minutes on screen time. On the contrary, the majority of five years old children (15.4%) and six years old children (23.6%) spent 1 to 2 hours on technologies’ use. Only a few of 3, 4, and 6 years old spent 2 to 3 hours on digital screen time, which was accounted for 0.8% for each group.
Figure 1. The average of children’s screen time per day

Figure 2 indicates that most of the parents of three years old children (90%) spent all times together with their child when using technologies, and none of them mentioned leaving their child alone with mobile devices. More than half of the parents who have four years old children (63%) stayed with their child at all times when using mobile devices, while 18.5% of them indicated that they never spent time on parents-child technology activities. Interestingly, the parents of four years old children left their child with mobile devices without supervision more frequently than the other groups of parents.

Figure 2. Children’s screen time per day with parents’ supervision
4.2 The children’s use of mobile devices at home in the past three months

Five frequency levels from the Likert scale were used to measure how regularly children use mobile devices at home in the past three months. The parents were asked to indicate the frequency which they allowed children to undertook technology activities. In Table 4, the results revealed that the top three parents-child mobile device activities were improving English literacy (M = 3.50), drawing and painting (M = 3.23), and accessing social media (M = 2.64). The findings demonstrated that preschool-aged children in this study most commonly used mobile devices to improve English literacy (e.g., to read, write, spell, listen, and speak) every day. Furthermore, all children who used mobile devices to develop their English language skills studied in bilingual schools. Besides, parents always allowed their child to use mobile devices for improving memory and recognizing shape, sound or colors (M = 2.57), storytelling activity (M = 2.55), calculations (M = 2.45), sciences (M = 2.03), and complete school assignment (M = 2.06) when they were at home. Only some parents used m-learning to improve eye-hand coordination (M = 1.95), and to improve fine motor coordination (M = 1.91). It can be inferred that most parents used mobile devices more frequently in learning activities (i.e., to improve English literacy, and to draw and paint) and less in improving child’s movement (i.e., to improve eye-hand coordination and to improve fine motor coordination).

Table 4. The children’s use of mobile devices at home in the past three months (N = 123)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“In the past 3 months, I let my child uses mobile application”...</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To improve English literacy (to read, write, spell, listen, and speak)</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To improve memory, and recognize shape, sound or colours</td>
<td>3. For calculations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>35.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. For sciences</td>
<td>5. To complete school assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. To complete school assignment</td>
<td>6. To storytelling activity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the past 3 months, I let my child use mobile application”…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8. To improve fine motor coordination</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>51.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9. To draw and paint</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10. To access social media (YouTube and Facebook)</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>39.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>2.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 The parents’ practices to protect child from risk when using technologies

As shown in Table 5, the three highest mean scores among the parents’ practices to protect child from risk when using mobile devices were ‘limit the time spent with technologies’ (M = 4.73), ‘web content filtering and security settings’ (M = 4.31), and ‘use parental control function’ (M = 4.10). It can be seen that the most frequently parents’ practice to protect child from risks of technology was managing child’s screen time. Besides, parents always monitored child’s web browsing history (M = 3.98), install security software, programs or applications in child’s technology devices (M = 3.85), and follow or connect with child on social media (M = 3.73). It can be seen from these results that most parents were well aware that they should obtain their child’s location and password to access devices or social media.

Table 5. The parents’ practices to protect child from risk when using technologies (N = 123)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“How you protect child from risk when using technologies”</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Limit the time spent with technologies</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Web content filtering and security settings</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Monitor my child’s web browsing history</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Install and update security software, programs or applications in my child’s technology devices</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Require to see child’s location</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Require child’s password</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“How you protect child from risk when using technologies”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. Require child’s password to access social media</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>61.8</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>1.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Use parental control function</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Follow and connect with my child on social media</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>1.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4 Results from open-ended questions
4.4.1 What are the advantages of mobile learning to pre-schoolers?
Among 120 respondents, almost all parents indicated positive opinion, and explained the advantages of m-learning such as improve children’s memory, support children’s cognitive skill development, and create a positive learning environment at home. Most parents agreed that m-learning improves a child’s memory. For example, they mentioned that m-learning helped their child to recognize and retrieve new information more easily. They also agreed that using m-learning benefits children’s cognitive skill development. They thought m-learning helped develop child’s ability to learn and solve problems. In addition, parents believed that mobile devices enhanced learning environment at home. It also supported children’s self-learning and which can take place anywhere and anytime. Almost half of the parents believed m-learning can be used to motivate children to engage in learning activities. Children can be encouraged to participate in activities involving mobile applications or games so that their body and mind can work together to learn new things effectively. Besides, some parents indicated that m-learning enhanced children’s English language skills. Children understood many words and kept adding more words to their vocabulary. Also, some parents believed that m-learning elicited drawing skill in the way of build-up children’s imagination. In summary, parents considered m-learning provides benefit to children and it is important that parents have to stay with their child when using mobile devices at home.

4.4.2 What are the disadvantages of mobile learning to pre-schoolers?
In the second question, parents were asked to give opinions on the disadvantages of m-learning to pre-schoolers. Among those parents who had positive opinions, there were some parents with negative opinions mentioned how mobile devices usage can cause problems in the future. The most commonly agreed on disadvantages were m-learning may cause eye problems to children and make children addict to technology.
Parents were most concerned about mobile screen which can harm eyesight and eye healthy. They believed that smartphones screen exposure and tiny screen were making children’s eyes worse. In addition, more than one in three parents reported that children’s exposure to screen for long time can lead to smartphones and technology addiction as well social media addiction. They were afraid that mobile devices contributed to social isolation and made children disconnect from their parents. Besides, the other parents’ concerns were hyperactivity disorder and inappropriate behaviour. Ultimately, parents agreed that m-learning may provide negative feedback if they allow children to use technologies alone without supervision.

4.4.3 What is the most frequent activity that you allow children to use on mobile devices?
Parents were asked about the most frequent activity that they allow children to use on mobile devices. The most commonly performed activities were learning English languages (34.2%), drawing and painting (31.7%), and watching YouTube, movies, and cartoons (19.51%). The other activities were completing school assignment and enhancing knowledge (4.9%), learning mathematics (4.9%), playing games (1.6%), storytelling (1.6%), and singing or dancing (1.6%).

4.5 Discussion
The findings of this research provide descriptive evidence of parents’ attitudes towards their children’s use of m-learning. This study surveyed a sample of 123 Thai parents whose children were between the age of three to six regarding their attitudes towards the use of m-learning among their preschool-aged children. One of the main findings of this study was that over half of preschool children had fewer than one-hour spent on digital screen time a day with the supervision of parents. This amount of screen time is within the recommendation provided by the Council on Communications and Media (2016) who suggested that parents should limit 2-5 year old children’s digital media use to one hour or less each day. The second key finding was that most parents used mobile devices for educational purposes more often than for entertainment. This finding disagreed with previous studies (Genc, 2014; Wu et al., 2014; Gutnick et al., 2011) which indicated that parents used mobile devices more frequently for entertainment. Most of the parents in this study believed that mobile devices provide benefit and make children engage with learning. They also agreed that m-learning helps improve their child’s memory and enhancing learning environment. Although some parents had negative views towards the use of technology by preschool children, they used mobile devices as a discipline and rewarding tool. Therefore, they would allow their children to after they finished their study or homework.
Some parents believed that mobile devices may cause problems to children’s health including eye problems and radiation exposure. In addition, the respondents were worried about the issue of technology addiction and that too much use of mobile devices may isolate their child from the society. These key findings paralleled with two recent studies conducted with parents whose children were in similar age groups (Linderoth, Lantz-Andersson, & Lindström, 2002; Preradović et al, 2016). These studies reported that the parents’ attitudes towards the use of digital devices were generally negative. The results revealed that parents’ attitudes toward the use of computer by two years old children or younger is generally negative, while the use of computer by children aged six is mostly positive. In addition, parents were having concerns on connection between violent media and aggressive behaviour. The researchers, thus, suggested that parents should apply approaches to use technology at home the same way it is used in early childhood educational institutions.

Parents have an important role in managing and controlling young children use of technology. Most of the respondents agreed that parents should stay with their children when using technologies. Although, it was not easy to monitor child’s use of digital devices, parents should find the ways to protect and safe their child from potential risks of technology (Beale & Hall, 2007). This study also found that most parents protected their child from technology by limiting the time spent and applying parental control function. Most of the parents preferred limiting their child screen time; however, time limitation might not be enough to avoid harmful risks (Delen, Kaya, Ritter, & Sahin, 2015) and strict rules regarding when to use technology should be applied even among young children.

It is recommended that parents should set strict rules of using technology devices with pre-schoolers because their cognitive and linguistic skills are still in developmental stage, and parent’s guidance is very important in their digital learning processes (Warren, 2003). However, using too many restrictions may be effective only to children with lower self-control (Lee, 2012). The result revealed that children with higher self-control did not need restriction for reducing online risks. The researcher suggested that parental mediation of children’s internet use should evolve from restriction which supported children to develop their own self-regulation and self-management on online activities and risks. In addition, the previous study (Nathanson, 2001) suggested that children would develop more critical thinking skills and be more critical on media content if their parents apply instructive approach. Parents with negative attitude towards digital media prefer active and restrictive mediation, while parents with positive attitude prefer co-viewing method, which can result in more positive effects on children. Therefore, it is important to note that
parents cannot monitor their child at all time, and thus, they should consider finding alternatives in protecting their child from potential risks associated with technology.

5. Conclusion
The main aim of the present study was to identify parents’ attitudes towards preschool-aged children’s use of mobile devices for learning. The result showed positive effects of most parents and the advantages of m-learning such as to improve children’s memory, to support children’s cognitive skill development, and to create a positive learning environment at home. On the other hand, some parents indicated negative feedbacks and believed that mobile devices may cause health problems and lead to technology addiction. The findings of this study offered a better understanding of parents’ attitudes of m-learning used by pre-schoolers which led to the discovery of how parents can protect their young children from potential harm caused by mobile learning. Since children develop cognitive skills rapidly in the first few years and in developmental stage throughout grade school, parents play an important role in fostering appropriate technology use. Therefore, it is suggested that parents should update their technological knowledge, instruct their child on how to safely use digital technology, and co-use technological devices with their children in order to appropriately facilitate their growth and development. It is suggested that future research in this area focuses on understanding parents’ behaviours towards their child’s m-learning use in order to develop effective strategies and guidance in helping parents to support their child in using technologies.
References


SAT TEST RESULT ANALYSIS (VERBAL SECTION): A CASE STUDY IN A CONTEXT OF THAI STUDENTS

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Abstract
This study aimed to investigate the question types in SAT verbal sections (redesigned version of 2015) that Thai students often wrongly answer and apply the results to the SAT verbal courses of a tutorial school since many students studying SAT courses obtain SAT verbal scores between 400-500 which does not meet the admission requirement of some faculties, especially those of leading universities in Thailand. The participants in this research study were 60 students studying in Grade 10 to 12, equally from Thai traditional schools and international schools, who had registered to join a SAT simulation test at the tutorial school. The research instrument includes the SAT test from Ivy Global and Cloud Ivy global, an online instrument for calculating SAT scores, to diagnose the test results. SAT question types in the verbal section were categorized according to the criteria of Ivy Global. Then, the average scores from each question type for each participant group were calculated. The study showed that students from both groups more often wrongly answered questions in the reading section than in the writing and language section. However, in writing and language section, students from Thai traditional schools had more wrongly answered questions in the part of expression of ideas than in the part of Standard English conventions. In terms of test result application, vocabulary teaching, well-designed materials, frequent test practice, and time management learning are strategies that can support the efficiency of SAT courses of the tutorial school.
Keywords: SAT Verbal, often wrongly answer question types, SAT test result, SAT course implementation

1. Introduction
Over the past decade, many universities in Thailand have started to offer international programs, in addition to regular Thai programs, in order to increase the language proficiency level of teaching and studying in higher education; this supports graduates so they can reach their academic potential in their fields and gain excellent English proficiency skills which will spur their knowledge and ability to work internationally. Thus, the formation and screening criteria of qualified students to study in the multidisciplinary curriculum of leading and prestigious universities in Thailand have recently played a very important role. That is, each faculty sets the criteria for recruiting students: one of the criteria is English skills by assessing students’ test scores from a variety of tests, and one of the tests is SAT.

The Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) is a paper-based standardized test developed and published by the College Board, Educational Testing Service, a non-profit organization, widely used for college admission in the United States. In the latest version of the test, there are three sections with one optional essay and four paper-based tests: critical reading (65 minutes for 52 questions), writing and language (35 minutes for 44 questions), mathematics (80 minutes for 58 questions), and essay (50 minutes for 1 prompt -optional) (Richtman, 2015).

However, according to the 2018 SAT score record of students taking SAT test-prep course at the school where the researcher of this study has worked as a test-prep tutor, there were few students gaining more than 600 in the verbal section: most of the candidates gained scores between 400 and 500. The score reflects that more than half of the students did not have a SAT score in the verbal section that met the requirement of some faculties, especially of Chulalongkorn University and Thammasart University, which made them miss the opportunity to study in the faculty that was intended. Furthermore, after they came back to study and went to resit, their scores did not increase much or students got lower points than in their previous tests. Therefore, to find an answer to these problems of student failure, the researcher planned to analyze SAT test results to investigate the types of questions that students often wrongly answer. The result of the study will benefit SAT teachers and help to develop their teaching to promote student potential for the test.
2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition and Types of Language Testing

2.1.1 Definition

To know a person’s ability in language usage, a language test has to be used to measure one’s language performance. According to Brown (2004), a test means a method of measuring a person’s ability, knowledge or performance in a given domain. From the definition, there are three key words: measure, ability, and performance. For specific explanation, Brown (2004) explains the qualifications a test must measure: firstly, whether the language ability of the person is either general or specific; secondly, testers need to know who the test-takers are, and the test used has to enable them to measure individual’s ability, knowledge, and performance. Thirdly, in the test result, an individual’s performance is tested and the test scores reflect the test-taker’s ability to use a concept common in the field of linguistics in a given domain. Thus, a well-constructed test is an instrument that provides an accurate measure of the test-taker’s ability within a particular domain.

2.1.2 Types of language testing

a. NRT and CRT

There are various categorizations of language testing. When tests are categorized by the interpretation of how students perform, there are two types of test, including Norm-Referenced Testing (NRT) and Criterion-Referenced Testing (CRT). According to Hughes (2003), Norm-Referenced Testing (NRT) is a kind of test which is designed to give the placement of the score test-takers obtain whether it is in the top 10 percent, the bottom 5 percent, or better than 60 percent compared to other candidates who have taken the same test. Also, according to Brown (2004), in NRT, each test-takers’ score is interpreted in relation to a mean, median, standard deviation, and/or percentile rank. The purpose is to place test-takers along a mathematical continuum in rank order. In contrast, Criterion-Referenced Testing (CRT) is designed to give test-takers feedback, usually in the form of grades, on specific course or lesson objectives (Brown, 2004). Additionally, Hughes (2003) indicated the purpose of CRT is to classify test-takers according to whether they are able to perform some tasks or sets of tasks satisfactorily, the results can be “pass” or “fail”. In addition, CRT presents absolute interpretation, which means test-takers’ performance is compared only to the amount of percentage of material learned, without reference to the other students’ scores.

According to the theoretical concept of NRT and CRT, SAT can be both NRT and CRT depending on the translation of the scores that test takers obtain. If the scores are presented in percentiles which show the placement of test takers’ scores, it is defined as Norm-Referenced Testing (NRT). On the other hand, if a SAT test taker’s
performance is presented in the form of the number gained from the correct answers, this can be defined as Criterion-Referenced Testing (CRT).

b. Decision purposes
When language tests are categorized using decision purposes, there are four types of language test decision including placement decision, proficiency decision, achievement decision, and diagnostic decision.

Placement decisions have the goal of grouping students of similar ability levels together (Brown, 1996). This kind of decision provides teachers with benefits when the students of homogenous ability are grouped in the same class and teachers are able to choose the appropriate contents for the level of students. Proficiency decisions focus on assessing the general knowledge or skills required for admission or exit from an educational institution. Proficiency tests are designed to assess test-taker’s language performance regardless of any training they may have in that language, so the content of this kind of test is based on a specification of what test-takers have to be able to do in the language in order to be considered proficient instead of the contents taught in language courses (Hughes, 2003). Achievement decisions are classroom-level decisions. According to Brown (1996), achievement decisions are decisions about the amount of learning that students have done, involving who can advance to the next level of study or who are able to graduate from the course. Thus, an achievement test is a kind of test that assesses the performance of test-takers based on the course or classroom’s objectives. Diagnostic decisions are aimed at fostering achievement by promoting strengths and eliminating weaknesses of individuals by diagnosing problems that learners may have in their learning process. Hughes (2003) suggested that because diagnostic tests are designed to diagnose specified aspects of a language, the diagnosed topics should be categorized and sub-categorized, so the information on what students need to work on in the future will be clearly elicited. From the theory, SAT can be considered as a proficiency test because the test focuses on assessing the general knowledge required for college study of test takers, including language ability, mathematic skill, critical thinking and reasoning skills, and the scores from the test will reflect the language and mathematic performance of test takers which reflect their readiness for college study.

c. Language skills
Language tests can be categorized by the language skills they test. According to Heaton (1988), there are six types of tests including tests of grammar and usage, testing vocabulary, listening tests, oral production tests, testing reading comprehension, and testing of writing skills. If considered the language skills that SAT measures, the SAT (verbal section) comprises a reading comprehension test and tests of grammar and usage. The SAT verbal section includes two sub-sections, reading and writing. However, the reading section of SAT verbal does not evaluate
only reading skills for general understanding, but also analytical thinking through finding evidence to support the answer, (called ‘Command of Evidence’), and analyzing rhetorical strategy, the author’s attitudes, and tones of passage. For the writing section, although this part of the exam is called the writing section, essentially it measures two things: standard in English conventions, also known as grammar and usage, and expression of ideas, the ability to use language to convey appropriate meaning. The SAT is a test of language proficiency at more advanced level than other tests measuring general language level of non-native speakers.

2.3 SAT verbal section

2.3.1 Test Format

The Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) is a paper-based standardized test developed and published by the College Board, Educational Testing Service, a non-profit organization, widely used in college admission in the United States. In the latest version of the test, there are three sections with one optional essay and four paper-based tests: verbal section, including reading and writing test and math section, including math with and without the use of a calculator.

Table 2.1: The format of SAT, (adapted from College Board, 2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Time (mins)</th>
<th>Number of questions</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Verbal Reading</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Writing and Language</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Math no-calculator</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Math with calculator</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Essay (optional)*</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total score = 1,600</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The SAT essay is optional. Normally, the SAT essay score is not required for international programs of Thai universities.

2.3.2 Skills needed for SAT verbal

SAT reading section emphasizes three skills of reading: reading for information and ideas, analyzing rhetorical strategy, and synthesizing the information from texts and infographics. The SAT Reading Test has two passages that include one or two graphics(e.g., tables, graphs, and charts) that convey information related to the passage content. Students are asked to interpret the information conveyed in one or more graphics and/or to integrate that information with information in the text. The largest proportion of questions is from the part on information and ideas, and the number of questions in this part is about 36 questions. The questions about rhetoric
are around 12 questions, and 4 questions are for synthesizing skill. There are five passages, including a passage from history or social studies, a passage from natural science, a passage relating to social science, an excerpt from literature (fiction), and a paired-passage. From the table above, there are about 44 questions related to the historical and scientific contents. This means that background knowledge related to the history and society of the United States, and to science, plays an important role.

For the writing and language section of SAT, the test measures two skills: Standard English conventions and Expression of ideas. The basic aim of this section is to determine whether students can demonstrate college and career readiness proficiency in revising and editing a range of texts in a variety of content areas, both academic and career related. They check, development, organization, and effective language use and for conformity to the conventions of Standard Written English grammar, usage, and punctuation. The test comprises a series of high-quality multi-paragraph passages and associated multiple-choice questions. Some passages and/or questions are accompanied by one or more graphical representations of data — tables, charts, graphs, and the like — and certain questions require students to make revising and editing decisions about passages in light of information and ideas conveyed graphically. (College Board, 2015)

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research context
This study is a case study conducted in the tutorial school where the researcher has worked. The school has SAT courses teaching students to gain the required SAT scores according to the criteria set by prestigious universities. However, the researcher has found that while students are enabled to reach the full score or gain a high score in the SAT math section, in contrast, for the SAT verbal section, more than half of the students scored just a little over half of the full score (400/800). This makes the researcher willing to analyze SAT tests in verbal sections that students have done to find the types of question that they often answers wrongly, and then link those mistakes to the English skills which apply to those questions. The ultimate goal for future is to bring out the research results to further develop teaching and learning in this tutorial school.

This research study took place in a Thai tutorial school context. The participants were Thai secondary students studying in Mathayom 4 to 6 (Grade 10 to 12) in Thai traditional schools and international schools in Thailand. They had registered to join a SAT simulation test at Ignite by Ondemand tutorial school, a tutorial school of test
preparation for university admission and international programs, both in Thailand and oversea colleges.

3.2 Population and participants

The participants in this research study were 60 students studying in Mathayom 4 to 6 (Grade 10 to 12) who registered to join the event of a SAT simulation test at Ignite by Ondemand tutorial school. All participants had their own objectives in being examined for their performance on SAT. From 91 students who registered for the SAT simulation test at the school, 60 students were selected as sample and equally categorized into two groups - those from Thai traditional schools and those from international schools- to compare the results of test result analysis. The reason for dividing students into two groups as mentioned is because Thai students and international students study in schools with different primary languages; that is, international students have more opportunities to use English during their classes than Thai students. Therefore, acquired English skill could be an important factor that makes these two groups different in terms of language skills utilized in language testing, which would affect the SAT scores in this research and elicit some important aspects in this study.

3.3 Research instrument

The SAT test used in the study was a test from Ivy Global, including 52 questions in the reading section and 44 questions in the writing and language section. The reason for using the Ivy Global test was because most students who prepare themselves for SAT tend to choose SAT practice tests from the College Board, which is the organization which developed the SAT test. To avoid repeated tests, the researcher therefore chose a SAT test from Ivy Global. Cloud Ivy Global, an online instrument for calculating SAT scores, was used to diagnose the test results. The researcher was able to key in the SAT answers of test-takers into the system. Then the system evaluated the scores and analyzed weaknesses and strengths in both the reading and writing sections. The example of the score calculation program screen is illustrated in the figures below.

3.4 Data analysis

SAT question types from the verbal section were categorized according to the criteria of Ivy Global. The participants’ test results were analyzed by the Cloud Ivy Global program to see the types of question that two groups of students correctly and wrongly answered. Then the average scores from each question type of each participant group were calculated. After analyzing the data, the researcher got results which demonstrated the question types that most students wrongly answered. The findings can be applied for SAT verbal course development in the targeted tutorial school, and possibly others, in the future.
4. Findings and Discussions
4.1 The question types in SAT verbal section that Thai students often wrongly answer
Table 4.1: SAT question types in reading section that Thai students often wrongly answer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question types</th>
<th>Percentage of correctness</th>
<th>Question types</th>
<th>Percentage of correctness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main ideas</td>
<td>23.33%</td>
<td>Finding information</td>
<td>34.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding information</td>
<td>30.66%</td>
<td>Rhetoric</td>
<td>35.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetoric</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>Implied information</td>
<td>37.62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After comparison, the test result shows that students from both groups more often wrongly answer questions in the reading section than in the writing and language section. For Thai traditional school students, the first most frequently wrongly-answered types of questions in the reading section are main ideas (IT) – with only 23.33 percent correct. The second most wrongly-answered types is finding evidence (IC) – only 30.66 percent correct, and the third most wrongly-answered types are rhetoric – correct only 33.33 percent of responses.
For international students, the first most frequently wrongly-answered types of questions in the reading section are finding evidence (IC) with only 34.33 percent correct. The second most wrongly-answered type is rhetoric – correct only 35.45 percent of the time, and the third most wrongly-answered types is implied information (II) with only 37.62 percent correct.
Table 4.2: SAT question types in writing section that Thai students often wrongly answer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question types</th>
<th>Percentage of correctness</th>
<th>Question types</th>
<th>Percentage of correctness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard English Conventions</td>
<td>70.5%</td>
<td>Standard English Conventions</td>
<td>69.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression of Ideas</td>
<td>41.25%</td>
<td>Expression of Ideas</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In writing and language section, most students perform quite well, especially in the Standard English convention part, which includes 20 questions. The percentage of students who correctly answered questions in this section from Thai traditional schools was 70.5, and that of international school students was 69.16 per cent. However, students from Thai traditional schools more often wrongly answer questions in the part of expression of ideas than in the part of Standard English convention. They answered questions correctly at a rate less than 30 percent; this included the questions of style and tone (ET), precise word choice (EP), supporting evidence (DS), main idea (DP), graphic analysis (DQ), and logical sentence order (OL). International students also were more likely to give wrong answers to questions in the part of expression of idea than in the part of Standard English convention. The subtypes of questions they answered correctly less than 30 percent included relevant information (DF), main idea (DP), precise word choice (EP), style and tone (ET), and logical sentence order (OL).

4.2 The application of test result to the course at the tutorial school

4.2.1 Strengthening skills for reading section
From the SAT test results, it is apparent that the reading section is the more challenging section of the two as the percentage of correct answers in this section is lower than half. Most students struggle with the questions of four subtypes: rhetoric, main ideas (IT), finding evidence (IC), and implied information (II). This means that all mentioned question types should be a focus for SAT test preparation in order to strengthen students’ reading skill and increase their SAT scores.
In addition, more students from Thai traditional schools did not perform well in the part of the test concerned with expression of ideas in the writing and language section. This is where students have to use their ability to revise and edit a range of texts in a variety of content areas, both academic and career related, for development, organization, and effective language use. In this part, students need to use reading ability and appropriate language usage to answer questions correctly which is not the same as in the part of the Standard English convention which mostly measures grammar ability.
To improve students’ ability in reading section, vocabulary plays a key role. From the percentage of correct answers of students from both groups it can be inferred that the problematic parts of students’ reading skill are knowing vocabulary appearing in SAT passages and understanding information and ideas which are the starting point of reading skill. The analyzing of rhetorical strategy or using critical thinking skill is the next step after the reading foundation skills are grounded.

4.2.2 Implement SAT materials of the school
The SAT material used in SAT courses of the tutorial school is an 11-chapter SAT book whose reading chapters are categorized according to the types of SAT reading.
passages: science, social science, American history and world literature, and paired passages. Each of the SAT question types are integrated into each passage. Students are trained to read and translate each passage type instead of learning the strategies and given training to do each SAT question type. To apply the findings of this study, if the SAT teaching materials are implemented and redesigned by categorizing each chapter according to each SAT reading question type, and students are trained with drills for each type of question, especially complex and frequently-wrong types, students will be familiar with the question types and be enabled to correctly answer more often.

Although in the book there is a chapter on expression of ideas, more practice exercises should be added for students to drill and practice because this question type is still a big challenge for Thai students. Additionally, Standard English convention is the part that most students do quite well, but teachers also need to promote this knowledge in addition to offering SAT practice tests to become familiar with their questions, which will also help increase the total score of the test.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Pedagogical Implication

Most participants often wrongly answered the questions in reading section of SAT verbal, especially in the question types of rhetoric, main ideas, finding evidence, and implied information. On the other hand, the participants performed better in writing and language section; however, Thai students more wrongly answered the question type of expression of idea.

The improvement of vocabulary and reading ability could be the first step and main focus for SAT verbal course. Rhetorical strategy analysis and critical thinking skill is the next step after the reading foundation skills are grounded. Furthermore, well-designed materials and frequent practice can support the efficiency of SAT course. Also, test practicing and time management could be the methods to make students get familiar with the SAT test style and better manage time while testing.

5.2 Recommendations for future research

1) This study was carried out to investigate the question types in the SAT verbal section that Thai students often wrongly answer. This was a case study of a group of students in a tutorial school. In the future, a study should be conducted with a bigger number of participants in order to obtain better understanding of students’ obstacles with the verbal section of SAT test. This could help teachers improve their teaching techniques in order to develop students’ language ability, which will increase students’ performance on the SAT test.
2) In further studies, questionnaires and interviews should be added to obtain more information on the participants’ problem in the SAT test.

3) The findings of this study could be useful for many teachers to assist them to develop and implement SAT verbal course design to beef up students’ competence and focus on weaknesses for maximizing student SAT scores and meeting the requirements of university admission.

References


A CORPUS-BASED STUDY OF SYNONYMS: FIGHT AND BATTLE

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Abstract
The study aimed to investigate the substitution of two verb synonyms, namely *fight* and *battle*, focusing on the similarities and differences in terms of collocation information and grammatical patterns. The data were collected from two sources which were the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English Online (2019) and the 560-million-word Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). The results reflected that although both synonyms shared several noun collocations in the category of ‘Warfare and Military,’ ‘Health and Medicine,’ as well as ‘Social Issues,’ some specific characteristics of each, appearing in these groups, and differentiating usage of *fight* and *battle* were discovered. *Fight* had more preference in the ‘Law’ and ‘Economy’ categories whereas *battle* more frequently co-occurred with those in the groups of ‘Environment, ‘Sports,’ and ‘Entertainment.’ Regarding grammatical patterns, the way the two synonyms were followed by their direct objects without any propositional phrases was found to be the most common pattern used in the authentic contexts. When the prepositional phrases occurred, the preposition *for* was the most frequently used one. For differences, *fight* had a tendency to produce many more patterns while *battle* carried the unique characteristic to be followed by gerund phrases. Therefore, it is crucial for language learners especially those who study English as a foreign language to always take these kinds of similarities and differences of any synonyms into consideration in order to be capable of using the synonyms appropriately.
Keywords: Synonym, Collocation Information, Lemma, COCA

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Among several aspects that prevent them from using English in the way native speakers do, synonyms can be another problematic factor to be successful in language learning. (Yeh, Liou, & Li, 2007). There are a large number of synonyms in English, such as fast and rapid, lie and untruth, because and since, under and beneath, or release and emit. English learners are normally taught to remember these words together to expand their vocabulary size (McKeown, Beck, & Sandora, 2012). However, the awareness of interchangeability issue needs to be raised since synonyms cannot substitute each other in all situations. For example, Alanazi (2017) illustrated that although both lie and untruth refer to the statement that does not conform to the truth, lie is likely to be used when there is a deliberate attempt to deceive while untruth does not necessarily relate to that intention but maybe the complete ignorance. Moreover, release and emit share the same meaning of ‘to send out gas.’ They are interchangeable in such context as Carbon dioxide is directly released/emitted into the atmosphere. Nevertheless, when release means ‘give someone freedom’ as in That prisoner was released yesterday, the word emit cannot replace release in this context, as in *That prisoner was emitted yesterday.

With more awareness of synonyms, they can provide English learners several benefits. The most obvious one is a boost in the vocabulary acquisition process during the vocabulary lessons compared to those who did not undertake the learning of synonyms according to Webb’s (2007) study. In addition, Yeh, Liou and Li (2007) presented another advantage of synonyms which were useful to improve English skills, especially writing skill. Using a variety of words with the same meaning in an essay can attract readers’ attention through until the end of the writing more effectively. Simultaneously, the writers who possess a number of synonyms can convey the intended meaning more precisely and prevent readers’ misunderstanding caused by the one-way communication quality of a piece of writing.

Based on my experience as an English language instructor in a military language center, two words in the military context that occur frequently in the classroom are fight and battle. For definition, both of them share the meaning of “to try hard to get, prevent, achieve or get rid of something” and “to take part in a war, battle, election, or competition.” (LDOCE, 2019). They were used interchangeably in many cases by my students, including myself, who are not native speakers possessing the intuition to judge the appropriate use of the words. Therefore, this study aims to distinguish these two words by implementing a corpus program to analyze the real use.
of the two words from different genres of texts. There are several aspects of synonym analysis which are definitions, collocations, connotations, grammatical patterns, styles, and dialects (Phoocharoensil, 2010). In this research, two distinct features of the synonyms, which are collocation and grammatical patterns were selected and analyzed thoroughly. However, only collocation information was presented in this journal. For those who are interested to have an insight into grammatical patterns of the synonyms, having an access into a full version of my independent study is recommended.

1.2 Objective of the study
1.2.1 To investigate the collocation information of the verbs fight and battle

1.3 Research Questions
1.3.1 What is the collocation information of the verbs fight and battle?

1.4 The Limitations of the Study
There was a restriction occurring in this research according to the use of COCA. The continuous and perfect continuous aspects which can generate more variety of noun collocates will not be included in the results owing to the limitation of the search system in the corpus program.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Definition
2.1.1 Synonym
The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary of English (2016) defines synonym as a word with the same meaning as another word in the same language. For example, shut is a synonym of closed.
The Oxford Dictionary online (2018) gives a meaning of synonym as a word or phrase that means the same or nearly the same as another word or phrase in the same language and also provide the same examples.
The Cambridge Dictionary online (2018) also provides exactly the same definition as the one in the Oxford Dictionary.

Leech (1981) stated that to identify two words as synonyms, they must share the rule of implication or the rule that determines the possible substitution of each synonym.

Therefore, it can be concluded that synonyms are words in the same language that possess the same meaning. However, according to the last definition, it
gives a sign that the meaning itself may not be adequate but the particular context or some grammatical patterns should also be considered to confirm that they are synonyms with each other.

2.1.2 Collocation

The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2016) defines the collocation as the way in which some words are often used together, or a particular combination of words used in this way. For example, *commit a crime* is a typical collocation in English.

The Oxford Dictionary online (2018) provides the meaning of collocation as the habitual juxtaposition of a particular word with another word or words with a frequency greater than chance.

The Cambridge Dictionary online (2018) gives a meaning of collocation as a word or phrase that is often used with another word or phrase, in a way that sounds correct to people who have spoken the language all their lives, but might not be expected from the meaning.

Timmis (2015) reinforced the definitions in the dictionary with the claim that collocation is a combination of two lexical words frequently occurring together in close position such as *dire straits* or *make sense*. Also, Firth (1957) supported that collocation is not absolute but probabilistic owing to repetitive combinations spoken and confronted by the speakers of any language.

To sum up, collocation can be words or phrases that frequently occur together so naturally and repeatedly that they sound correct to native speakers.

2.1.3 Lemma

The Cambridge Dictionary online (2019) provides the meaning of lemma as a form of a word that appears as an entry in a dictionary and is used to represent all the other possible forms. For example, the lemma ‘build’ represents ‘builds,’ ‘building,’ and ‘built.’

The Oxford Dictionary online (2019) gives the meaning of lemma as a word or phrase defined in a dictionary or entered in a word list.

Crystal (1997) claimed that lemma is a dictionary headword or an abstract representation which subsumes all formal lexical variations, for example, the lemma walk subsumes walking, walks, and walked.

In summary, it can be said that lemma is defined as an entry word in the dictionary which represents all possible forms that a certain word can generate. The notion of lemma helps corpus linguistic researchers compose word frequency lists and investigate collocations more effectively (Knowles and Don, 2004). Thus, this notion will be applied to this study during the analysis process. Even though nouns can be added to by ‘s’ to show plurality, both singular and plural form of noun
collocates found from the corpus will be considered as the same ones as they share the same lemma.

2.1.4 The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)
The Corpus of Contemporary American English or COCA is one of the largest and the most widely-known corpus of English that those who are interested in or carry out research can access without charge. There are 5 main sub-corpora in COCA which are spoken, fiction, magazine, newspaper, and academic. In other words, it provides various genres ranging from the least formal to the most formal. COCA comprises more than 560-million words of texts. The major functions that can be generated in the corpus include List, Chart, Collocates, Compare, and Keyword in Context (KWIC). Moreover, COCA constantly updates its own database, with December 2017 as the most recent update. This diverse, high quantity, and up-to-date information leads to reliability and validity attested by the number of international users.

2.2 Previous studies
Some previous studies which can demonstrate methods to analyze the information and generate interesting notions about synonyms are as follows.

Phoocharoensil (2010) investigated five synonyms, ask, beg, plead, request, and appeal in terms of definitions, collocations, connotations, grammatical patterns, styles, and dialects. He also compared the information from the dictionary with those from the concordance lines. The finding revealed that although all synonyms shared the same core meaning, beg was frequently used for something anxious and urgent, plead went with something serious and important, request collocated with something polite and formal, and appeal was concerned with something serious, urgent, formal, and legal. For dialects, each of them can be applied in their own specific region where some contained idiomatic expressions used in the area such as beg. For connotation, appeal followed by the preposition against expressed a negative meaning. For grammatical patterns, some of them share the patterns but there are some distinct patterns where they cannot co-occur especially in idiomatic expressions. For collocations, noun and adverb collocates are the most commonly found for these verbs.

Ong (2014) found out the similar and different use of the words specially and especially which were analyzed in 3 aspects, collocation, phraseology and semantic prosody. The Oxford Dictionary Online and 100 concordance lines of the Bank of English (BoE) corpus were selected to have an insight into both words. The result showed that specially is regularly used to describe actions to fulfill specific functions while especially tended to describe information to maximize specific entities or qualities. Furthermore, whereas specially typically collocated with verbs and prepositions especially co-occurred more with adverb and adjective such as when and
good respectively. For semantic prosody, especially has more tendency to create negative images like risk and battle compared to specially. However, both words typically share negative prosody when describing women’s characteristics.

Yang (2016) scrutinized the synonyms learn and acquire about their similarities and differences, investigating concordance, collocation, word sketches and sketch differences. 100 million-word BNC was gathered and then analyzed by the software Sketch Engine (SkE). The finding revealed that learn was more frequently used. For collocates, the top 50 collocates from both sides were examined by SkE. The left collocates of learn were classified into four main categories which were abstract nouns, individual/collective nouns, personal pronouns, and auxiliary and modal verbs while the categories for the right one were abstract nouns and notional verbs. For the word acquire, adverbs, abstract nouns, and individual/collective nouns were considered the three major categories whereas abstract nouns and individual/collective nouns were the groups for the right collocates.

Srimaneerat (2016) examined the similarities and differences among three verb synonyms which were catch, grab, and grasp based on the analysis of their lexical information, collocation information, and degree of formality. Two sources used to collect the data were the MacMillan Dictionary Online (2016) and the 200 concordance lines from COCA focusing on only those in the past simple and past participle forms. The result showed that the synonymous words had more than one definition in terms of lexical information. For collocation information, the study put an emphasis on merely noun collocates preceded by these verbs. They were categorized into two main classes which were abstract nouns with human actions as a top subcategory and concrete nouns with human organs as a top one. For degree of formality, all of them were more likely to appear in less formal contexts due to the high prevalence in fiction. Nonetheless, grasp was currently the only one that can also be found in formal academic texts. The study confirmed the need for careful use of these synonyms since they can substitute one another perfectly only in particular contexts.

To sum up, in this research of the verb synonyms fight and battle, the focus to key the specific details in the corpus program to generate only right collocates acting as a direct object or a prepositional phrase of the target verb is crucial for valid outcome. Besides, the idea to use the references both from dictionary and corpus data is interesting. Instead of using both as main tools as in Phoocharoensil’s (2010) study, this paper will use corpus data as the main resource to analyze the collocation information and use a dictionary to support the definition. Also, creating some subcategories to illustrate the collocates of the synonyms helps improve the comprehension of the results as in Srimaneerat (2016).
3. Research Methodology

3.1 Targeted Synonyms

The study examined two English verb synonyms *fight* and *battle* focusing on their present and past forms which are *fight*, *fought*, *battle* and *battled* in order to cover a variety of tenses where these synonyms can occur. The synonyms occasionally share the same lexical information in some contexts, so it is fairly tricky to differentiate them and use them appropriately at the same level that native speakers can do, especially for those who learn English as a foreign language.

3.2 Data Collection

The data were drawn from two sources. The first one was the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English Online (LDOCE, 2019) and the other was the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) comprising 560-million words collected from various texts from 1990 – 2017. COCA can be accessed by the link [https://corpus.byu.edu/coca/](https://corpus.byu.edu/coca/). The data collected from COCA was mainly analyzed to reveal collocation information of the synonyms by using the dictionary to supply the lexical and grammatical information required to present the findings.

In order to find out the collocation information, 200 top collocates gathered from the top 50 noun collocates in both present and past forms of the synonyms, *fight*, *fought*, *battle*, and *battled*, from COCA were examined. The procedure to retrieve the information was as follows.

1. Go to the function ‘Collocates’ displayed on the homepage of COCA website.
2. Fill in the box ‘Word/phrase’ with the synonyms *fight*, *fought*, *battle*, and *battled* one at a time.
3. Set the function as ‘verb.ALL’ at the button ‘POS’ abbreviated from ‘Parts of Speech’ and placed behind the ‘Word/phrase’ box in order to limit only synonyms acting as a verb to be shown in an outcome.
4. Set another ‘POS’ button next to the box ‘Collocates’ below the box ‘Word/phrase’ as ‘noun.ALL’ according to the focused collocates which were only nouns and this could prevent prepositions or adverbs being incorporated into the result.
5. Select the number ‘4’ in the number tabs below the box ‘Collocates.’ The tab ranging from 0 to 9 showed the number of collocates counting to the left and right of the target word that was required for analysis.
6. There was a ‘Sort/Limit’ button below the ‘reset’ button. Inside this function, the ‘minimum’ box needed to be filled with ‘MUT INFO 3’ since MUT is short for ‘Mutual Information Score,’ the way to calculate the word with more relevant conceptual information.
3.3 Data Analysis

After obtaining the information from COCA, the analysis of the two synonyms was manually conducted. There were four steps to analyze the collocation information in order to answer the research question. The steps were as follows.

1. Scrutinize the top 50 noun collocates retrieved from the function ‘Collocate.’
2. Remove some repetitive words in terms of lemmatization as well as some words belonging to other parts of speech instead of verbs which were the focus of the study. In this part, to manually recheck the information retrieved was significant since merely relying on the automatic process can mislead regarding the inaccuracy of the findings.
3. Tabulate the noun collocates ranked by the frequency of occurrence from the most to the least.
4. Classify the noun collocates into some categories to illustrate the types of nouns co-occurring with the two synonyms more distinctly.

During the process, some further explanations for certain noun collocates might be required in order to prevent the confusion of the reader about the connection between the target synonyms and their collocates.

4 Findings and Discussions

This chapter reports the findings of following topics:

4.1 Top 50 Noun Collocates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Rank</th>
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<td>war(s)</td>
<td>1217</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>discrimination</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>disease(s)</td>
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<td>crime</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>28</td>
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<td>204</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Taliban</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>infection(s)</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>custody</td>
<td>39</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>fight*</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>injustice</td>
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<tr>
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<td>independence</td>
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<tr>
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<td>freedom</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>epidemic</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to Table 4.1, the noun war(s) was considered the most frequent word co-occurring with the word fight at the frequency of 1,217 times. Battle(s) and terrorism were ranked in the second and third place at the frequency of 462 and 325 respectively. 23 occurrences of fronts and insurgents as the noun collocates for the verb fight were regarded as the lowest frequency.

6 out of 50 noun collocates for fight were not displayed explicitly in the table since they shared the same lemmas, the head words in the dictionary without any inflections added. As a noun, a common inflection which is applied to the lemma form is the plural morpheme. For example, according to the noun collocates of fight, the word wars with ‘s’ at the end and enemies with the conversion of the terminal letter from ‘y’ to ‘ies’ were the plural form of the word war and enemy respectively. Therefore, war at the frequency of 955 and wars at the frequency of 262 in the original data from COCA should be combined as 1217 items of frequency and shown as ‘war(s)’ in table 4.1 owing to originating from the same lemma war. Hence, the symbol ‘(s)’ attached at the end of the word in any collocation tables in this paper refer to the lemmatization idea.

Besides, another symbol that was occasionally used in the noun collocate tables in this report was the asterisk ‘*’ assigned after some collocates. It signified that those noun collocates may cause confusion about the conceptual relation between them and the target synonym. This further explanation was provided to prevent the problem and clarify the relationship between the words. For instance, in Table 4.1, the asterisks were put to the words fight, terror, tooth, nail, tears, warming, radicals and fronts. Using merely the direct translation that someone fights their own organs like tooth or mail can be misleading.

To begin with, it may seem strange to imagine why the target word ‘fight’ was followed by itself as ‘*I saw him fight fight.’” Actually, fight has its own expression ‘fight the fight’ which was commonly used in a considerable number of contexts discovered in the concordance lines. It can be seen in “…If you send me there, you’ve got a young guy who’s going to fight the fight to get this country back…” (Retrieved
from Atlanta Journal Constitution entitled Georgia Politics; GOP race not strictly to right in 2014). The next one, terror, does not only refer to the emotion of scare as fight’s collocate. It can also be used in the famous term ‘the war on terror’ coined by president George W. Bush after the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001 in the USA. It appears as in “The American public has largely understood that, and therefore has set Abu Ghraib apart from questions about how to fight the war on terror.” (Retrieved from ACAD: Commentary entitled The 35-year War on the CIA in 2009). It can be noted that this terror can be interpreted as both ‘scare’ and ‘terrorism’ in this context. In fact, almost all of the words terror obtained from concordance lines were defined as ‘terrorism.’

Regarding tooth and nail, it reflected further understanding about the common use of idiomatic expression for the word fight in real context. The idiomatic expression ‘to fight tooth and nail’ means ‘to try extremely hard to do, achieve, or prevent something,’ as in “Regardless what you think about Geoffrey, he will fight tooth and nail for his clients, including unpopular causes and impossible odds.” (Retrieved from The Detroit News entitled Fieger v. Morse: Lawsuits spark battle of TV lawyers in 2017).

In the case of tears, this reveals another expression ‘fight back tears’ which means ‘try very hard not to cry’ as in “Again, Griffith Joynor was barely able to fight back tears as she talked about wanting to help children take a psychological break from their depressed surroundings.” (Retrieved from Houston Chronical entitled For Flojo, ‘fast track’ takes on new significance in 1993).

For warming, this was not involved with the general temperature topic as ‘warm weather’ but one of the most current environment issues, ‘global warming,’ as in “And we will go inside the politics that may prevent an international plan to fight global warming.” (Retrieved from Fox Baier entitled Political Headlines in 2009).

Regarding radicals, while the term was frequently found in the context of crime or terrorist news in the definition of ‘violent people’, all concordance lines in which radicals were co-occurring with fight belonged to the medical genre in the phrase ‘free radicals’, uncharged molecules in human body, as in “They say seeds are full of polyphenols, which fight free radicals and contribute to healthy skin.” (Retrieved from San Francisco Chronicle entitled The science of skin care; BEAUTY; Peninsula startup finds a new use for its microalgae-anti-aging in 2011).

Last but not least, all of the 23 occurrences of fronts with fight did not refer to the foremost lines of an armed force, but relate to the expression ‘fight on … (number) fronts’ which means ‘to fight against more than one enemy at a time’ as in “The government is also being forced to fight on several fronts in addition to ...

4.1.1.2 Fought

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<td>44</td>
<td>domination</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2 Top 50 Noun Collocates Frequently Co-occurring with Fought Ranked by COCA

In Table 4.2, war(s) with the frequency of 935 and battle(s) with the frequency of 464 were ranked in the first and the second place for the synonym fought similar to fight. There were two words that had the lowest frequency of 9, which were skirmishes and domination.

The 12th noun collocate of fought, breath, showed the frequent use of the expression ‘fight for breath’ which means ‘have a lot of difficulty breathing’ as in “Rhodes fought for breath and finally sucked in some air.” (Retrieved from The wild hog murders entitled The wild hog murders in 2011). Although court’s definition can belong to many fields such as sports, royalty, or business, this corpus illustrated the context of court with the verb fought only in the meaning of ‘the place where the trial
and legal case is held’ as in “He notes that he fought in the courts to protect a Bible display installed on public property and to have the divorce of a same-sex couple’s civil union invalidated because they’d gotten hitched in Vermont.” (Retrieved form Mother Jones entitled THE GREAT HIGH HOPE in 2012).

The following word was standstill which co-occurred with fought in the expression ‘fight (something) to a standstill.’ It means ‘to keep trying very hard to stop the situation’ as in “Iraqi forces in the south at least have fought ISIS to a standstill at Baiji.” (Retrieved form PBS NEWSHOUR 6:00 PM EST entitled PBS NewsHour for August 8, 2014 in 2014).

Finally, an expression of cats and the verb fought was displayed in the corpus. It was ‘fought like cats and dogs’ indicating ‘the way two or more people argue each other a lot’ as in “Harvey and his older sister, Marcia, fought like cats and dogs, so Mr. Aberle invited me along to sit between them in the car when they went skiing.” (Retrieved from Denver Post entitled The places He’s Gone in 1997).

4.1.1.3 Battle

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Rank</th>
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<td>depression</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>fire(s)</td>
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<td>streets*</td>
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</tr>
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<td>disease</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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<td>27</td>
<td>fatigue</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>bacteria</td>
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<td>evil</td>
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<td>34</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>injuries</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>virus</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>perception</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 4.3 Top 50 Noun Collocates Frequently Co-occurring with Battle Ranked by COCA
Table 4.3 revealed that the noun *blaze* co-occurred with *battle* most at the frequency of 29. The nouns *forces* and *fire* had fairly close frequency with *blaze* at the frequency of 23 and 22 respectively. *Battle*’s noun collocates with the lowest frequency of 4 contained *swords, pirates, obesity, racism, bacteria, invasion, gang, fate, injuries, and perception*.

The word *elements* in the 6th rank derived from ‘the elements’ meaning ‘the weather especially bad weather’ as in “It’s possible to walk between the malls, but you have to [battle the elements] and cross busy thoroughfares.” (Retrieved from Southern Living entitled Check in & Shop in 2004). *Spot(s)* in the 8th rank normally co-occurred with the noun *roster*, which was removed from the table since it collocated with *spot(s)* not *battle*, in the sports expression ‘battle for roster spots’ that means ‘to try hard to be selected in the team list for the next match’ as in “Young Eric Johassen (6-5, 310) and 15-year vet Stan Brock battle for the roster spot.” (Retrieved from USA Today entitled Assessing AFC teams in 1994). Despite the common definition of ‘a swell’, the noun collocate *bulge* in this case referred to the phrase ‘the Battle of the Bulge,’ a strong but unsuccessful German attack against Belgium in 1944, but the meaning of this phrase changed and came to express a humorous way to mean ‘a struggle to lose weight’ as in “Still to come, fitness expert Donna Richardson dancing to a new beat to help you [battle the bulge], when LATER TODAY continues.” (Retrieved from NBC Today entitled ACTRESS ELIZABETH PERKINS TALKS ABOUT HER NBC SITCOM “BATTERY PARK”, FILM “28 DAYS” AND HER GROWING-UP YEARS in 2000).

For the word *street*, it indicated the place where a battle took place as in “German and Soviet soldiers [battle bitterly in the streets] of Kharkov.” (Retrieved from Associated Press entitled Chronology of World War II Events in March 1943 in 1993). The noun collocate *sword* represented one of the most common weapons used in a battle and followed the preposition *with* as in “The Seoul firm is the creator of Lineage, a medieval cyberworld in which players do [battle with swords] and shields, and use magical rings to change their identities.” (Retrieved from TIME entitled South Korea Wires Up in 2001).

In addition, there were 3 collocates excluded from the table since they collocated with the word *battle* which was not a verb but a noun instead, and it is not the focus of the study. The first word was *stations* coming from the whole compound noun ‘battle stations’ referring to ‘announcements aboard a naval warship to alert the crew to prepare to battle’ In addition, *gear* was related to the compound noun of warrior garment ‘battle gear.’ The last one was *cry* that was found in the compound noun ‘battle cry,’ a phrase used to encourage people in a particular cause.

Besides noun collocates with the same lemmas and the synonyms *battle* acting as nouns, 3 more noun collocates in the top 50 were excluded from Table 4.3 because
they functioned as modifiers in the compound nouns. The first one was *insurance* in which all of its concordance lines revealed it was always the a modifier preceding the noun *company(s)*, which was the authentic noun collocate of the synonym *battle*, as in “As a result, policy owners are left to **battle insurance companies** over coverage issues.” (Retrieved from Consumers Research Magazine entitled What to look for in homeowner’s insurance in 1996). The following word was *quarterback* which was always found to be a modifier of the word *job* in the expression ‘to battle for the quarterback job,’ a meaning of trying so hard to play in the quarterback position, as in “They did bring in Flynn to **battle for the quarterback job**, but the job will go to Pryor, the former Jeannette High School star.” (Retrieved from Pittsburgh Post-Gazette entitled GERRY DULAC PREVIEWS THE AFC in 2013).

Finally, for the noun of human organ *breast*, all of its 4 concordance lines were always followed by the word *cancer* which was in the 4th rank of the table, so the frequency of *breast* was already included in those of *cancer* (17) shown in the table. The example of the word was seen in “As it comes out of a pill bottle, neither Plavix nor tamoxifen is an active drug, ready to **battle** blood clots or **breast cancer**.” (Retrieved from USA Today entitled A treatment just for you? Genetic testing may help; It can predict body’s response to medicines).

### 4.1.1.4 Battled

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>injury(s)</td>
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<td>fatigue</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>depression</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>weight*</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>disease</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>diabetes</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
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<td>7</td>
<td>forces</td>
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<td>27</td>
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</tr>
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<td>28</td>
<td>drugs*</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>insurgents</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>fire (s)</td>
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<td>flames</td>
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<td>demons</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>urge</td>
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<td>34</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>demonstrators</td>
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<td>courts</td>
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<td>36</td>
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</tr>
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<td>17</td>
<td>streets</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>infections</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>troops</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>protesters</td>
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</table>
Table 4.4 Top 50 Noun Collocates Frequently Co-occurring with Battled Ranked by COCA

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>decades*</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>supremacy*</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>chemotherapy*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to table 4.4, cancer was the top noun collocate of battled at the frequency of 80. The following words ranked in the table in terms of frequency were injury (43) and depression (31). The noun collocate chemotherapy at the frequency of 1 was counted as the minimum frequency for battled’s noun collocate. Actually, chemotherapy occurred 3 more times in the original data from the corpus but it was removed from the table since the occurrences did not co-occur with the noun battled but with the phrase ‘side effects’ instead as in “We’ll also speak with singer Melissa Etheridge, who battled cancer and chemotherapy side effects with medical marijuana and calls pot a godsend.” (Retrieved from CNN_Cooper entitled Ballots and Bullets; America’s High: The Case for and against Pot; Health Care Time Bomb in 2009). The one that collocated with the synonym battled can be found in “She left the offer languish as she battled chemotherapy, then surgery, to beat the grapefruit-sized tumor doctors found in her leg.” (Retrieved from Houston Chronicle entitled BUILDING AN ORPHANAGE; A local teen with cancer uses a gift meant for her to instead HELP CHILDREN with AIDS; Her wish fulfills the hopes of others in 2008).

Some confusing nouns discovered in this group were the ones with the definition of ‘the power to make a decision about something’ like control, supremacy, and dominance usually followed by battled and the preposition for as in “On the ground in Iraq, government troops battled insurgents for control of the country’s largest oil refinery for a third day.” (Retrieved from PBS NEWSHOUR 6:00 PM EST entitled PBS NewsHour for June 19, 2014 in 2014). Furthermore, decade, the noun collocates expressing time, co-occurred with battled and was put after the preposition for as in “Journalist Bryant Gumbel met Ali as a teenager, and in 1991 interviewed him about the Parkinson’s disease that he battled for decades.” (Retrieved from PBS NEWSHOUR 6:00 PM EST entitled PBS NewsHour for June 10, 2016 in 2016).

Another possible idiomatic expression created with battle was produced by the noun collocate odds in the expression ‘battle against the odds’ which means ‘to work hard despite great difficulties’ as in “So you are seeing a community which has done fantastically well for the last two years, has battled bravely against the odds.” (Retrieved from CNN Morning entitled Dr. Paul Jackson Discusses the Dangers of the Monsterrat Volcano in 1997).

Besides the lemmatization issue, there was an additional factor causing the deletion of some noun collocates presented in Table 4.4. The reason was that some noun collocates retrieved from COCA did not co-occur with the synonym battled but other words in the sentences. Most noun collocates relating to the addictive
substances which are *drug*, *alcohol*, *cocaine* and *heroin* regularly preceded the words like *addiction(s)*, *abuse*, and *problems* as in “Etta James had an erratic career as tastes in popular music evolved, and she **battled heroin and cocaine addictions**.” (Retrieved from NPR_FreshAir entitled Etta James: The 1994 Fresh Air Interview in 2012). It was noted that some collocates like *alcohol* including *drugs* and *weight* can collocate with either *battled* shown in the table in the 14th, 23rd, and 28th places respectively or with different nouns which were not presented in the table. Moreover, some *battled’s* noun collocates about human organs such as *shoulder* and *foot* in the table actually co-occurred with some nouns in the table like *problem*, *injury*, and *cancer* instead of *battled* as in “Cook also **battled a shoulder injury**.” (Retrieved from Detroit Free Press entitled isportsweb: MSU QB Cook has proven worthy of 1st round NFL draft… in 2016), and in “A former elite runner, now a strong masters competitor, Hart has **battled foot problems** in recent years.” (Retrieved from Denver Post entitled Taking old age in stride The 55-and-older crowd won’t be left in the dust when runners dominate the streets of Boulder in 2017). Therefore, although *shoulder* and *foot* were presented in the original corpus data, they were removed from a display in the table.

4.1.2 Discussion

The noun collocates of the two synonyms can be divided into 8 main groups which were ‘Warfare and Military,’ ‘Health and Medicine,’ ‘Social Issues,’ ‘Environment,’ ‘Law,’ ‘Sports,’ ‘Economy,’ and ‘Entertainment.’ Those which did not belong to one of the mentioned groups were counted as ‘Others.’

4.1.2.1 Warfare and Military

<table>
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<th>The Lemma Fight</th>
<th>The Lemma Battle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>enemy(s)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>insurgents</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>rebels</td>
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<td>fighters</td>
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<tr>
<td>duels(s)</td>
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<td>militants</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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In the warfare and military group, *fight* and *battle* shared some noun collocates which were *army, enemy*(s), *insurgents, rebels, Taliban, terrorism,* and *terrorist.* Despite the fact that there was more variety of noun collocates for *fight,* the collocates in this group look fairly similar to those of *battle* in terms of the way that their collocates seem to illustrate opponents taken the action of the verbs such as *communists, Germans, guerrilla, invaders, Nazis, Russians,* and *Soviets* from the word *fight* and *gang, militants, pirates, soldiers,* and *troops* from the word *battle.*

Interestingly, there were two main points detected from the table to show the different use of the two synonyms. The first one was the use of common phrases of the synonym *fight* with the noun collocates *battle*(s), *duel*(s), *fight*(s), and *war*(s). The phrases were ‘to fight a fight,’ ‘to fight a battle,’ or ‘to fight a war.’ It was shown in the collected data that it cannot also produce the phrases like ‘to battle a fight,’ ‘to battle a battle,’ or ‘to battle a war.’

Interestingly, proper nouns which were nationalities (*Germans, Russians,* and *Soviets*) as well as political ideology (*fascism*) only collocated with the word *fight.* However, the shared collocate *Taliban* seemed to violate the generalization since it was a proper noun collocating with *battle.* This may occur since the word *Taliban* was a relatively new term concerning about terrorist issues in recent decades. Besides, the notion of conflict between Taliban and America together with the collocates *Soviets* and *Russians,* American major rivals, was likely to contribute to the high frequency of these words found in COCA which was

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Different Collocates</th>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nazis</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Soviets</td>
<td>terror</td>
</tr>
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<td>war(s)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5 Comparison of *Fight* and *Battle*’s Noun Collocates in ‘Warfare and Military’ Subcategory
the corpus of American English. In other words, these kinds of collocates might not be discovered at such high frequencies in other corpus like BNC, the corpus of British English.

4.1.2.2 Health and Medicine

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Health and Medicine</th>
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<td>virus</td>
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<tr>
<td>obesity</td>
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<tr>
<td>cancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nausea</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Shared Collocates**

**Different Collocates**

| AIDS       | chemotherapy |
| epidemic   | depression   |
| flu        | diabetes     |
| panic      | disorder(s)  |
| radicals   | fatigue      |

Table 4.6 *Comparison of Fight and Battle’s Noun Collocates in ‘Health and Medicine’ Subcategory*

The two synonyms shared the similar noun collocates in this group which were *infection(s), bacteria, virus, obesity, disease(s), cancer, and nausea*. Even among the different noun collocates of the two synonyms, some shared a characteristic referring to the names of the diseases or health symptoms like *AIDS, epidemic, flu* and *panic* from the word *fight* and *depression, diabetes, disorder(s), fatigue, and illness* from the word *battle*. Nonetheless, one type of the noun collocate in this group only found in *battle* was the treatment name, *chemotherapy*. 
4.1.2.3 Social Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Similarities</th>
<th>The Lemma Fight</th>
<th>The Lemma Battle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>corruption</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poverty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>racism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Differences</th>
<th>The Lemma Fight</th>
<th>The Lemma Battle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>crime</td>
<td>abuse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discrimination</td>
<td>addiction(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>domination</td>
<td>alcohol</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>equality</td>
<td>alcoholism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>freedom</td>
<td>drugs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hunger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>injustice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rights</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slavery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7 Comparison of Fight and Battle’s Noun Collocates in ‘Social Issues’ Subcategory

For ‘social issues’, three noun collocates corruption, poverty, and racism were found with both synonyms. Although both fight and battle seemed to have nearly the same number of noun collocates in this group, more specific social issues applied differently for these two synonyms as can be revealed in the table. Fight related more to human rights issues which were equality, freedom, injustice, rights, and slavery whereas battle appeared more in the context of addiction issues which were abuse, addiction(s), alcohol, alcoholism, and drugs.

4.1.2.4 Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>The Lemma Fight</th>
<th>The Lemma Battle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shared Collocates</td>
<td>fire(s)</td>
<td>blaze(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different Collocates</td>
<td>warming</td>
<td>elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>flames</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>waves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>wildfire(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>winds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.8 Comparison of Fight and Battle’s Noun Collocates in ‘Environment’ Subcategory

The table demonstrated that noun collocates related to ‘Environment’ preferred battle to fight. The major type of environmental problem co-occurring with the synonyms was about ‘fire.’ Nevertheless, battle still showed more variety of
words illustrating the fire problems namely *blaze(s)*, *flames*, and *wildfire(s)*. Another environmental issue revealed from the corpus data was weather problems which can be seen from the rest of the noun collocations, except for *waves*. Those were *warming* from ‘global warming’ in *fight* and *winds* as well as *elements* from ‘the elements’ in *battle*.

4.1.2.5 Law

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Law</th>
<th>The Lemma <em>Fight</em></th>
<th>The Lemma <em>Battle</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shared Collocates</strong></td>
<td>courts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Different Collocates</strong></td>
<td>charges</td>
<td>custody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>extradition</td>
<td>lawsuit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.9 *Comparison of Fight and Battle’s Noun Collocates in ‘Law’ Subcategory*

Unlike the first three subcategories, it was evident that *fight* had more preference to noun collocates in this category of ‘law’ compared to *battle*. While both synonyms shared only a single collocate, *courts*, indicating where the legal causes take place, *fight* covered a wider range of the words in the legal field, in particular, *charges*, *custody*, *extradition*, and *lawsuit*.

4.1.2.6 Sports, Economy, and Entertainment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sports</th>
<th>Economy</th>
<th>Entertainment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Lemma <em>Fight</em></strong></td>
<td>inflation</td>
<td>monsters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Lemma <em>Battle</em></strong></td>
<td>spot(s)</td>
<td>villains</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.10 *Comparison of Fight and Battle’s Noun Collocates in ‘Sports,’ ‘Economy,’ and ‘Entertainment’ Subcategory*

For the group of ‘Sports,’ ‘Economy,’ and ‘Entertainment,’ there were no similar noun collocates shared between *fight* and *battle*. For the synonym *fight*, only the word *Inflation*, an economic problem, collocated with it while words relating to sports and entertainment were not discovered with *fight*. For *battle*, the noun collocate about sports displayed in the able was *spot(s)* whose relationship to *battle* was already mentioned in the Table 4.3 description. Besides, for the entertainment group, the words *monsters* and *villains* were connected with the word *battle* in the field of film, fiction or game industry as in “They include Sword Gai, a modern-day fantasy about a boy who fuses with a demonic sword to battle hordes of monsters.” (Retrieved from Engadget entitled Netflix reveals new slate of anime originals in 2017) and in “Still showing ‘The Amazing Spider-Man 2’ C+ Spider-Man continues to battle villains in New York, including his old friend Harry Osborn and
the new Electro.” (Retrieved from Atlanta Journal Constitution entitled MOVIE MINIS; MOVIE MINIS in 2014).

4.1.2.7 Others

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Others</th>
<th>The Lemma Fight</th>
<th>The Lemma Battle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>urge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>evil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>demons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Collocates</td>
<td>breath</td>
<td>bulge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cats</td>
<td>control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fronts</td>
<td>decades</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>impulse</td>
<td>fate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different Collocates</td>
<td>nail</td>
<td>odds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>standstill</td>
<td>perception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tears</td>
<td>problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>temptation</td>
<td>streets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tooth</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.11 Comparison of Fight and Battle’s Noun Collocates in ‘Others’ Subcategory

Table 4.11 manifested that both fight and battle had urge, evil, and demons as noun collocates. With thorough analysis of these noun collocates in the ‘Others’ category, it was surprisingly seen that the word fight can generate more idiomatic expressions than battle, for example, ‘fight for breath,’ ‘fight like cats and dogs,’ ‘fight on many fronts,’ ‘fight (something) tooth and nail,’ ‘fight (something) to a standstill,’ and ‘fight back tears’ whose definitions have been mentioned in the previous section. Battle contained a few examples such as ‘battle the bulge,’ ‘battle (something) for control (of something),’ and ‘battle against the odds.’

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

This corpus-bases study reflected some shared and different between the synonyms fight and battle proved by the analysis of the information retrieved from COCA in terms of collocation information. The results of the paper have provided useful facts comparing the two synonyms as detailed below.

5.1.1 Similarities of the two synonymous verbs

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Fight and battle shared a number of noun collocates in both category of ‘Warfare and Military,’ which are army, enemy(s), insurgents, rebels, Taliban, terrorism, and terrorist, and category of ‘Health and Medicine,’ which are infection(S), bacteria, virus, obesity, disease(s), cancer, and nausea.

5.1.2 Differences of the two synonymous verbs

In terms of collocation information, fight preferred noun collocates in the category of ‘Law,’ and ‘Economy’ whereas battle frequently co-occurred within the categories of ‘Environment,’ ‘Sports,’ and ‘Entertainment.’ Furthermore, the idiomatic expressions were more commonly found to co-occur with fight as in ‘fight for breath,’ ‘fight like cats and dogs,’ ‘fight on many fronts,’ ‘fight something tooth and nail,’ ‘fight (something) to a standstill,’ and ‘fight back tears’ while there were only 3 expressions discovered with battle namely ‘battle the bulge,’ ‘battle (something) for control (of something),’ and ‘battle against the odds.’

Therefore, it is remarkable from the findings of the study that although fight and battle shared common use in some situations, the two synonyms cannot be used interchangeably in all contexts, as proved by their collocation information in this study. Both of them occasionally have different noun collocates of certain subcategories.

5.2 Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study allow English language users to have better understanding of fight and battle and also raise the awareness of interchangeability issues between the two synonyms. There are three main implications which can be beneficial to teachers and ESL/EFL learners.

First of all, language teachers can apply concordance lines to be a resource in the classroom, especially for vocabulary lessons. Instead of presenting a definition explicitly to students, having them guess the target words in the context provided in the concordance lines is more advantageous to their comprehension and long-term memory according to the data-driven learning approach (Lee, 2010). However, it is essential to adapt the length or the structure of the contexts from the original data to suit students’ level in certain classes to prevent discouraging problems and boost their motivation to learn more effectively.

Also, there are some authentic uses in the authentic context found in concordance lines in a corpus like COCA that do not exist in a dictionary (which was the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English Online in this study). For example, the expression ‘fight back tears’ shown in the 22nd rank of the top noun collocates with fight could not be found in the dictionary. The dictionary presented only the phrasal verb ‘fight back.’ Also, the dictionary did not contain the expression ‘fight for breath’ but includes only ‘fight to catch one’s breath.’
Moreover, the expression ‘fight to a standstill’ was not included in the dictionary but only ‘come to a standstill.’ Finally, although the expression ‘fight like cats and dogs’ appeared in the dictionary, it was shown as ‘cat and dog’ without ‘-s’ while all cats and dogs were added by ‘-s’ in all concordance lines containing the expression. Therefore, it is advisable for teachers to use both dictionary and corpus data to look up the meaning and crosscheck each other to confirm the meaning, especially for those learners who are not native speakers. In addition, to combine some nouns together, it is important to be certain that they can collocate with each other. As seen from this study, certain nouns can co-occur only with either fight or battle. The investigation of corpus can help reduce the problem of confusing usage of synonyms.

After the introduction by the teachers in the way mentioned above, language learners should become aware of the issue of synonyms’ interchangeability issue. Although it is difficult for students to access the corpus data compiled from several genres by themselves, teachers can encourage their students to comprehend the importance of reading more especially in various genres, such as news, fiction, songs, movie subtitles, or advertisements rather than only in a few types in which the individual is interested. This behavior can expand the learners’ vocabulary size, get them exposed to more possible uses of words, and offer them more exposure to collocation.

Furthermore, to create textbooks or in-house materials, one of the essential steps is the vocabulary selection. The frequency of occurrences shown in corpus can be used as a guideline or criterion for inclusion since corpus represent the authentic use of words from a variety of genres. It can help the material developers determine the words and their order of importance at various levels that should be incorporated into decisions about materials. The words with higher frequency should be presented for teaching before those with lower frequencies.

5.3 Recommendations for Further Research Studies

There are some possible features that can be further investigated for more thorough comprehension to confirm the interchangeability of the two synonyms. In addition to collocation information, there are more synonym criteria that can be implemented to analyze the corpus data, such as lexical meaning, degree of formality, and styles. For instance, for those who are fascinated in the various World Englishes, the idiomatic expressions of both synonyms can be examined to find out whether there are any reasons for specific usages or relationships of some idioms with major historical events in the past related to wars or international conflicts. Also, in terms of limitations mentioned in the previous part, research should include the continuous
form of the synonyms and extend the number of concordance lines collected to analyze, which may bring about more useful and generalized results.

References


THAI LEARNERS’ PROCESSING OF ENGLISH SUBJECT AND OBJECT RELATIVE CLAUSES

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Abstract

The research aimed to investigate the processing of English subject relative clauses (SRC) and object relative clauses (ORC) by Thai L2 learners. Based on L1 and L2 research findings (Miyamoto and Nakamura, 2003; Traxler et al., 2002 for L1, and Hashimoto, 2007; Havik et al., 2009 for L2) and structural similarities between Thai and English SRCs and ORCs, we hypothesized that Thai learners would process SRCs more quickly than ORCs. In particular, they should spend shorter reading time (RT) on the English SRC critical regions than they should on the ORC critical regions. The participants were 12 Thai L2 learners attending high schools. Their proficiency levels determined by the Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) were elementary, lower intermediate and upper intermediate. A self-paced reading task, including subject extracted and object extracted relative clauses in English, was conducted in two presentation lists, on the Latin Square Design basis. The total of 64 experimental items, consisting of sixteen target experimental sentences and forty-eight fillers, were employed and reading times (RTs) were recorded. The results, based on the average RTs of the critical regions from the Thai L2 learners, indicated that the SRC was processed more quickly than the ORC; t-test results showed non-significant differences. The hypothesis is confirmed by the average RT data. NP1 and NP2 consumed substantial RTs, with NP2 taking slightly more RT than NP1, both in...
the SRC and ORC. This finding especially in ORC is consistent with the Perspective-Shifting approach. Regarding RC verbs and main clause verbs in the ORC, SPLIT is supported. Both consumed similar RTs, consistent with energy units. However, in the ORC, NP2 took slightly more RT than the main clause verb, inconsistent with SPLIT, where the NPs should take less RTs than the verbs.

**Keywords:** L2 Processing, Subject Relative Clause, Object Relative Clause, Thai L2 learners

1. Introduction

Researchers in the area of language processing have been interested in relative clauses. Relative clauses are largely difficult for L2 learners as they involve modifying structures in relation to noun phrases. Thai, the L1 of our participants, is interesting. Like English, Thai is a configurational language, where the sentence pattern can be characterized by SVO. In addition, Thai and English relative clauses are similar in that the head noun precedes the modifying relative clause. Given such similarities, it is interesting to examine if L2 Thai learners process English relative clauses in a similar manner to L1 English speakers.

A number of studies have examined L1 speakers’ processing of relative clauses (Traxler et al., 2002; Miyamoto and Nakamura, 2003) These studies showed that L1 speakers process subject relative clauses more easily than object relative clauses. There are few studies which have examined the difficulty in the English relative clause acquisition by L2 learners. The issue that the researchers pay special attention to involves the difference in processing difficulty between subject-extracted relative clauses (hereafter SRC) and object-extracted counterparts (hereafter ORC), as evident in Gibson et al. (2005) study. As shown in (1a) and (1b), the head noun in the main clause is modified by an embedded clause.

(1) a. The reporter, who $e_i$ attacked the senator admitted the error.
   b. The reporter, who the senator attacked $e_i$ admitted the error.

In both sentences, there is an empty category ($e$), technically termed gap, which is the original position of the relative pronoun who. In (1a), the relative clause *who attacked the senator* modifies the preceding noun phrase *the reporter*; *who* is extracted from the subject position. In (1b), the relative clause *who the senator attacked* also modifies the preceding noun phrase *the reporter*. However, in this case, the relative pronoun *who* is extracted from the object, leaving a gap in its original position.
Sentences (1a) and (1b) contain subject-extracted and object-extracted relative clauses, respectively.

As noted above, most experiments found a preference for subject relative clauses. In respect of L2 learners, it is interesting that L2 learners process English SRCs more easily than ORCs although their L1s do not share the same relative clause structures (Juffs, 2005 for Chinese, Japanese, and Spanish learners of English; Hashimoto, 2007 for Japanese learners of English; Havik et al., 2009 for German learners of Dutch).

In Thai, relative clauses are introduced by complementizers thîi and konthîi. Sentence (2) below illustrates a Thai minimal pair of subject and object relative clauses.

(2) a. phayabaan thîi/konthîi ê chɔ̂ op mɔ̌ ɔ̌ sàj kraprooŋ sán nurse Comp like doctor wear skirt short

“The nurse that liked the doctor wore a short skirt.”

b. phayabaan thîi/konthîi mɔ̌ ɔ̌ chɔ̂ op ê sàj kraprooŋ sán nurse Comp doctor like wear skirt short

“The nurse that the doctor liked wore a short skirt.”

In (2a), the head noun phayabaan is modified by thîi/konthîi ê chɔ̂ op mɔ̌ ɔ̌ ; the operator, which originally occupies the subject position of the relative clause, is extracted, leaving a gap. In (2b), the head noun phayabaan is modified by thîi/konthîi mɔ̌ ɔ̌ chɔ̂ op ê ; the operator which originally occupies the object position is extracted, leaving a gap. Structurally, Thai (2) sentences are similar to English (1) sentences as both Thai and English exhibit the ordering of a head noun preceding the relative clause. A difference involves the fact that Thai uses a complementizer while English uses either a complementizer or a wh-phrase to introduce relative clauses, as shown in (1) and (2).

Aside such a difference, it is particularly interesting to examine if Thai learners of English will process SRCs and ORCs in a similar manner to L1 speakers and L2 learners in prior research.

1.2 Research Hypothesis

Based on L1 and L2 research findings (Miyamoto and Nakamura, 2003; Traxler et al., 2002; Hashimoto, 2007; Havik et al., 2009) and structural similarities between Thai and English SRCs and ORCs, we predicted that Thai learners would process SRCs more quickly than ORCs. In particular, they should spend shorter reading time on the English SRC critical regions than the ORC critical regions. The critical regions in the SRC involve the RC parts (excluding that, following Traxler et al. 2002) in SRC and ORC and the main clause verbs.
The remaining parts of this paper is organized as follows: section 2 presents literature review; section 3 states methodology; section 4 presents the results obtained from the Thai L2 participants; and section 5 provides discussions, limitations, recommendations, and conclusion.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Processing of SRC and ORC Theoretical Models

One account featuring syntactic structure of relative clause is Active Filler Strategy (AFS) (Frazier, 1987). AFS is based upon the difference in syntactic structure between SRC and ORC. In a sentence, there is a distance between the filler and the empty category, called gap. According to AFS, when the readers encounter the filler, the nearest gap is considered to be a location to fill. Thus, the readers attempt to locate the gap to the nearest subject. It is addressed that the readers have more difficulty with reading ORCs than they do SRCs. Specifically, they spend time on locating the nearest gap when the nearest possible gap is not available.

Perspective-shifting account (MacWhinney, 1997, 1982) predicts that learners spend longer reading time on ORCs than SRCs. That is, learners do not need to shift their perspective when they encounter the subject of the main clause which is also the relative clause subject, such as the reporter in (1a). In contrast, in (1b), they have to shift their perspective because the subjects of the main clause and the relative clause are different. Processing difficulty occurs due to the change in perspective in ORCs.

Another theory is the one that Gibson (1998, 2000) used in his study, called the Syntactic Prediction Locality Theory (henceforth the SPLT). Processing requires successful integration of energy units: if integration crosses new discourse referents, energy units incur. Sentences (3a) and (3b) below, from our stimuli, illustrate integration cost made by SPLT.

(3) a. The writer that hated the actor had a car accident.
    b. The writer that the actor hated had a car accident.

According to SPLT, the RCs of SRC and ORC bear different energy unit costs. The final position of the RC of the ORC has a gap, i.e. the position where the operator has been extracted, which incurs additional cost, while the final position of the RC in the ORC does not. Such a difference involves higher processing cost in the ORC than the SRC. In terms of energy costs of verbs vs. NPs, SPLT predicts that on average verbs
consume more energy cost than the subject NP of the main clause, and the subject NP and object NP of the relative clause.

2.2 L1 and L2 Research
In respect of L1 study, Traxler et al. (2002) employed three eye-movement-monitoring experiments, investigating subject-extracted and object-extracted relative clauses by native English speakers. In the first experiment, animate sentential subjects and relative clause subject and objects were examined. In the second experiment, the animacy property remained but the thematic roles of the sentential subject and the relative clause subject and objects were clearly Agent and Theme, respectively. In the third experiment, they added a sentence type where the sentential subjects and the relative clause subjects and objects were inanimate and animate, bearing the Theme and Agent role, respectively. Traxler et al. (2002) found the processing of SRCs to be quicker than that of ORCs. In addition, the difficulty of processing of ORCs can be reduced when the sentential subjects are inanimate and semantic roles of subjects and objects in relative clauses are clearly indicated by the verbs.

In addition to evidence from English L1 speakers, L1 Japanese has been studied in Miyamoto and Nakamura (2003). Two Self-Paced-Reading (SPR) experiments were conducted with native speakers of Japanese; one examined subject and object extracted relative clauses and the other experiment checked relative clauses with Topic/nominative vs. Accusative markers. Miyamoto and Nakamura (2003) found that subject relative clauses (S-gap) took longer reading time than object relative clauses (O-gap) in both experiments. Thus, the findings in both Traxler et al. (2002) and Miyamoto and Nakamura (2003) are similar, despite different L1 backgrounds, i.e. subject extracted relative clauses are more difficult to process than object extracted relative clauses.

In the current study, we are concerned with L2 learners’ processing of SRC and ORC. There are only a few studies in this area. Havik et al. (2009) investigated whether or not German L2 learners of Dutch process subject-object ambiguities in relative clauses like native Dutch speakers by means of the SPR task. Working memory (WM) span tests divided the L2 learners and native speakers into two groups, i.e. high WM and low WM span. Havik et al. (2009) found that the native speakers spent less time reading the SRC than the ORC sentences. Both the high and low WM L2 learners patterned with the lower WM native speakers who performed considerably less accurately than the higher WM counterparts on ORC sentences. According to Havik et al. (2009), L2 learners prefer subject to object relative clause, similar to native speakers.
Another study involves the comprehension of English subject and object relative clauses by Japanese learners of English (Hashimoto, 2007). This study examined the potential applicability to second language (L2) processing of a theory proposed to predict linguistic complexity in first language (L1) processing, based on Gibson’s (1998, 2000) theoretical model. Hashimoto (2007) examined the relative order of difficulty in processing encountered by Japanese learners of English when reading several types of relative clause structure. Hashimoto used the SPR task, including subject-and object-extracted relative clause in English, collected the reading time data, and compared them with the reading time differences predicted by Gibson’s theory. The goal of this study was to assess how well this process can be applied to L2 data. According to Hashimoto (2007), the results support the SPLT, with an exception of the longest reading time spent on the second NP, which was predicted to consume least energy cost.

In Juffs’ (2005) study, adult learners of English as a second language with different L1 backgrounds, i.e. Chinese, Japanese, and Spanish participated. The purpose of this study was a replication of Juffs and Harrington’s (1995) study in term of measures of working memory as an individual variation. In particular, the study investigated two aspects, i.e. the relationship between online comprehension and working memory (WM) span, and the potential WM span effects on the real-time processing of the experimental sentences. The results of this study replicate those of Juffs and Harringtons’ (1995) result to some extent. However, there were negative effects on processing L1 structures as there is no wh-movement in the L1. A number of garden path effects appeared in Subject extractions only from finite clauses.

So far, the findings in the L1 and L2 studies presented in this section similarly suggest that the SRC is quicker and easier to process than the ORC. An exception involves wh-extraction from finite clauses, which poses difficulty to L2 learners in Juff’s (2005) study. Although studies have found common results, more data from Thai learners remain interesting, as they can provide insights into the pattern of the subject/object asymmetry in L2 processing of relative clauses.

We present our methodology next.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

Twelve Thai EFL students from two public high schools in Bangkok and its vicinity participated. Two were 9th graders; the remaining students were 11th and 12th graders. The Oxford Quick Placement Test established their average proficiency as lower intermediate, i.e. B1 by CEFR standards.
3.2 Materials
There were 32 target pairs (16 SRCs and 16 ORCs). The target pairs were divided into 2 batteries (A & B). Each battery had 16 pairs (8 SRCs and 8 ORCs). The 16 target pairs and 48 fillers (with the total of 64 items) in both batteries were randomized. By means of the Latin Square Design, the items were presented in a way that a participant saw only one member of a target pair. All items were presented on Self-Paced-Reading (SPR) sessions.

The target sentences contained 6 to 7 segments. The set of (3') below displays the segmentation of (3), with slashes. Basically, the article and the modifier (if available) were included within the noun segment, e.g. the writer, the actor, and a car accident. Adjuncts such as last week constituted a segment. The complementizer that, the verb in the RC, and the matrix clause verb represent individual segments.

(3a') The writer/ that/ hated/ the actor/ had/ a car accident/ last week.
Did the writer have a car accident? 1. Yes 2. No

(3b') The writer/ that/ the actor/ hated/ had/ a car accident/ last week.
Did the actor have a car accident? 1. Yes 2. No

A Yes/No question followed a given item to ensure participants’ comprehension and attention, as shown below (3').

3.3 Norming Study
To ensure that there was no semantic bias toward the SRC or the ORC in the experimental items, a norming test was employed. The SRC and ORC items such as (3a) and (3b) were modified into single clauses as (4) for norming.

(4) a. The writer hated the actor.
b. The actor hated the writer.

We conducted a norming experiment with thirty Thai 10th to 12th graders who were not participating in the main experiment. They rated the plausibility of each sentence on a 1-5 point Likert scale, where 1 corresponded to not at all plausible and 5 extremely plausible. There were twenty-two sentences (11 pairs) to be rated in the questionnaire. We compared Condition 1 (such as 4a) and Condition 2 (such as 4b) sentences, using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test, and selected the top eight pairs with the p value above 0.10, which suggested that the two conditions were not significantly different. The eight pairs included the writer & the actor, the man & the director, the nurse & the doctor, the salesman & the lawyer, the policeman & the robber, the
musician & the young woman, the woman & the painter, and the driver & the manager. These NPs were further integrated in the actual test items.

3.4 Procedure
The twelve Thai student participants were administered the OQPT and the online Self-Paced Reading task (SPR). The SPR sessions were conducted separately from the OQPT. Regarding the task presentation, we employed Linger, a free software program, with the Non-Cumulative Moving Window technique. This online or real-time computerized method records a reading time for a designated segment, i.e., a word or phrase. In a typical SPR session, sentences are presented on the computer screen.

At the beginning of each SPR session that we ran, four trial sessions with comprehension questions were presented to enable the participants to be familiar with the task. Afterwards, the fillers and the targets were presented on the screen one segment at a time. When the participants pressed a keyboard button, designated as F, the first segment showed up on the screen. When they pressed F again, the next segment displayed and the first segment disappeared. This non-cumulative window moving technique applied until the final segment of the sentence. The reading times of the individual segments were recorded in milliseconds. After the final segment of a given test sentence appeared, the participants had to answer yes or no (by pressing F and J buttons).

In terms of time spent on the overall SPR session, the two 9th graders and the remaining 10-12th graders spent approximately 11-13 minutes and 20 minutes, respectively. Most of them did not take a break as the SPR format that we used had already included a short break. Some participants reported that they could not remember the first few phrases; otherwise, they did not find the SPR to pose any problem.

The participants spent approximately 30 minutes on the OQPT. Most students found it to be difficult, but they managed to complete all the questions.

4. Results
This section reports results including the Thai L2 learners’ responses to overall SPR and target items (section 4.1), RT data on SRCs (section 4.2), RT data on ORCs (section 4.3), and a comparison between SRCs and ORCs (section 4.4).

4.1 Responses to Overall SPR and Target Items
The student participants’ correct responses to overall SPR and target items account for 87% (60 from 68 stimuli) and 78% (12.5 from 16 points), respectively. This suggests that the student participants were largely attentive to the SPR task. Given the 78% correct target and 87% correct overall SPR stimuli, we employed all the RT data, without the exclusion of incorrect responses to comprehension questions.

4.2 RT Data on SRCs
To show the overall results of the participants’ reading times, we present average reading times of six consecutive segments. In line with Hashimoto (2007), the average reading times of the six segments are adequate as a complete structure. The average RTs are reported in milliseconds in Tables 1 and 2, and Figures 1 and 2 below. We used actual parts of a sentence to represent different segment numbers, for easy reference.

Table 1
Average Reading Times of SRC by Thai L2 Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>The writer</th>
<th>that</th>
<th>hated</th>
<th>the actor</th>
<th>had</th>
<th>a car accident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RT</td>
<td>1230.50</td>
<td>943.52</td>
<td>1035.02</td>
<td>1446.25</td>
<td>1202.38</td>
<td>1738.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>583.87</td>
<td>367.05</td>
<td>455.57</td>
<td>502.46</td>
<td>367.37</td>
<td>441.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1
Average Reading Times of Thai L2 Learners on SRCs

1 Out of 32 target items, there were 22 with six segments and 10 with seven segments. Segment 6 was occupied by either an NP or a PP complement of the matrix verb, while segment 7 an adjunct.

2 We trimmed our data by removing outliers, which were reading times above 4,000 milliseconds from the data, as these RTs could have occurred from the participants’ delay or an unintentional lapse. This affects approximately 0.05% of the data, within the allowable limits in psycholinguistics research.
With respect to the SRC, as Table 1 and Figure 1 illustrate, the Thai learners spent 1,231 and 1,446 milliseconds on the two NPs *the writer* and *the actor*. As there was a change from *the writer* to *the actor*, the second NP *the actor* involved higher processing cost. The complementizer *that* took the shortest reading time (943 milliseconds), which is reasonable, as a functional word marking a relative clause. The RC verb *hated* took a shorter reading time than the matrix clause verb *had* (1035 vs. 1,202 milliseconds). A slightly higher processing cost was involved when the learners encountered the main verb. The final segment *a car accident* took the longest reading time (1738 milliseconds) among all the segments, which could be attributed to its length and the learners’ attempt to recall the first NP, e.g. the person who had a car accident, which was the kind information that would potentially be asked in the comprehension questions.

### 4.3. RT Data on ORCs

The Thai L2 participants’ average reading times of the six segments of the target ORC items were shown in Table 2 and Figure 2 below.
Average Reading Times of ORC by Thai L2 Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>The writer</th>
<th>that</th>
<th>the actor</th>
<th>hated</th>
<th>had</th>
<th>a car accident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RT</td>
<td>1149.64</td>
<td>910.28</td>
<td>1288.82</td>
<td>1390.16</td>
<td>1273.64</td>
<td>1551.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>754.49</td>
<td>431.82</td>
<td>380.85</td>
<td>490.15</td>
<td>316.76</td>
<td>479.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2
Average Reading Times of Thai L2 Learners on ORCs

In terms of the ORC, based on Table 2 and Figure 2, the reading time of the first NP was slightly shorter than that of the second NP (1150 and 1289, with a difference of 139 milliseconds). Compared to the SRC counterparts, the difference between the two NPs in the ORC was smaller. The complementizer *that* took the shortest reading time (910 milliseconds), like in the SRC. As for the verbs, the matrix verb involved a slightly shorter reading time than the RC verb (1390 and 1274, with a difference of 116 milliseconds). Similar to the final segment of the SRC, the ORC counterpart involved the longest reading time (1552 milliseconds), among all the segments, which could be attributed to its length and the participants’ recollection of the prior NP.
4.4 Comparison between SRCs and ORCs
With respect to comparisons of critical regions between the SRC and the ORC, Table 3 illustrates the critical regions, i.e. segments 3 and 4, and segment 5, which involve the relative clause part and the matrix verb part, respectively.

Table 3
Average Reading Times of Critical Regions of SRC and ORC by Thai L2 Learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Segment 3 and 4</th>
<th>Segment 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SRC</td>
<td>2481.28 (846.59)</td>
<td>1202.38 (357.37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORC</td>
<td>2678.98 (816.41)</td>
<td>1273.64 (316.76)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Standard deviations appear in the parentheses.

The difference between the critical regions, based on the data in Table 4, is small. The average RT of SRC is shorter than ORC by 197.7 milliseconds, as is the difference between the average RT of the matrix verb of the SRC relative to the ORC, i.e. 71.26 milliseconds.

We performed paired-samples t-tests across subjects by critical regions. In respect of the relative clause part, the average RT of SRC is not significantly different from that of the ORC; the result just missed significance (t (1,11) = -1.956, p < .08). Similarly, the RT of the matrix verb in the SRC is not significantly different from that of the ORC (t (1,11) = -.831, p = .424).

Thus, our hypothesis formulated was not confirmed by the t-test results. Viewed from the average differences, there was potential for the quicker processing of the SRC than the ORC among the Thai L2 learners, similar to the findings with Japanese learners of English and German learners of Dutch (Hashimoto, 2007; Havik et al. 2009).

5. Discussion and Conclusion
5.1 Discussion
To reiterate, we hypothesized that English subject relative clauses would be processed more quickly than English object relative clauses by Thai L2 learners, based on research findings with L2 learners (Hashimoto, 2007; Havik et al. 2009). In particular, the time spent on the critical regions of SRCs should be shorter than the critical regions of ORCs.
The results from the average RTs of segments three and four from the Thai L2 learners indicate that the RT of the combination of both segments of the SRC was slightly shorter than the ORC counterpart. Similarly, the average RT of the main verb of the SRC is minimally shorter than that of the ORC. Comparisons on the two critical regions by sentence types and participants via t-test analyses revealed non-significant differences. Therefore, the hypothesis is confirmed on the basis of average reading times, but not from t-tests. It can be said that Thai L2 learners potentially process subject relative clauses more quickly than object relative clauses, similar to L2 learners of different L1 backgrounds.

Hypothesis confirmation aside, the second NP which occupies the final position of the relative clause (segment 4) in the SRC and the position immediately to the right of the complementizer that (segment 3) in the ORC is particularly interesting. This NP consumed more RT than the verbs, except for the first verb in the ORC, in contrast with the SPLT prediction, which would predict the opposite direction. This finding especially in the ORC is consistent with the Perspective-Shifting approach. That is, learners shift their perspective from NP1, the main clause subject, to NP2, the relative clause subject. Regarding relative clause and main clause verbs in the ORC, SPLT is supported. Both consumed similar RTs, consistent with energy units. However, in the ORC, the second NP took slightly more reading time than the main clause verb, inconsistent with SPLT, where the NPs should involve less reading time than the verbs.

5.2 Limitations
Due to time constraints, the group of Thai L2 learners was restricted to 12 persons. The results were drawn from this small group. Quantitative analyses would have benefited from a greater set of data from Thai L2 participants.

5.3 Recommendations for Further Studies
As noted in 5.2, it is desirable that future research in this area recruit a greater number of participants to examine hypotheses more scientifically and enable stronger evidence.

In addition, we found that the second NP involved more RT than the first NP. This might involve the equal plausibility of the first and the second NP to be the subject or object. A further study may employ targets where the semantic roles of NP1 and NP2 are clearly Agent and Theme. For instance, ‘the policeman that arrested the thief…’ and ‘the thief that the policeman arrested…’ Traxler et al. (2002) used this type of sentences to check if the difficulty of ORC can be reduced.
5.4 Conclusion
This study investigated the processing of English subject and object relative clauses by Thai L2 learners. We hypothesized that Thai learners would process English SRCs more quickly than ORCs, based on prior studies (Hashimoto, 2007; Havik et al., 2009). In particular, they should spend shorter reading time on the English SRC critical regions than they should on the ORC critical regions. The critical regions in the SRC involve the RC parts (segments 3 and 4) of the SRC and ORC and the main clause verbs (segment 5), following Traxler et al. (2002).

Twelve Thai L2 learners participated in Self-Paced Reading sessions. The total of 64 experimental items, consisting of sixteen target experimental sentences and forty-eight fillers, were employed. The target stimuli were presented on two lists, based on the Latin Square Design pattern. The target and fillers were randomized.

The results, based on the average RTs of the critical regions from the Thai L2 learners, indicated that the SRC was processed more quickly than ORC, but t-test results showed non-significant differences. Thus, the hypothesis is confirmed by the average RT data, not the t-test results. The finding that ORCs consume more reading time than SRCs is consistent with previous findings in L1 and L2 research in this area (Miyamoto & Nakamura, 2003; and Traxler et al., 2002, for L1, and Hashimoto, 2007; and Havik et al., 2009, for L2). Interestingly, we found NP2 to have taken more RTs than NP1 across SRCs and ORCs. The heavy load of NP2 in the SRC cannot be explained by the Perspective-Shifting approach (which would restrict this pattern to the ORC); neither can it be accounted for by the SPLT approach (which would predict the verbs to consume more time than this NP). We attributed this high processing cost of NP2 in both relative clause types to the equal plausibility of NP1 and NP2 to serve as the subject and the object of a sentence, a consequence of our norming experiment. In this respect, our findings reveal that semantic roles are at play in the processing of relative clauses. We recommend that future studies use NPs with distinct semantic roles to reduce the time of processing the second NP. This might provide more evidence whether or not ORCs remain more time-consuming than their SRCs counterparts.

References


THE EFFECT OF SPEAKING INSTRUCTION USING AUTHENTIC TASKS ON YOUNG LEARNERS’ SPEAKING ABILITY

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Abstract
The research aimed to study 1) the effects of English speaking instruction using authentic tasks on the speaking ability of young learners 2) the students’ opinions on learning English speaking through authentic tasks. The subjects for this study were six students who enrolled in English Summer Course 2019, offered by a private English language school in Khon Kaen. The instruments used in this research were a speaking pre-test and posttest, a questionnaire, and semi-structured interview. The main data were collected by recording videos of the role play and video transcripts were analyzed qualitatively. The qualitative portion consisted of students’ scores which were analyzed using descriptive statistics: mean and percentage. The data from semi-structured interview were analyzed qualitatively. The findings indicated that the use of authentic tasks on speaking instruction improved the students’ speaking skills. The results of the research showed that there was improvement of the students’ speaking ability in some aspects, such as pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, comprehension and fluency.

Keywords: Authentic Task, Task-Based Instruction, English Speaking Ability, Thai EFL Primary students
1. Introduction

English is a lingual franca which is widely used for international communication. Even though English language is used only as a foreign language in Thailand, it has played a crucial role in Thai education for a long time. English language serves as an important tool for communication, education, and understanding of various cultures and perceptions of other countries. Graddol (2006) suggested that teaching English as a foreign language should consider several factors such as options of which language skills to be taught and how, where the language will be used, learning settings and environment, selection of content and materials, and assessment criteria. As English is not our native language, English learning for communication definitely plays a crucial role and learning on speaking ability must be emphasized. Speaking ability is very important to have good communication, especially in international communication.

In Thailand, using English in the context where opportunities to use the language are limited since English is used only when talking with the foreigners. Therefore the school is the only place where the students have a chance to practice the target language. While English would surely become part of Thai people’s daily lives, English teaching and learning in Thailand seem to be ineffective. According to Simpson (2011), it is claimed that English teaching in Thailand focused on grammar and accuracy. Most teachers primarily delivered English lessons through Thai language to explain new words or grammar; therefore, students do not sufficiently practice English speaking. As a result, Thai students have problems with English speaking ability. Moreover, Mackenzie (2002) also found other factors that lead to ineffective English speaking ability. Those factors are being too shy and no having confidence to speak English, having no motivation to communicate in English and worrying too much about accuracy and grammar. Also, Wiriyachitra mentioned the causes of difficulties in English language teaching and learning concerned interference from students’ native language, unchallenging English lessons, being passive learners, and being poorly-motivated because of a lack of chances to use English in their daily lives. Fink (2003) emphasized the importance of motivating students to connect the knowledge learned in classes with their lives so that this knowledge could be used in various situations. Frequently, students were unmotivated to take part in speaking activities because they did not see any relevance between those topics or activities they did in the classroom and their daily lives. To engage students in active learning, authentic tasks were an effective alternative to bring students’ reality to the classroom to enhance their speaking ability.
1.1 Research Questions
1. How effective are authentic tasks in developing students’ speaking ability?
2. What are students’ opinions on learning through authentic tasks?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Speaking
“Speaking skills is the single most important aspect of learning a foreign language, and the success of learning the language can be evaluated in terms of the ability to hold a conversation in that language.” (Nunan, 1991, p.39). Also, Moris in Novia (2002) stated “speaking is the novice means of communication among member of society in expressing their thought and is as the representation of social behavior.” On the other hand, Wilkin (2001) proposed that the aim of the recent teaching English as Foreign Language is speaking achievement. In a bit different statement, Chaney (1998: 13) stated “speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols in various contexts.” Among the four language skills, speaking ability is assumed to be the most important skill that must be mastered when learning a foreign language. Therefore, language learners who desire to master the language must be able to communicate with that language. As mentioned, it can be concluded that language is a means of communication especially in speaking ability which is an important part of second language learning and teaching.

2.2 Teaching speaking
Nunan (2003) defined the meaning of Teaching Speaking as “teaching ESL learners, firstly, to produce the English speech sounds and patterns; secondly, to use word and sentence stress, intonation and rhythm; thirdly, to choose appropriate lexicons and sentences based on the proper use in any situations, speaker, and subject matter; fourthly, to organize their thoughts in a meaningful and logical sequence; fifthly, to use language as a way of expressing values and discretions; finally, to use the language rapidly, reasonably and confidently without lots of unintended pauses or fluency.” Hence, it can be considered that speaking ability is an important part of second language learning and teaching.

In Thailand, teaching speaking has often been taught as a repetition of drills or memorization of sentence patterns. Learning to communicate in a foreign language such as English, is a process of very complex activities of language acquisition. For young students, to start learning a foreign language is like starting to learn one’s mother tongue. They need some more time to listen to a foreign language in the classroom and they should have also more chances to repeat some of the words they
hear. According to Slattery and Willis (2001), although repetition of dialogues or sentence patterns does not mean that the learners are acquiring the target language, it is still very important. They argued that repetition provides the learners for meaningful communication in various ways such as by helping them be more familiar to speak English, allowing them to practice the intonation pattern, and enabling them to feel more confident when English is required in any situations.

Referring to oral production and the teaching of speaking, Hedge (2002) claimed that “the most important matter involving speaking ability is to distinguish the various kinds of situations in which the language will be used. Thereafter, students can communicate by delivering their own ideas, opinions, beliefs, and preferences based on some background knowledge, expressions, and vocabulary.” That is the reason why teachers need to bring real and meaningful purposes into the speaking activities so that their communicative skills are developed.

To discuss more about English speaking curriculum, Talley and Hui-ling (2014) observed curriculum for teaching speaking ability that should lead students to be in more authentic and practical settings and encourage students involving in the lesson. Furthermore, the study of Tuan and Mai (2015) pointed there were various factors that affect students’ speaking ability such as motivation, anxiety, confidence, time, listening ability and feedback during speaking activities by teachers or peers. For students who desired to be successful in communicative ability, they must be also good at listening skills in order to understand what is said.

2.3 Authentic Task

Nunan (1989) mentioned about the authenticity that “authentic refers to any material which has not been specifically produced for the purpose of language teaching” (p. 54). Nunan also introduced different ways of characterizing activities within a communicative framework and within the criterion of authenticity: “The activities can be either real-world or pedagogic. Real-world tasks are tasks that a regular person would do in a real-world context. Pedagogic tasks are recreated in the classroom to serve as exercises for practicing and for using the language.” An authentic task, therefore, “is considered as such as long as it has a clear and direct relationship with the things that happen in daily life.”

Guarento and Morley (2001) highlighted that “task authenticity depends on four aspects: a genuine purpose, real-world purpose, classroom interaction, and students’ engagement.” Additionally, the authors stated that “to integrate input and output,
reception and production, is to mirror real-world communicative processes, and is something that all teachers concerned with moving towards authenticity should aim to do”.

Willis (1996) stated that “one way to create an engaging setting is by using the language with meaningful purposes. Tasks provide a useful alternative to engage students in a meaningful context where the main objective is to make the language learning process a more natural one.” Willis declared that a task is “an activity where the target language is used by the student for a communicative purpose in order to achieve an outcome” (p. 23).

**Willis (1996) identified a task-based lesson with three stages:**

1. **Pre-task:** “The moment when the teacher explores the topic with the class, highlights useful words and phrases, and presents examples to students. Some useful procedures in this part involve using materials to lead into a topic, brainstorming for ideas, comparing and sharing ideas, providing a model, doing a similar task, and allowing the students’ time to plan. “

2. **In the task cycle,** “students do the task in pairs or small groups and prepare the report while the teacher monitors the process. When students present the report, the teacher listens and comments. This report indicates the process students have followed to accomplish the tasks as well as the conclusions they reached.”

3. **The final stage** is “language focus which provides opportunities for students to analyze and practice specific linguistic forms.”

**2.4 Related Studies**

There have been several previous studies so far related to developing students’ speaking ability in a foreign language. Many studies used various materials to enhance students’ speaking ability.

Firstly, games were used as meaningful materials as in the study of Urrutia, & Vega (2006), it was an action research project on the understanding and actions taken to improve speaking skills through games in a public school called “Federico García Lorca” in Colombia. The participants were forty students; twenty girls and twenty boys, from 14 to 18 years old. Questionnaires, teacher’s journals and video recordings were used as data collection instruments. The results of the study showed that the most students considered speaking is difficult to practice; also, the researchers noticed that some students used English during the activities, while most of them still used their native language in the class.
Another study using games to improve students’ speaking ability was conducted by Rama, Ying, Lee & Luei (2007). The study of using language games to improve speech skills during English classes in a primary school called “Jurong” in Singapore. The participants in this study were seventy-eight students. Two-group pretest–posttest experimental design was used in this research. The students were divided into two groups which were experimental group and control group. The experiment group was implemented by language games to improve speaking skills, while a control group focused in a teacher centered method in which teachers used real-life activities including the essential vocabulary to perform a conversation. The results showed that games allow most of students to improve communication in a second language.

Focusing on the previous studies involving authentic tasks, Ramírez Ortiz, S. M., & Artunduaga Cuellar, M. T. (2018) conducted an action research study on using authentic tasks to foster oral production among English as a foreign language learner. The subjects of the study were eight students from grade ten who had been studying in the school for more than three years. These students were selected for convenience sampling in terms of schedule and availability. Their English level was A1 which was determined by a diagnosis test called “Retos al Saber”. The findings revealed that authentic tasks, related to students’ daily lives, give a positive effect on the students in terms of engagement and confidence-building. Using authentic tasks allowed the students to feel more confident at the moment of presenting their oral reports.

Additionally, the study of Noor Malihah (2010) conducted ‘The Effectiveness of Speaking Instruction through Task-Based Language Teaching’. The study suggested that “teaching speaking is not merely to let students to repeat or memorize dialogues, but they should be able to use the utterance to communicate in the real situations.” The result showed Task-based learning was beneficial to the student because it promoted more student-centered and allows for more meaningful communication. Furthermore, since the tasks are likely to be familiar to the students in their real lives such as buying a ticket, which may further motivate them in the language learning.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study is one group-experimental pretest–posttest design consisting of only an intact group. The dependent variable is measured once before the treatment is implemented and once after it is implemented. The difference is then compared between pretest and posttest scores. If the average posttest score is better than the average pretest score then it makes sense to conclude that the treatment might be effective.
3.2 Population and Subject
The target population of this study was the students in the primary school in Khon Kaen. The convenience sampling technique was used for choosing the subjects. The subjects consisted of six students at the primary level, aged between 7-9 years who enrolled in the speaking course with the researcher. All students had been studying English for a total of 3-4 years, and the average classroom level was elementary.

3.3 Setting
The setting was at a private English language school in Khon Kaen offering a speaking class for primary level. The course focuses on speaking ability which aimed to encourage students to enhance their oral production and to make the learning process more meaningful through the use of tasks. The speaking course offered eight lessons with forty-eight hours. Lessons were held twice a week for a period of two hours each. The students would be learned how to use English in their daily life.

3.4 Research Instruments

3.4.1 Instructional instruments / Intervention instrument
3.4.1.1 a lesson Plan of “Giving direction”
This lesson will be divided into 3 classes including pre and post-test. The students would learn once a week for a period of two hours each. “Since communication is a process, it is insufficient for students to simply have knowledge of target language forms, meanings, and functions. Students must be able to apply this knowledge in negotiating meaning. It is through the interaction between speaker and listener that meaning becomes clear” (Larsen-Freeman, 1986, p. 123). The first class, therefore, the students first required to take the pre-test of speaking using a role-play with a native speaker. In the beginning stages of language learning, new vocabulary, in this case, vocabulary of places, would be presented orally with extensive support of printing pictures, video, gesture, or acting out. Then, the second class, map skills would be taught together with the phrases for giving direction and prepositions of place. In this stage, the students were allowed to practice speaking with their friends using authentic tasks. For the last class, the teacher gives sometimes allowing the students to practice before taking the post-test using the role-play.

3.4.2 Research Instruments
3.4.2.1 Test
In order to compare the effectiveness of teaching speaking skill using authentic tasks, the pre-test and post-test would be required. Alliger and Horowitz (1989) originally described the concept that” the pre-post testing method used attempted to better
quantify the learners' baseline knowledge and what they gained from their workshop participation.”

1. The pre-test of speaking was used to find out whether they have relatively the same ability in speaking before treatment. The students would do the role play dialogue based on the real situation in their daily life which was Giving Direction. The students were asked by the tourists how to get to the places. The pre-test would be observed and recorded as a video, then transcribed and evaluated their speaking skill using speaking rubric assessment.

2. The post-test of speaking was used after the students got the treatment. The dialogue would be paralleled to the pre-test. The post-test would be observed and recorded as a video, then transcribed and their speaking skill evaluated using the same speaking rubric assessment. The result of the post-test was used to compare the data of the pre-test and making conclusions as to whether the authentic tasks can improve students’ speaking ability.

3.4.2.2 Semi-Structured Interview
In this study, a semi-structured interview together with a questionnaire would be used because it is easy to replicate as a fixed set of closed questions are used, which are easy to test for reliability and clear for young learners. Additionally, it is fairly quick to conduct the data within a short amount of time. The questionnaire was structured in the modified Likert fashion, on a 4-point scale, ranging from “strongly agree” 4, through “agree” 3, “disagree” 2 to “strongly disagree” 1.

3.4 Data collection
Firstly, the subjects would take the pre-test of speaking using the role play in the theme of ‘Giving Directions’. The data would be recorded as a video and transcribed then evaluate using rubric assessment. After that, the teacher taught about giving direction that firstly introduced vocabulary of places, the phrases for giving direction and also prepositions respectively. Willis (1996) proposes a task-based lesson with three stages: pre-task, the task cycle, and the language focus. In the pre-task, the teacher will present what will be expected of the students in the task phase. The next phrase is the task phase where the students perform the task, typically in small groups, although this is dependent on the type of activity. Therefore, the students were required to practice speaking in pairs using authentic tasks then present in front of the classroom. Then the teacher listened and commented. For the last stage, language focus which provides opportunities for students to practice specific linguistic forms. The students would take the post-test using the role play that the dialogue was
paralleled with in the pre-test. The data would also be recorded as a video and transcribed, then evaluated using rubric assessment. Later, the video recordings of the students’ speaking test were transcribed to analyze speaking skills features. Finally, a structured interview and a copy of questionnaire were applied at the end of post-test to the six students to know students’ opinions, experiences and perceptions of the tasks. These three instruments were used during each implementation session.

3.5 Data Analysis
The researcher classified the data analysis of the study into two types: the description of statistical information and content analysis.

For the first type of data analysis, the description of statistical information are the pre-test and posttest and a questionnaire. Firstly, the researcher analyzed the result of the test after collecting the data by using a speaking test. The result of the test was processed by comparing the data before and after treatment. After the researcher got the result of pre-test and post-test, the researcher used Development Score or Gain Scores (GS)% purposed by Sirichai K.(2013) to analyze the data. Maximum and minimum of the pre-test and posttest scores and average were used to calculate to find out their improvement in percentage.

For the second type of data analysis, content analysis, the researcher summarized the data from semi-structured interview, analyzed the content and presented opinions and suggestions from the students. Overwhelming some researchers, qualitative interviews tend to generate large amounts of data (Neuman, 2007). That is, as Dörnyei (2007) indicates, ‘a one-hour interview may approximately take up to six to seven hours to transcribe, and around fifty pages of transcript.

3.6 Scores
In evaluating the students’ speaking scores, the researcher used the Oral English Rating sheet proposed by Harris (1974: 84). The Oral English Rating sheet consisting of five components namely: pronunciation, fluency, grammar, vocabulary and comprehension.
4. Findings

4.1 The Result of Pre-Test and Post-Test of the students

After giving the pretest, treatments, and posttest, the result from pretest and posttest scores were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Grammar</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Fluency</th>
<th>Comprehension</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>∑</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>̅x</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>∑</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>̅x</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement</td>
<td></td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 Total and Mean of Pretest and Posttest Score of the Students

From the table 4.1 above, it can be seen that there is progress of the students speaking ability. In pretest, the means of the students’ score is 2.17 for pronunciation, 1.50 for grammar, 1.83 for vocabulary, 2.33 for fluency, and 2.33 for comprehension. So, the means of the students’ total score is 10.17. It shows that the students’ speaking ability was low. Therefore, the researcher taught the students through authentic tasks as the treatment to improve the students’ speaking ability. While in posttest, the means of the students’ score is 4.67 for pronunciation, 3.33 for grammar, 4.17 for vocabulary, 4.00 for fluency, and 3.83 for comprehension. So, the means of the students' total score is 20.00.

The score of the posttest compared with the pretest shows that the students’ scores increase significantly after they got the treatments. The significant increase of the students’ score also shows that the authentic tasks improve the students’ speaking skill. The improvement is 88% in pronunciation, 52% in grammar, 74% in vocabulary, 63% in fluency, and 56% in comprehension. The improvement of the students’ total score is 67%. The significant improvement of the students’ speaking ability can be seen in the charts as follows:
4.2 The Students’ Opinion on Learning English Speaking using Authentic Tasks

To conduct the students’ opinion on ‘Learning English Speaking using Authentic Tasks’, a questionnaire was used. The instrument comprising 13 questions with Likert fashion, on a 4 – point scale, ranging from “strongly agree” 4, through “agree” 3, “disagree” 2 to “strongly disagree” 1.

The result of the students’ questionnaire is presented along with the data from the interview as followings:

Table 4.3.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Number of Answers</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>It was fun when doing activities using the authentic map.</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table 4.3.1, it can be seen that that most students strongly agreed that they were excited when doing activities using the authentic map.
Table 4.3.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Number of Answers</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The activities allow me to use more English</td>
<td>Strongly agree: 5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree: 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree: -</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree: -</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“I almost use English all the time when I’m in the class because I have to answer the questions and do activities with friends such as group survey. It’s different from my school where the teacher use Thai language for instruction.” (S1)

The excerpt above showed that the activities allowed the students to use more English.

Table 4.3.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Number of Answers</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I feel more confident to speak English.</td>
<td>Strongly agree: 1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree: 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree: -</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree: -</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From table 4.3.3, most students agreed that they feel more confident to speak English as in the sample excerpt below.

“I feel more confident than before. Previously, I always avoided talking with foreigners.” (S2)

Table 4.3.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Number of Answers</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I understand the questions.</td>
<td>Strongly agree: 1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree: 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree: -</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree: -</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table 4.3.4, most students agreed that they understand the questions. See some excerpts below;

“I understand some sentences. I grab the keywords.” (S4)
The student used a listening strategy such as grabbing the keywords to understand the questions.

Table 4.3.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Number of Answers</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I can respond to the questions promptly.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From table 4.3.5, most students disagreed that they can respond the questions promptly. See some excerpts below;

“Actually, I cannot respond promptly but it’s better than before.” (S1)

From the excerpt above, it indicated that the student noticed his improvement. However, some students could not respond to the questions promptly as in the excerpt below;

Table 4.3.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Number of Answers</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>When I do not understand the questions, I ask for lower speed and repetition.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Yes, I would ask for lower speed with repetition to check the vocabulary.” (S3)

The excerpt showed that the student try to check the vocabulary he heard.

Table 4.3.7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Number of Answers</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I spend more time thinking the answers.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the table 4.3.7, the students both agreed and disagreed that they spend more time thinking about the answers.

“I spend few time. It depends on the questions.” (S1)
This showed that the amount of time spent answering the questions depends on the difficulty of each question.

“Yes, I take more time because I try to think about the vocabulary.” (S6)
It can be noticed that, the student who spent more time had limited vocabulary.

Table 4.3.8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Number of Answers</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I have more confidence to talk with foreigners.</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Yes, of course. I dare to talk with foreigners if I meet them outside.” (S3)
The student above has opportunity to meet foreigners, he has more confident to talk with them. While some disagreed that they had more confidence to talk with foreigners.

“No, I feel shy.” (S4)
The excerpt above clearly indicated that the student has no confidence.

Table 4.3.9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Number of Answers</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I feel excited.</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“I feel so excited both pre-test and posttest.” (S3)
The excerpt showed that the student feels excited although he met the foreigner for the second time.
Table 4.3.10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Number of Answers</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I feel worried</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table 4.3.10, most students strongly disagreed that they were worried when doing the activities and talking with the foreign teacher.

“Not at all. I think it’s more fun.” (S3)
Also, the student above do not feel worried but he think it’s more fun.

Table 4.3.11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Number of Answers</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I feel shy when I made errors.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table 4.3.11, most students agreed that they were shy when making errors.

“Yes, sometimes I feel shy and have no confidence if I make errors.” (S6)
However, some students did not feel shy; “No, I’m not shy.” (S3)

Table 4.3.12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Number of Answers</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I apply vocabulary from the lesson when I am talking.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table 4.3.12, most students agreed that they applied vocabulary from the lesson when talking.

“Yes, I always apply the vocabulary I have learned. I try to think about the vocabulary.” (S2)
Table 4.3.13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Number of Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I cannot continue the conversation because of inadequate vocabulary.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Yes, sometimes I cannot remember the vocabulary so I try to use synonyms or explain more in details.” (S2)

The student above cannot continue the conversation because of limited vocabulary. However, he tried to use the vocabulary he knows and tried to explain in detail.

One strongly disagreed with this; “No, it’s not my problem” (S3)

4.3 More opinions on English speaking learning through authentic tasks from semi-structure interview

Question 1: How do you feel when using the authentic map in the classroom?

Most of the students felt excited when using the authentic map because they have never used it before. Some students felt worried that they could not find the places. The extracts are provided below:

“I feel a little excited because I never use the authentic map. It differs from the map I have learned in the classroom. I also feel under pressure and worried that I could not do it. However, I can read the map and tell directions.” (S2)

The excerpt above indicated that the student feels worried because he never used the authentic map before.

“I feel worried that I could not find the places. I’ve never used an authentic map before. This is my first time.” (S6)

The student above worried about using the authentic map because he was afraid that he could not find the place.
**Question 2: How do you feel when talking with the foreigner?**

Most students had difficulties in vocabulary when speaking English. They do not know how to say it correctly. They were shy and not confident to speak out. Normally, at their school, the students were also asked to repeat some expressions after the teacher and also the teacher rarely used English to teach them. However, their opinions showed that students had improved their self-confidence and adopted a different perception towards learning English. Most of the students had positive feeling when talking with the foreign teacher even though they were worried at the first time. It was gradually getting better when they were familiar to the teacher. Moreover, unfamiliar accent of the foreign teacher was a language barrier for the students. Here are some extracts of the interview transcripts.

“At the first time I feel nervous because I’m afraid that I cannot answer the questions. It’s quite difficult to listen to the foreign teacher because of fast speech and I hardly talk with foreigners in real life. Moreover, their accent differs from us so it’s hard to understand.” (S2)

Form the excerpt above, the student felt worried because he hardly talked with the foreigners. Also, their accent is difficult to understand.

“I feel nervous because I never met and talked with foreigners before. It’s my first time to talk with foreigners.” (S4)

Surprisingly, the student above felt nervous because this was the first time talking with the foreigners.

**Question 3: Do you have any suggestions? If any, please identify.**

None of the students had any suggestions. They told me that the lesson, activities and language use were appropriate to their levels. It was good enough.

“Nothing needed. I like it. It’s appropriate to my level.” (S1)

The student above thinks the lesson is appropriate. It’s neither difficult nor easy.

“It’s good enough but sometimes it’s quite difficult because I rarely used English before.” (S5)

From the excerpt above, the student has difficulty when using English because he rarely use it in daily life.
5. Discussion

5.1 Summary of the findings

The comparison and analysis of the pre-test and posttest results revealed that the students improved in their speaking ability by displaying appropriate use of pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and interactive communication. The findings from this study are consistent with the previous studies stating that using authentic tasks in the classroom can enhance the students’ speaking abilities because a task is “an activity where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose in order to achieve an outcome” (Will, 1996). By conducting the research, it was found that:

Firstly, authentic tasks improved the students’ confidence and made the student more active to speak because the tasks related to their real-life situations. Also, they had a chance to practice the target language with the foreign teacher. This also made them to be more familiar with the native speaker. Secondly, the task improved the students’ fluency. Through doing role plays using the authentic map, the students could learn how to read the map and use the language effectively and communicatively. When the students were doing the role plays with the foreign teacher, they were not interrupted by the researcher. Thirdly, it also improved the students’ pronunciation. Since the students had a chance to talk with the foreign teacher, this allowed them to get the model of language in the spoken form and also they would be more familiar with the native accent, pronunciation and intonation. When they were practicing speaking activities with their peer, they learnt how to use the language expressions and learnt how to speak communicatively with the right intonation and pronunciation. Moreover, the authentic tasks also improved the students’ vocabulary which can be seen in their daily life. The implementation of the authentic tasks engaged the students to learn the language expressions in different ways. Thus, they could learn and gather new vocabularies. Finally, the tasks also gave the students more chances to speak and improved the students’ participation. When doing activities, all students had more chances to use the target language, such as making a short conversation using the expressions they had learnt, interviewing, asking for more information, etc.

5.2 Discussion

The main objective of this research study was to discover the effect of authentic tasks on speaking ability of a group of EFL learners which was examined in terms of the ability of the students to produce the foreign language in real communicative situations. The study considered the use of authentic tasks inside the classroom. Based
By doing authentic tasks, students gain more competences in their speaking ability. Firstly, the use of authentic tasks also enhances the students to increase their confidence when they are speaking because they do not concentrate too much on grammar but on meanings. Secondly, authentic tasks enhance the learning process by encouraging students to participate more actively in class to express their ideas and opinions and to do so they need to use different strategies to be understood. Finally, teachers are encouraged to look for alternatives to support students in their learning process and overcome the difficulties that affect the development of their speaking ability.

This section also presents a discussion based on the findings from the study on the effects of English speaking instruction through authentic tasks on speaking ability and their opinions towards the activities using the authentic tasks of the young EFL learners in a primary school. The results were discussed based on the research questions as followings;

**Research Question 1: How effective are authentic tasks in developing students’ speaking ability?**

The score of the posttest compared with the pretest shows that the students’ scores increased significantly after they got the treatments. The significant increase of the students’ score also shows that the authentic tasks improve the students’ speaking skill. The improvement is 88% in pronunciation, 52% in grammar, 74% in vocabulary, 63% in fluency, and 56% in comprehension. The improvement of the students’ total score is 67%. Therefore, there is a significant improvement of the students’ speaking ability.

According to the previous study on using the problem sticks to improve speaking skill of the second graders. The study used quasi experimental designed which consists of two subject experimental and control group. The data was gained from the result of pre-test and post-test of both experimental and control group. For this case, the t-test was applied. The posttest score, compared with the pretest, shows that the students’ scores increased. The increase of the students’ score means that there’s also
improvement of students’ speaking skill at control group. The highest improvement is 51.9% in grammar while the lowest improvement is 34.1% in pronunciation.

To discuss the results above, the present study showed significantly different results in improvement of the students’ speaking ability. This study showed the highest improvement which was 88% in pronunciation while the previous study indicated pronunciation is the lowest improvement. In addition, the lowest improvement of the present study was grammar while it was the highest improvement of the previous study. This can be caused by various factors such as students’ background, materials used in the classroom and also the topics of each lesson. Moreover, according to the interview, familiarity is also an important factor that affects the students’ speaking ability. Some students rarely talked with the foreigners in their daily life so they had no confidence and tried to avoid talking when they were in those situations.

Based on the results from the present study, it seems that English speaking instruction using authentic tasks played a part in improving the English speaking ability on young learners. The findings suggested that the use of authentic tasks in the classroom setting, especially when used with real-life situation with which the students can relate to, provides meaningful context and functions as a means to continue into a variety of language learning activities (Brewster et al., 2002) which was seen in the classroom activities using authentic tasks.

**Research Question 2: What are students’ opinions on learning through authentic tasks?**

In this part the discussion will be divided into 3 issues.

The first was about the students’ responses to the English lesson. Based on the result of questionnaire, most of students liked English lessons using the authentic tasks, and some felt excited when using the authentic map because they have never used it before. The students admitted that the use of the authentic map was easy to follow and very useful in their daily lives. It was a very interesting technique to be used in teaching speaking.

The second issue was the students’ opinion on their speaking ability, it was shown that the students had difficulties in vocabulary. They did not know how to say it in English correctly. This can be seen obviously when doing the pre-test. They seemed to understand the questions but they did not know how to say the answer. Also, they were shy and not confident to speak it out. However, their opinions showed that
students had improved their self-confidence and adopted a different perception towards learning English when taking the posttest.

The third was the students’ opinion on the lesson and activities in the classroom. Based on the result of questionnaire, most of the students considered that the use of authentic tasks for teaching speaking was appropriate. In addition, the students stated that they had made good progress in their speaking ability after the researcher applied the activities in the class. They also agreed that the tasks were beneficial to improve the students’ speaking ability.

Based on the result of the questionnaire above, it could be concluded that the use of authentic tasks in teaching speaking are beneficial for the students in improving their speaking ability.

6. Implications and Recommendation for Further Research

6.1 Implications
After conducting the research, the researcher provides implications for the English teacher and the students.

5.4.1 For the English teacher
It is suggested to build a comfortable atmosphere and encourage the students to speak English especially in the speaking activities. The teacher also needs to apply activities which make the students confident to speak English. In the activities which work on fluency, the teacher should let the students speak even when they make mistakes without any interruption such as giving feedback or correction. To focus on accuracy, the teacher may give feedback to the students’ mistakes directly or indirectly. Importantly, the teacher should properly deliver model of language as input. After the students get enough input, the teacher should also provide adequate practices before going to the production stage. Then teacher consider activities engage the students’ participation and give the students more chance to speak. Role plays are the example of activities which encourage the students to speak up.

5.4.2 For the students
It is suggested that students should make the best use of the learning process in the classroom and give positive contribution, so they will gain effective learning. To be fluent, students should attempt to get more confidence and not to be afraid of making mistakes. On the other hand, the students also need to pay attention to their performance, so they can speak more accurately.
6.2 Recommendations for Further Research

For further research on improving speaking ability using authentic tasks, it is suggested to choose the topics related to real-life situations that the students would face, such as Self-Introduction, Telling Prices etc. In terms of credibility, further research can be done with a larger number of participants. Moreover, the timeframe was limited so the time period for intervention should be extended. Finally, authentic tasks can be adapted to other English teaching materials.

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production among English as a foreign language learners. HOW, 25(1), 51-68. https://doi.org/10.19183/how.25.1.362
A CORPUS-BASED STUDY OF THE SYNONYMS: CONVEY AND EXPRESS

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Abstract
In this study, two synonym verbs, namely *convey* and *express*, were investigated in order to find the similarities and differences between the terms with regard to collocations, degrees of formality and grammatical patterns. Data were obtained from concordance lines of the Corpus of Contemporary American English. It is revealed that although *convey* and *express* are synonymous, they cannot substitute each other in every context. Therefore, it is concluded that *convey* and *express* are not perfect or absolute synonyms. They are near-synonyms.

Keywords: Corpus-based study, Synonyms, Collocations, Degrees of formality, Grammatical patterns.

1. Introduction
The languages of the world today requires a common language and English is one of the most convenient languages to be used. Based on various research, majority of words in the English language have been derived from other languages, therefore, words often have complicated structures which students might find difficult to understand. One significant issue is that Thai learners have problems understanding the term synonyms. Fromkin & Rodman (1998) stated that “synonyms are words that have the same or nearly the same meaning to each other” (p. 165). An example is the...
word *great* (adjective), *excellent* and *fabulous* are synonyms for the word *great*. For a period of time, many linguists have studied the term synonyms. They acknowledge that synonyms are a notable aspect of linguistics, and they are a puzzling spectacle (Taylor, 2002). Some research from Divjak and Gries (2006) mentioned that in many recent years, linguists have focused less on the term synonyms compared to other phenomena.

There is one of the best lessons for L2 learners to increase their vocabulary knowledge, which is the study of synonyms, in order to encourage the use of a wider variety of words in any writing. However, one possible problem is Taylor (2012) said “the non-existence of perfect synonyms” (p. 262) Taylor’s notion supported by Chung (2011), he also said “perfect synonyms or absolute synonyms are words which are absolutely identical in meaning and completely interchangeable in every context” (p. 399) It is rare or impossible that all features will occur, as noted by Taylor (Taylor, 1995). More than 90 percent of synonyms words are likely to be near synonyms rather than perfect synonyms. For meaning of the word near synonyms by Cruse (1986), “Near synonyms defines as lexical items whose senses are identical in respect of central or semantic traits but differ in minor or peripheral traits” (p. 267)

In this study, the researcher will examine the language patterns with regards to synonyms. In particular, the two verbs: *convey* and *express*. The researcher picked these two synonyms on the basis that the students do not know how to use the words in the appropriate context. Furthermore, the students often ask to clarify the difference between the two verbs. The questions encouraged the researchers to simulate a study on the two verbs to clarify the students’ doubts. Since the verbs *convey* and *express* are generally used in an academic or casual context. Despite the lack of information on these two verbs, the researcher hopes to provide a better insight on the verbs to help students, learners and even teachers as well. The researcher will utilize the corpus named Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) to represent the concordance lines to extract the required information aside from the dictionary’s definition.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The definition of corpora

Corpora can be defined as a tool of linguistic analysis which uses a collection of real texts from real situations (McEnery et al., 2006).

Crystal (1992) said the term corpus or the plural form corpora is “a collection of linguistic data, either compiled as written texts or as a transcription of recorded
speech” (p. 85) He also said “the main purpose of a corpus is to verify a hypothesis about language. For example, to determine how the usage of a particular sound, word, or syntactic construction varies.” (p. 85)

In terms of language study, is the most significant data dealing with corpus linguistics. Conrad (2002) can fill the definition of corpora by stating “a corpus is a large, principled collection of naturally occurring texts that are stored in electronic form (accessible on computers)” (p. 76)

2.2 Types of corpora
There are various types of corpora. Furthermore, they contain not only written but also spoken (transcribed) language. And the data in corpora is not old texts, they have modern texts from one language or several languages.

The first type of corpora is general corpora or reference corpora. One example of this corpus is British National Corpus or BNC. The second type is specialized corpora which data in corpora is a specific genre or unique time. One example of this corpus is the Nottingham Health Communication Corpus. Corpora can consist of texts in one language or more than one language. If the texts are the same in term of meaning in all languages such as translations English to Spanish. The corpus is called a Parallel Corpus.

In this study, the researcher uses COCA because from Davies (2008) mentioned COCA is the largest freely available corpus of English. And it is the only large and balanced corpus of American English. COCA was published in 2008. Today more than tens of thousands of users use this corpus per month.

2.3 Perfect synonyms
Chung (2011) mentioned that perfect synonyms or another named absolute synonyms are words that can be replaced each other all contents or contexts.

Ullmann (1967) considered that “the true synonyms are the words that can be used interchangeably in any setting and it does not affect the original definition of a particular sentence” (p. 109)

Bogza (1960) admitted perfect synonymy only in scientific terminology, where “there exist synonymous doublets and triplets. They name the same concept and therefore are perfect synonyms” (p. 340)
2.4 Near synonyms
Near synonyms or plesionyms are “words that are similar in the term of meaning and are almost synonyms but not quite, very similar but not identical, fully intersubstitutable but instead varying in their shades of denotation, connotation, or emphasis,” as mentioned by three researchers (DiMarco, Hirst, & Stede, 1993).

Murphy (2003) defined the term near synonyms as items which have identical features but not identical in term of meaning. For the near synonyms type, he said that it has different from other types because it affects the sentential truth-conditions. In addition, near synonyms are common in language and can be found without much effort. The words share the same meaning as something which does not represent the truth but they can be distinguished in small ways. A lie is a purposeful way to mislead someone and a clear denial of the truth.

2.5 Previous study
The researcher chooses some pieces of research that their research is focused on the synonymous verbs or also have used the COCA as the major method similar to this study. The example of research showed below:

Phoocharoensil (2010) explored the five synonyms verbs for specific purposes such as lexical, syntactic, or stylistic information. He began to study the five verbs by using three learners’ dictionaries compared with corpus-informed data. At the last the result from the three learners’ dictionaries showed that they cannot cover all details of the five words such as grammatical patterns or collocations information. But the result from the corpus-based study seems to cover much more information that is not existent in dictionaries. Additionally, one of the benefits of corpora is they can also give sample sentences of synonyms verbs to learners or teachers. Thus learners and teachers could be able to have access to the probing meanings of the five synonyms words in the study.

Chung (2011) explored both likeness and unlikeness of two synonyms verbs create and produce and used three corpora (Brown Corpus, Frown Corpus, and British National Corpus) for analysis. The results show that the preposition “for” can be used with these two words, such as to create for a large national purpose and if you are going to produce for home use only. However, the researcher found that the use of “out of” with only create and the use of over and upon for only produce. The researcher gathered that the common prepositions used with the words create and produce. This research found the collocations of 300 concordance lines and found that most used three synonymous verbs.
Cai (2012) studied the adjective great and its near synonyms such as excellent, fabulous, terrific, awesome, and fantastic. He chose the word great because it is a high-frequency word in English. Furthermore, after he studied three thesauruses of English, he chose a set of high-frequency synonymous adjectives such as wonderful and awesome because they shared the same meaning of the chunk “very good”, as a subject for research. In his research, he thought the word great and its synonyms must differ in some place, thus, the purpose of his study was to explore the differences among the word great and its synonyms. For his method, he used the COCA to collect all the data. He focused on the frequencies of the near synonyms and collocations and also paid attention to the different meanings in different contexts. And the result of this study showed the most used word is the word great and the words that are increasing in usage across time are awesome, fabulous, and fantastic. However, from the collocational analysis, the word great is the most used word but the trend is to use it less when compared with the words fabulous, fantastic, terrific, and the older sense of awesome, because these words trend to more use. Lastly, the findings of this research advocated a similar position to the previous research claiming the meanings and uses of synonyms are clearly different. For instance, the adjective fabulous, fantastic, great, terrific, and wonderful occur more in the spoken genre evidenced by COCA, while the adjective awesome and excellent are occurring in various magazines.

The researcher named Kumnerdchart (2013) considered the three synonyms verbs defend, protect, and safeguard. He focused on the four main aspects containing collocations, grammatical patterns, formality of context, and sense of meaning. The researcher retrieved the data of three verbs from the first 500 concordance lines of COCA. And he also used Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary Online (2011) for comparing the result with COCA. Next, WordNet 3.1 was also used in order to find a sense of the meaning for each synonym verb. Finally, the findings of this research showed that although the three synonym verbs were near synonyms, they also had differences in features such as grammatical patterns or collocations.

3. Methodology

3.1 The subject
This study uses COCA as the main instrument. Since the program is considered user-friendly considering that it is made up of more than one hundred million words in written English and demonstrates keywords in context. The concordance lines make it efficient to study lexical and structural information.

3.2 Data Collection
The COCA corpus online enables sourcing for words or phrases based on aspects of speech. COCA was used to retrieve variations of *convey* and *express* in the first 500 concordance lines. The results are based on the number of times the word occurs. The lexical and structural information about the keyword can be analyzed effortlessly. The top 10 collocations that appear alongside the two words and the statistics of the distribution were retrieved from COCA. Furthermore, in terms of grammatical patterns, the sentence structure was retrieved from COCA.

### 3.3 Data Analysis

The data analyzed only by the researcher. For the results of collocations, after the data were analyzed by the first 500 concordance lines. The top 10 nouns that tend to co-occur with the two synonyms verbs are represented in the form of a table. The rank of the table will start from high-frequency words to low-frequency words that co-occur with the verbs (*convey* and *express*). Next, data analysis for degrees of formality, the researcher will analyze the data by grouping the sentences into five categories contain academic textbook, magazine, news, fiction, and spoken and representing the percentages of each group in a pie chart. At last, in terms of grammatical patterns, firstly the structure of sentences that are found in COCA was be analyzed. Secondly, all the grammatical patterns that were found in COCA will be presented in this study.

### 4. Findings and Discussion

#### 4.1 Results of the verb *convey*

##### 4.1.1 Collocation

The nouns which tend to co-occur together with *convey* in COCA are considered in the table below:

**Table 1**: Shows top 10 nouns which always appear together with *convey*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Frequency (times)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sense</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Idea</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Emotion</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Feeling</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Impression</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mood</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 shows the results of the verb *convey* in term of collocation. From the top 10 range, the noun ‘sense’ is in the first rank which occurs with the verb *convey* 36 times. It is followed by ‘idea’ which appears in the second rank (23 times). The last rank is the noun ‘wish’, which happened only 2 times.

### 4.1.2 Degree of formality

**Figure 1**: Distribution of *convey* in different genres.

The verb *convey* was shown in COCA 5495 times from 1990 to 2017.

Figure 1 shows the consequence that the verb *convey* appears most frequently in academic textbooks (40%), after by magazines (23%), news (14%), and fiction (12%). And the verb is least found in spoken type (the percentage was only 9%).

### 4.1.3 Corpus-based grammatical patterns

There are six grammatical patterns of the verb *convey* that the researcher found possible in the first 500 concordance lines from COCA.
a) *convey + noun/noun phrase* (114 tokens)
   - LN 3 ‘loved, " says Seiler, the Chicago sex therapist. " If you can *convey your pleasure* in touching him and show that you enjoy his arousal, that's’

b) *convey + noun/noun phrase/noun clause (something) to noun/noun phrase (someone)* (24 token)
   - LN 81 ‘Services to Youth Linkage, says: " *The main message we are trying to convey to our kids* is that if you stumble, you can get up. Our’

c) *convey + clause with that* (10 tokens)
   - LN 19 ‘" I'll show. Count on it. " She shrugged, hoping to *convey that she didn't care one way or the other*. " I'll accept’

d) *convey + clause with question words* (10 tokens)
   - LN 41 ‘I began to cry, as did Pam. There were no words to *convey what I felt* for Dr. Levey at that moment. He was the angel who’

e) *convey + in + noun/noun phrase* (2 tokens)
   - LN 339 ‘Mr-McDUFF: I don't know. SCHLESINGER: (Voiceover) What were you trying to *convey in your testimony?* (Footage-of-Schlesi) Mr-McDUFF: My -- my attorneys wasn't doi –’

f) *convey + to noun/noun phrase (someone) + clause with question words* (1 token)
   - LN 145 ‘hear. ! M-HILL: The words " Im sorry " can never *convey to her how I feel*, I do apologize to the parents and to the’

4.2 Results of the verb *express*

4.2.1 Collocation

The nouns which tend to be present together with *express* in COCA are considered in the table below:

**Table 2.** Shows top 10 nouns which always represent together with *express.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Frequency (times)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>View</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Feeling</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 shows the top 10 nouns which co-occur with the verb *express*. The noun 'view' is in the first rank which occurs with the verb *express* 23 times. It is followed by ‘feeling’ that occurs in the second rank (22 times). The last rank is the word ‘thought’, which occurs only 5 times.

### 4.2.2 Degree of formality

**Figure 2**: Distribution of *express* in different genres.

The verb *express* has been shown in COCA 6428 times from 1990 to 2017.
Figure 2 represents the results from COCA. It shows the verb *express* appears most frequently in academic textbooks (37%), followed by magazines, spoken excerpts, and news (all percentages of these three types are equal, approximately 17%) And this verb is least found in fiction. The percentage was only 10%.

### 4.2.3 Corpus-based grammatical patterns
There are six grammatical patterns of the verb *express* that the researcher found possible in the first 500 concordance lines from COCA.

a) *express* + **noun/noun phrase** (145 tokens)
   - LN 2 ‘consumption, " said one grandmother, who showed up at a national rally to *express her concern*. " Putting animal genes into plant genes is crossing the border.’

b) *express* + **noun/noun phrase/noun clause (something) to noun/noun phrase (someone)** (3 tokens)
   - LN 169 ‘did take off the skin). " * Expert insight: " Lily should *express to Eugene in a loving* but firm way her reasons for wanting to lose weight’

c) *express* + **clause with question words** (2 tokens)
   - LN 113 ‘But I wasn't going to write a book that kind of didn't *express what I thought was the case*. " Panetta also argues that there is time’

d) *express* + **in + noun/noun phrase** (2 tokens)
   - LN 218 ‘deeds and his fate have an almost magical quality, which is very difficult to *express in words, sentences, phrases, essays, or books. # The epilogue’

e) *express* + **to + noun/noun phrase** (1 token)
   - LN 499 ‘great respect for her. And so to have the responsibility to kind of help *express to the world or show the world*, somehow interpret who she is and hope’

f) *express* + **clause with that** (1 token)
   - LN 271 ‘appear to be even more pessimistic than female underachievers. Males were more likely to *express that social injustices persist today*. They were also less likely to indicate that racial’
4.3 Discussion
In this part, the researcher discusses the resulting of the two synonym verbs in term of similarities and differences, especially in collocation, degrees of formality, and grammatical patterns.

The researcher concludes that even though synonyms share the same meaning together. It cannot be concluded that they can interchangeable or replace in all contexts and contents. Since in term of collocations, degrees of formality, and grammatical patterns they show differences styles.

4.3.1 Collocations
In term of collocations, from the top 10 rankings of the two verbs *convey* and *express*, the nouns that they tend to always appear with them are idea, emotion, and feeling. That also means the two verbs are appropriate to use with these three nouns.

The top three rankings with the word *convey* are sense, idea, and emotion, while, the top three rankings with the word *express* are view, feeling, and concern.

4.3.2 Degree of formality
After analyzing the results in term of the degree of formality, the frequency of *express* (37%) in the academic textbook is lower than *convey* (40%). Therefore, the researcher concludes learners, teachers, and readers tend to find the verb *convey* appear in academic texts more than the verb *express*.

4.3.3 Grammatical Patterns
The grammatical patterns of the two verbs are compared and contrasted and shown in two tables below:

**Table 4:** Shows the grammatical patterns of *convey* and *express* are shared

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Convey</th>
<th>Express</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>convey</em> + noun/noun phrase</td>
<td><em>express</em> + noun/noun phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>convey</em> + noun/noun phrase/noun clause</td>
<td><em>express</em> + noun/noun phrase/noun clause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(something) to noun/noun phrase (someone)</td>
<td>(something) to noun/noun phrase (someone)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 shows the grammatical structures that *convey* and *express* are shared.

Table 5 shows the grammatical structures that *convey* and *express* do not share with each other.

The researcher concludes even though the verbs *convey* and *express* have six patterns of grammar similar to each other. They also do not always interchangeable or replace each other in every context or content.

5. Conclusion
There are three main conclusions in this study:

The first: even though *convey* and *express* are synonymous, they cannot substitute each other in every context and content.

The second: from the result, the two verbs share a few features that are the same in term of collocations, degrees of formality, and grammatical patterns. And they also present differences in terms of collocations, degrees of formality, and grammatical patterns.
The third: the researcher concludes *convey* and *express* are not perfect or absolute synonyms. They are near synonyms.

6. **Recommendations for further research**

According to the findings and discussion in this study, the researcher has two main recommendations for further study.

The first recommendation is focused on comparative between corpora that represent language varieties that are different within the English language. For instance the comparison between COCA and BNC. The COCA represents American English while the BNC represents British English. Therefore, these two corpora can show clearly view in term of similarities and differences in the two Englishes.

The second recommendation is researchers should increase the research on synonyms verbs because there are only a few pieces of research on this area.

**References**


ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING MOTIVATION OF
THAI PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENT: A COMPARATIVE
STUDY OF STUDENTS FROM TWO PROGRAMS

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Abstract
The purposes of the study were to investigate instrumental and integrative motivation levels of sixty Primary 5 students, thirty students from an Intensive English Program (IEP) and thirty students from a regular program, and to determine whether they were instrumentally or integratively motivated to learn English as a second language. The instruments used were a motivation survey, which was adapted from the Attitude and Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) of Gardner (1985) and other previous studies, and open-ended questions. The findings illustrated that both the IEP and the regular program students obtained high motivational levels in both instrumental and integrative motivation. However, the mean scores showed that the level of instrumental motivation was slightly higher than that of integrative motivation for both groups of students.

Keywords: Instrumental motivation, Integrative motivation, Intensive English Program, Regular program.
1. Introduction

In Thailand, English language has been taught for more than a hundred years, since the reign of King Rama III (Methitham & Chamcharatsri, 2011). Later, English became more important in Thai society after Thai officials and students were sent overseas to further their education during the first three decades of the twentieth century (Methitham & Chamcharatsri, 2011). Following the Compulsory Education Act of 1921, English became mandatory for students beyond Grade 4 in government schools (Methitham & Chamcharatsri, 2011). Nowadays the English language has become more and more essential as it is the language of international communication in various sectors, such as aviation, technology, diplomacy, science and tourism. Therefore, English is able to increase job opportunities with companies around the world. It’s also used for socializing and entertainment through media and the internet. Currently, a large number of people have realized why English is so important and begun to make English language teaching for the Thai education system better. The Intensive English Program (IEP) has been established since 2011; it is the program that is consistent with the Thai Ministry of Education curriculum framework which prioritizes and promotes the English language in the hope of improving Thai education. Therefore, many primary schools in Thailand have two programs of education, which are the regular program and the IEP. Students who join IEP have more opportunity to learn English as the course requires them to study three subjects, which are English, Science, and Mathematics, in English, while regular program students study English in the English subject only.

Undeniably, there are several factors that have impact on foreign language learners. Many researchers believe that motivation may be the key factor to lead ESL learners in the ways to succeed in learning English. Motivation is one of the factors that could be considered as an instrument to achieve in English learning.

Gardner and Lambert did the seminal work in 1972; they found that motivation is accepted by teachers and researchers as playing an important part in language learning. They differentiated language learning motivation into two types, which are instrumental motivation, i.e., learning a target language as a bridge to complete their practical goals, and integrative motivation, i.e., learning the target language because of learners’ personal interests in the target language. These two types of motivation will be applied in this study to analyze the motivation of students in the IEP program and the regular program to learn English.

Consequently, the major objective of this study is to examine and analyze motivational types that mostly apply in the foreign language learner; especially
among IEP students and regular program students in Primary 5 at Radbumroongsilp School in Ayutthaya, Thailand. It is crucial to conduct this study as this study can inform curriculum makers and it could provide adequate and very informative data for people to look into the curriculum design for IEP programs or regular programs and this could also help teachers to provide student counseling for the students; particularly the students who start thinking about whether they should either switch from IEP to regular program or from regular program to IEP in order to choose the program that is the most suitable for them.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Motivation

Gardner (1985b) explained that motivation is “the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in the activity” (as cited in Dörnyei, 1998, p.122). Investigating the reasons why learners are motivated to learn a foreign language, it is also essential to know the purpose of the language learner. It could be explained easier in the 4 elements which follow:

1) The reason that make you want to study.
2) The strong will to study.
3) The type of people we are.
4) The burden and our assessment of what we have to do.

(McDonough, 2007, pp. 369-371)

2.2 Types of Motivation

2.2.1 Instrumental Motivation

Gardner (1992) indicates that instrumental motivation is defined as the pragmatic purpose to learn English. Students don’t want to learn English because they desire to acquire knowledge but they learn English because they need to. According to Gardner and Lambert (1972), it was revealed that learners who are motivated instrumentally desire to study a language owing to a pragmatic reason such as passing a language requirement, receiving a monetary reward, such as a salary bonus, or having a better chance to get into college.

2.2.2 Integrative Motivation

Gardner’s studies in 1992 indicate that integrative motivation comes from the learner’s interest to be members of the community that uses the target language. Students would like to study English for the reason that they are eager to know how to use English in the English community and it’s not because of other specific purpose. Learners who have integrative motivation also interested in cultures of the target language.
2.2.3 Impact of Motivation on Learners
According to Dornyei (2001), motivation and learning achievement are indirectly related (as cited in Csizer and Dornyei, 2005). What this means is that motivation affects behavior of learners rather than directly affecting learning achievement. Motivation is just one factor among many factors affecting learning achievement (Csizer and Dornyei, 2005). Furthermore, self-mention in writing, as noted by Ivanič (1998), is the construction of the writer’s identity that is based on “possibilities of self-hood available to the writer in particular contexts”.

2.2.4 Factors Affecting Motivation

2.2.4.1 Students
According to Williams and Williams (2011 as cited in Lengnick-Hall and Sanders, 1997, p. 1335), “students are the raw materials for education and the primary products of educational transformations; and most important, students are key members of the labor force involved in creating education.” It is claimed that a ‘student’ plays an important role in assisting teachers to encourage their motivation level. One of the most effective ways that help teachers to enhance student’s motivation is to make them feel that they are integrated in the classroom.

2.2.4.2 Parents
According to Butler (2015), “parent-oriented inspiration was a novel sort of inspiration, unmistakable from extraneous and inherent inspirations and that it exceptionally clarified the beneficial outcomes of parental contribution on the students’ accomplishment (as cited in Cheung and Pomerantz, 2012). From this statement, it can be inferred that parents are able to help their child by having normal and meaningful conversations with them, so parents could be one of the main inspirations for the student to accomplish any tasks in their life by setting high goals and by expressing their own interests and support of learning at home and at school.

2.2.4.3 Gender
The study of Ellis (1994) indicated that girls received higher scores than boys in every test and the tests were all in French which was a second language for the students. The attitudes toward French of the students were measured also and the results showed that the girls’ attitude was more positive than the boys. It can be inferred that gender is one of the factors that have impacts on the role of motivation in learning a second language.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design
This study used mixed mode design. The first part was the introductory quantitative phase of the data collection and analysis and this was followed by the qualitative
phase of the data collection and analysis. The data from the two parts were analyzed in order to address the research questions.

3.2 Data Collection
The researcher constructed the questionnaire by adapting items from questionnaires of Gardner (1985a) and other previous studies (Phithakphongphnan, 2014; Tanghom, 2014 and Rojcharoenngam, 2014). There were ten items for instrumental motivation and ten items for integrative motivation. Before handing out the questionnaires to all the students, the items were checked for content validity using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC). This was followed by a pilot test. The researcher did a pilot test with 5 students to see the tendency of the results and check whether the language used was appropriate and easy for students to understand and do the questionnaires. After this process, the questionnaires were printed and handed to the participants in the IEP program and the regular program during class time. They were allowed to complete the questionnaires until the end of that class.

3.3 Participants
IEP, the supplementary courses include English, Mathematics, and Science and they are taught purely in English. The curriculum is based on the Thai Ministry of Education Curriculum. In contrast, there is no supplementary course taught in English in the regular program. So, students who join a regular program have less opportunity to learn English than IEP students. Moreover, to ensure the validity and reliability of the study, the researcher included Taro Yamane’s table to calculate the appropriate sample size. The formula used is described as follows:

\[ n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2} \]

\[ n = \text{size of sample} \]
\[ N = \text{size of population} \]
\[ E = \text{acceptable sampling error} \]

The researcher assessed the acceptable sampling error in this study to be ±5% or 0.05. Thus, the sample size suit for this case was

\[ n = \frac{66}{1+66(0.05^2)} \]

\[ n = 57 \text{ people} \]

There are 30 students in IEP and 30 students in regular program. The researcher wanted to collect as much data as possible, so all of the students were asked to do the questionnaires.
3.4 Instrument

3.4.1 The Motivation Survey
The motivation survey focuses on the motivation toward English language learning. The present study adapted items from the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB), which was developed in 1985 by Gardner to examine integrative and instrumental motivation of language learners by using orientation scales, and from other previous studies. The researcher chose the appropriate items which were suitable to Thai learning context and culture. Each of items in the motivation survey examines instrumental or integrative motivation. There were ten items for each type of motivation. The survey was translated into Thai for students.

3.4.2 Likert Scale
The researcher also used the five-points Likert scale in the motivation survey. The five-points Likert scale was rated from strongly disagree (1 point) to strongly agree (5 points).

3.4.3 Opened-ended Questions
The open-ended questions provided qualitative data for the study. Students were asked for more detail about their motivation to study English. The open-ended questions provided data to support the results from the questionnaire in order to have the most accurate results from this study. For questions 1 and 2, the researcher asked to check with them if there was any possibility to learn English from integrative or instrumental motivation. For questions 3 to 6, the researcher chose the most popular reasons to learn English from the questionnaires to check if they had instrumental motivation or not. For questions 7 to 10, the researcher asked questions to check the impact of integrative motivation toward students.

3.4.4 Data Analysis Summary
This study also aimed at enhancing knowledge about students’ motivation towards learning English as a second language through the use of a quantitative questionnaire (an adopted version of the AMTB) as well as qualitative research instruments (opened-ended questions). In addition, the researcher used the five Likert scale to calculate the motivation level (very high, high, average, low, or very low) and the type of motivation that students utilize for their learning language. The interpretation of the motivation level was based on the following table.

4. Findings and Discussion
Results of the questionnaires were reported here. The data were collected from primary five students in Radbumroongsilp School, Thailand. The collected information was divided into three parts as follows.

Part 1: General Information
Part 2: The Motivation Survey
Part 3: Open-ended Question
4.1 General Information

4.1.1 Gender
The majority number of students were male in IEP but most students in regular program were male.

4.1.2 The number of years in learning English
Most of the students in both programs had studied English for 5 to 10 years.

4.1.3 Level of preferences toward English learning.
Most students in IEP had high rate of learning English while the level of preferences towards learning English was moderate in regular program students.

4.1.4 Parents’ income
Parent’s income of IEP students and regular program students. The income of the majority of the parents of IEP students (77%) were in the middle-income range (18,000-85,000 baht/month). For parents of the regular program students, the income of most of them (53%) was in the lower-income range (< 18,000).

4.1.5 Parent’s education
The majority of mothers of IEP students had a bachelor’s degree but in regular program parents got the highest frequency graduated in high school.

4.2 The Motivation Survey
The information concerning instrumental and integrative motivation was analyzed and is presented in terms of mean scores, standard deviation and the motivation levels interpreted by using a five-point Likert scale, as illustrated in Table 4.10 below.

**Table 4.10**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Mean range</th>
<th>Motivational Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (strongly disagree)</td>
<td>1.00-1.49</td>
<td>Very low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (disagree)</td>
<td>1.50-2.49</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (neither agree nor disagree)</td>
<td>2.50-3.49</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (agree)</td>
<td>3.50-4.49</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 (strongly agree)</td>
<td>4.50-5.00</td>
<td>Very High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.1 Overall Result of IEP and Regular Program Students

Table 4.15

*Mean Scores, Standard Deviations, and Motivational Level Interpretation for IEP students (N=30)*
As shown in Table 4.15, the overall mean scores of both instrumental motivation and integrative motivation for IEP students were 4.06 (SD = 0.89) and 3.58 (SD = 1.09) respectively. In the motivation level interpretation, the mean scores indicated that the two types of motivational level were ‘high’.

Comparing the type of motivation for IEP students in Radbumroongsilp School shows that the IEP students mostly applied instrumental motivation to study the English language, although the average mean score of the instrumental motivation is just slightly higher than integrative motivation by 0.48.

Table 4.16
Mean Scores, Standard Deviations, and Motivational Level Interpretation for regular program students (N=30)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation Type</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrative</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.16 illustrates the overall mean scores of both instrumental motivation and integrative motivation for regular program students were 4.07 (SD = 0.89) and 3.54 (SD = 1.12) respectively. In the motivation level interpretation, the mean scores indicated that the two types of motivational level were ‘high’.

Comparing the type of motivation for regular students in Radbumroongsilp School shows that most regular students applied instrumental motivation to learn the English language although the average mean score of the instrumental motivation is only slightly higher than integrative motivation by 0.53.

When considering the overall results, it can be seen that both the IEP and the regular program students had more instrumental motivation to learn English since for both...
groups, the means of instrumental motivation are slightly higher than means of integrative motivation.

Interestingly, it can be observed that there is no difference between the means of instrumental motivation of the IEP students and that of the regular program students. Additionally, the same can be observed for the means of integrative motivation.

4.3 Open-ended Questions

Q1: In your point, what is the main reason to study English? Please explain.
IEP: Students perceived that learning English is fun.
Regular: They want to be able to speak English with foreigners to get to know them as English is used in many countries.

Q2: How can English benefit to your life? Please explain.
IEP: They can communicate with people around the world, especially when they travel abroad and it’s convenient to use electronic appliances when they know English.
Regular: Learning English is useful to their daily life, they can ask questions and answer to foreigners; in case they go to study abroad, they can communicate with other people there.

Q3: Do you agree or disagree with this statement, and why?
“I will be able to gain higher salary in my future career, if I can speak English fluently.”
IEP: They agreed with the statement because working with the foreign companies may have higher salary than working in Thai company.
Regular: Students perceived that they agreed because most students wanted to be a seller and speaking English can result in more customers, both Thai and foreigners, so they can gain more money.

Q4: Do you agree or disagree with this statement, and why?
“I want to learn English because my parents support me to learn English.”
IEP: They agreed, because parents know the benefit of learning English, such as being able to study in a good school, getting a good job, traveling abroad and being an educated person.
Regular: They agreed because parents see the advantages of learning English, such as being able to study in a good school, getting a good job, traveling abroad and being an educated person.

Q5: Do you agree or disagree with this statement, and why?
“I study English because I need to use it when I travel aboard.”
IEP: They agreed with the statement, because English is the international language and most countries can communicate in English.
Regular: They can communicate with people there to buy things, ask for directions and make friends.

**Q6:** Do you agree or disagree with this statement, and why?
“I need to use English to play computer games.”

IEP: They agreed with the statement; most games are in English, students want to know details about the game, how to play the game and suggestions in the game, so they can play games happily. They also get new English vocabulary at the same time.

Regular: They agreed because students can apply English to their daily life when they use electronic appliances, such as mobile phones, computers and tablets. They can communicate with foreign people also.

**Q7:** Do you agree or disagree with this statement, and why?
“There are many interesting books in English, so I want to read and understand them.”

IEP: They agreed with the statement because reading English books let students see various structures in sentences and new vocabularies, they can apply what they read to create sentences for communication. Moreover, reading English books help them improve their English skills, so it will be good for their future career also.

Regular: Students agreed was because reading English books let students know things about the world and students can talk more on various topics to foreign people and it is a good activity in their free time.

**Q8:** Do you agree or disagree with this statement, and why?
“I wish I could live in English native speaker country for my entire life.”

IEP: They agreed with the statement; students might have the opportunity to work, study and travel abroad, so they can communicate with people there.

Regular: Students agreed because students want to live abroad in the future and English is important language for them to communicate with people in other countries.

**Q9:** Do you agree or disagree with this statement, and why?
“I want to get new foreign friends to know more about their lifestyle.”

IEP: They agreed with the statement students would like to know about new cultures and they thought foreign friends would help them to improve their English skills.

Regular: They agreed with the statement students want to have foreign friends, so they can talk to foreign friends about their lifestyle. If those life styles sound good as a way of life, students can apply those lifestyles to their own lifestyle and they have more opportunities to practice English skills also.

**Q10:** Do you agree or disagree with this statement, and why?
“I like English pronunciation, so I would like to speak English as similar as native English speaker.”

IEP: They disagreed, was that they thought it is difficult to speak like native speakers. The way sounds are pronounced in English is much different from Thai language, so they do not feel comfortable to speak English.

Regular: They agreed with the statement, speaking like native speakers sounds beautiful and it is easy to listen to what foreign people say if students have pronunciation like native English speakers.

5. Conclusion
This research was conducted in order to compare the motivation in learning English of primary five students comparing Intensive English Program and regular program students in Radbumroongsilp School in Ayutthaya, Thailand. There were two perspectives of motivation that were observed in this study concerning motivation type and motivation level. The comparison between IEP students and regular students toward motivation in EFL students to study English found that both instrumental motivation and integrative motivation levels were high; only a few items were ranked in the ‘average’ level for both IEP students and regular students. However, the instrumental motivation obtained a slightly higher mean score than integrative motivation. But both instrumental motivation and integrative motivation encouraged students to learn English, so these two types of motivation should be incorporated together in order to support EFL students to have more effective outcomes in learning English, based on the high level of motivation in both programs.

5.1 Recommendations and Future Considerations
As the result of considerations from this study concerning the research questions, there are recommendations as follows:

5.1.1 This research was done with IEP and regular program students in primary five at Radbumroongsilp School. This was limitation of this study as the result can be generalized to only this group of students. Thus, for further study, the research should be carried over to a larger size of participants to attain more information regarding the motivation in learning English of primary students who are IEP students and regular students.

5.1.2 This research studied two types of motivation toward learning English. In order to study the motivation of learning English language in depth, various factors which can have impact on students’ motivation toward learning English, such as teachers, students, and parents are recommended to be studied further.
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THAI SECONDARY SCHOOL EFL STUDENTS’ PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS THEIR TEACHERS’ USE AND THE USEFULNESS OF THE QUANTUM LEARNING-AND-TEACHING MODEL IN READING INSTRUCTION

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Abstract

The quantum learning-and-teaching model founded by DePorter is considered to be an effective and practical model of learning encouragement. Various studies, especially in Indonesia, were conducted to investigate the effects of using the quantum learning-and-teaching model in reading instruction; however, there has been no such study conducted in the Thai context. This study aims to investigate the perceptions of Thai secondary school EFL students regarding their teachers’ use and the usefulness of the quantum learning-and-teaching model in reading instruction. Data were collected via a questionnaire. The research results reveal that the students’ perceptions regarding their teachers’ use and the usefulness of the quantum learning-and-teaching model in reading instruction were both ranked at the high level. Looking at specific items in the questionnaire, the data show that while the students perceived all 49 teaching practices were useful at the high level, they perceived their teachers used 5 teaching practices less at the moderate level. It is recommended that teachers apply a quantum learning-and-teaching model in their reading instruction to encourage students to learn how to read and to provide a positive learning atmosphere in the classroom.
Keywords: quantum learning-and-teaching model, reading strategy instruction, Thai secondary school ELF students

Introduction

Although there are four dominant skills in English language teaching: listening, speaking, reading and writing (Richard, Platt, & Weber, 2001), reading is considered to be a complicated skill which requires a variety of competences such as eye movement and brain processing (Alderson & Bachman, 2001). In their studies, Champaruang (1999 as cited in Chawwang, 2008), Ponmanee and Sinsuwan (2001 as cited in Chawwang, 2008), Purisodom (1999 as cited in Chawwang, 2008), Thani (1999 as cited in Chawwang, 2008), and Yongsathien (1999 as cited in Chawwang, 2008) found that Thai students have problems with reading comprehension the most. Several studies (Chawwang, 2008; Hayikaleng, Nair, & Krishnasamy, 2016; Lekwilai, 2014; Petchinalert & Aksornjarung, 2017; Sitthitikul, 2007; Tapinta, 2006; the Department of Educational Techniques, 1995 as cited in Yaemtui, 2015) indicate that Thai EFL students have low English reading proficiency, and they have difficulties in English reading. Moreover, TOEFL iBT test score data summary shows the Thai total mean score of 77 out of 120 is much lower than the Indonesian total mean score of 86, and the mean score of Thai examinees’ reading section is 19 while Indonesian examinees’ reading mean score is 21 (Educational Test Service, 2018). Based on this information, it seems worthwhile to find out why Indonesians, who are also EFL students, have a higher mean score in the reading section than that of Thais. From a review of related literature, it has been found that many studies in Indonesia have explored the implementation of the quantum learning-and-teaching model and investigated its effects on Indonesian students’ reading comprehension.

Thus, it seems worthwhile to investigate if a quantum learning-and-teaching model is used among Thai teachers in their reading instruction, and if Thai students find it to be useful. However, to the best of the researchers’ knowledge, no studies can be found conducted within this context. Studies conducted in Thai contexts have mostly focused on only reading strategy instruction in general (Akkakoson, 2013; Chumworatayee, 2017; Dorkchandra, 2013; Khaokaew, 2012; Whankhom, Phusawisot, & Sayankena, 2016; Wichadee, 2011). Therefore, this study aims to find out if the quantum learning-and-teaching model is used among Thai teachers in teaching their secondary school EFL students and if the students find it useful. The results of the study can be used as a guideline to help Thai teachers in conducting their reading instruction in the classroom.
Research Questions
1. To investigate the perceptions of Thai secondary school EFL students regarding their teachers’ use of the quantum learning-and-teaching model in reading instruction.
2. To investigate the perceptions of Thai secondary school EFL students regarding the usefulness of the quantum learning-and-teaching model in reading instruction.

Research Objectives
1. What are the perceptions of Thai secondary school EFL students regarding their teachers’ use of the quantum learning-and-teaching model in reading instruction?
2. What are the perceptions of Thai secondary school EFL students regarding the usefulness of the quantum learning-and-teaching model in reading instruction?

Literature Review

Reading Strategy Instruction

Reading strategy instruction is an effective and helpful method for teachers to develop students’ reading proficiency (Bimmel, Bergh, & Oostdam, 2001; Cekiso, 2007). Not only reading proficiency but also other learning abilities can be improved through reading strategy instruction, such as autonomous learning, decoding ability, and positive attitude toward reading (Ballou, 2012; Bimmel et al., 2001; Cekiso, 2007; Chamot & Ei-Dniary, 1999; Cohen, 1998 as cited in Fu, Chen, Wey, & Chen, 2014; Enciso, 2015; Klapwijk, 2012; Martínez & Zarobe, 2017; Qanwal & Karim, 2014; Shih & Reynolds, 2015; Van den Bos, Brand-Gruwel, & Aarnoutse, 1998 as cited in Klapwijk, 2012). It is highly recommended that teachers teach their students to use reading strategies while reading (Chamot & Ei-Dniary, 1999 as cited in Alastuey & Agulló, 2015; Chumworatayee, 2017; Shih & Reynolds, 2015). In order to better reading comprehension skill, it is important that readers spend plenty of time practicing the skill in many reading situations (Ballou, 2012; Carrell, 1998 as cited in Manoli et al., 2016; Enciso, 2015; Ness, 2011).

from students’ first language are transferred automatically. On the other hand, explicit or direct reading strategy instruction refers to a way of giving instruction directly, such as explaining, providing examples, and giving clues. Explicit reading strategy instruction is the most useful and helpful strategy teaching in language classroom (Alastuey & Agulló, 2015; Ballou, 2012; Cohen, 2011 as cited in Taki, 2017).

Reading strategies refer to conscious processes which deal with reading comprehension problems and facilitate readers’ comprehension (Alexander, Graham, & Harris, 1998; Arabsolghar & Elkins, 2001 as cited in Cekiso, 2007; Enciso, 2015; Manoli & Papadopoulou, 2012). Reading strategies illustrate how readers form an idea of a task, how they comprehend what they read, and how they react when they do not understand (Block, 1986; Carrell, 1991; Lee, 2012). When readers’ knowledge is not complete and not very useful, for example, texts are difficult, or reading tasks are complex, more strategic reading is required (Afflerbach, Pearson, & Paris, 2008). Obviously, many studies found that reading strategy instruction positively affects EFL students’ reading comprehension ability (Adigüzel & Gürses, 2013; Al-Rubaye, 2012; Ballou, 2012; Darwish, 2017; Efstratia, 2017; Fu et al., 2014; Jafari & Shokrpour, 2012; Marashi & Rahmati, 2017; Yousefian, 2015; Zhang & Wu, 2009). These studies were conducted to investigate the effects of reading strategy instruction in EFL contexts. They commonly used the Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS), initiated by Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002), as the main research instrument.

The Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) contains 30 items under three categories: Global Reading Strategies (GLOB), Problem Solving Strategies (PROB), and Support Strategies (SUP). Global Reading Strategies (GLOB) refer to the strategies which learners consciously and carefully use to control their reading; for example, to have a reading purpose, to think about prior knowledge, and to use tables in text. Problem Solving Strategies (PROB) are the actions and process which learners directly use while reading, such as slow and careful reading, getting back on track, and visualizing information. Support Strategies (SUP) refer to using reference materials to facilitate learners’ reading comprehension; for instance, taking notes, underlining information, and paraphrasing.

Quantum Learning-and-Teaching Model

The quantum learning-and-teaching model is an effective and practical model of learning encouragement which contains educational theory and immediate classroom activities together with gathering all elements like media and environment (Abdulah, 2012; DePorter & Hernacki, 1992; DePorter et al., 1999; Koeswandi & Saleh, 2014; Martika & Hermayawati, 2016; Mulyanah, 2008; Saragih & Kristiani, 2012). Besides, it draws students’ interest to the lessons by applying relevance to students’ lives and
providing meaningful experience. It also contains ideas on preparation for creating lessons, how teachers manage classroom, what content should be taught, how teachers use materials and create classroom environment, and how teachers give appropriate feedback (Abdulah, 2012; DePorter et al., 1999; Koeswandi & Saleh, 2014).

Bobbi DePorter, the founder of quantum learning and teaching, came up with this interesting model at “SuperCamp,” an accelerated Quantum Learning Program organized by Learning Forum, an international education company. Hundreds of teachers and over 25,000 students from nine years to 24 years were involved in this ten-day residential research program (DePorter et al., 1999). The results revealed that the camp’s participants improved their grades and learning processes, being more active in classroom lessons, and being proud of themselves (Vos-Groenendal, 1991 as cited in DePorter et al., 1999). After the study at “SuperCamp,” there have been various studies, especially among Indonesian EFL students’ reading proficiency, conducted to investigate the effect of quantum learning-and-teaching model (Abdulah, 2012; Fadillah, 2013; Fermanda, 2013; Khasanah, 2012; Koeswandi & Saleh, 2014; Martika & Hermayawati, 2016). The results of these studies were similar in that the quantum learning-and-teaching model was found to have a positive effect on Indonesian students’ reading comprehension.

Bobbi DePorter, the founder of the quantum learning-and-teaching model, embodied five core principles in quantum teaching which cover a prime directive which is “Theirs to Ours, Ours to Theirs” (DePorter & Hernacki, 1992, p. 7). These five principles are as follows: “Everything speaks”, “Everything is on purpose”, “Experience before label”, “Acknowledge every effort”, and “If it’s worth learning, it’s worth celebrating” (DePorter et al., 1999, p. 7). “Everything speaks” means everything in the classroom sends messages. DePorter et al. (1999) stated that classroom environment, teachers’ body and verbal language, and handouts send messages to students. The environment in the classroom relating to learning includes teachers’ intonation, body language, learning materials and teaching materials (Çiftçi, 2009; Khasanah, 2012; Saragih & Kristiani, 2012; Sunarti, 2014; Suwarni, Tarjana, Slamet, & Ngadiso, 2014). “Everything is on purpose” refers to everything happening in the class having an intended purpose. “Experience before label” is the content should be labelled after experiencing (Suwarni et al., 2014). Whenever teachers teach only the content and knowledge without applying and using it, it might be forgotten and useless. The human brain learns through experience, so learning happens best when students experience it (DePorter et al., 1999). “Acknowledge every effort” suggests that teachers should acknowledge and cheer students when they learn and dare to do something for their learning. In order to achieve the best learning result, teachers should acknowledge every effort, not only the correct ones. Lastly, “If it’s
worth learning, it’s worth celebrating” is to create positive emotional association and celebration by giving feedback and positive reinforcement.

In addition to the five core principles, the quantum learning-and-teaching model suggests context sets and content sets. There are four context sets, which establish quantum learning lessons: atmosphere, foundation, environment, and design (DePorter et al., 1999). Atmosphere is a main psychological factor of academic learning since it influences students’ emotion. There are six important ingredients in setting up a perfect learning atmosphere: intention, rapport, joy and wonder, risk-taking, belonging, and modelling. Foundation refers to building students to apply the learnt knowledge to their life in the future and create autonomous students. Foundation is one of essential parts of the learning community (DePorter et al., 1999). Environment is another of the important factors in the learning context. Learning happens both consciously and non-consciously at the same time. The brain is able to non-consciously attend to many things from many sources, such as peripherals, props, seating, organic elements, and music, at the same time (DePorter et al., 1999). Lastly, the quantum learning-and-teaching model offers recommendations for teachers on how to design their lessons by following these five dimensions: (1) From their world to our world, (2) Considering learning styles and multiple intelligences, (3) Considering the difficulty of content and degree of personal risk, (4) Teaching design frame, and (5) Use of metaphor, imagery, and suggestion.

Content sets refer to useful strategies and techniques for classroom teachers in three main aspects: presentation, facilitation, and learn skills. For presentation, teachers are content deliverers who are the most influential to students’ learning success. Modelling content is the most effective way to deliver it. In order to empower teachers’ content modelling, speech, voice, tone, body, face, and intention should be carefully and effectively performed.

The quantum learning-and-teaching model mentions that teachers have the responsibility to facilitate learning and keep students involved with their lessons. It recommends that teachers should clearly know the aim of lessons and begin lessons with delivering lesson objective to their students. Now that teachers propel students’ learning success, they should consider these four following components: outlining the overall view of lessons, serving a variety of multi-sensory and multiple intelligences to create preferred ways that people use to focus on, remember, and learn information, chunking, and having frequent reviews. There should be not only presentation and facilitation, but also asking of questions, which is also useful to better learning. There are two major advantages of asking the students questions. First, asking questions provides teachers chance to celebrate and honour students’ classroom participation. Plus, teachers also offer students opportunity to take risk. Second, it aids teachers to clarify and elicit students’ understanding, thought and learning progress. By asking
more questions, students are offered chances to explain their answers and understanding. Lastly, learn skills, which are organizing information and quantum reading, are mentioned as useful ways to help make lessons more enjoyable and easier in less time. Learn skills include giving organization tools, such as mind mapping and note taking, can help students organize their thoughts and ideas well. In addition, using organization tools makes content easy to understand and recall.

Apart from providing organization tools, quantum reading offers the following five steps to develop reading skill. First, reading class should start with asking these following questions: “What is this about?” “What do I want to get out of this?” and “How can I use this information?” Answering the mentioned questions provides learners reasons to read. Second, students should be in a calm and peaceful atmosphere to get ready before reading passages. Third, students scan passages quickly by pointing fingers at reading passages and moving eyes with the finger. Teachers ask students to look at anything remarkable, such as headlines, bold type, pictures, and graphs because they convey some meanings and ideas. Moreover, teachers should let students continuously ask themselves questions about outstanding components. Fourth, the reading stage can be done faster. Finally, students should have a chance to review what they have already read.

**Methodology**

**Research Design**

This study is a survey research. A quantitative design was employed to investigate the perceptions of Thai secondary school EFL students regarding their teachers’ use and the usefulness of a quantum learning-and-teaching model in reading instruction.

Two hundred and fifty-six Year 9 students in a Thai Secondary School in Bangkok were selected by convenience sampling method as one of the researchers taught a Fundamental English 5 course to them in the first semester of Academic Year 2019. Moreover, the students had taken four required English reading courses in their Years 7 and 8.

**Data Collection**

The main research instrument in the study was a questionnaire. The aim of using the questionnaire was to investigate the participants’ perceptions regarding their teachers’ use and the usefulness of quantum learning-and-teaching models in reading instruction. The questionnaire consisted of three parts as follows: Part I: Participants’ Background Information, Part II: Participants’ Perceptions Regarding the Use of
Quantum Learning-and-Teaching Model in Reading Instruction, and Part III: Participants’ Perceptions Regarding the Usefulness of Quantum Learning-and-Teaching Model in Reading Instruction. All of the 49 items in Part II and Part III were accompanied with a 5-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 to 5. There were two subsections in Part II and Part III: Perceptions Regarding Reading Strategy Instruction (Items 1-24) and Perceptions Regarding Classroom Activities (Items 25-49).

To design the items regarding Reading Strategy Instruction in Part II and Part III of the questionnaire, the researcher selected items regarding reading strategy instruction based on the characteristics and principles of the quantum learning-and-teaching model by adapting the SORS, the questionnaire designed by Mokhtari and Sheorey in 2002. The researcher selected 24 items and modified the items based on the aims of the study. For the questionnaire items regarding classroom activities, the 25 questionnaire items were created by analysing quantum learning-and-teaching models.

To develop the questionnaire, the 49 items were checked by a panel of three experts for content validity and appropriateness of language used. The resulting Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) Index total mean score was 0.84, which means the questionnaire items were acceptable.

**Data Analysis**

For Part I, Participants’ Background Information, the researcher used descriptive statistics to calculate and summarize the percentages of the background information asked. The data from both Part II and Part III of the questionnaire was analysed using SPSS to calculate means, standard deviations, and levels of agreement. In terms of the levels of agreement, a Likert scale that ranged from 1 to 5 was used in the questionnaire and converted into three levels of agreement as suggested by Ketsing (1995): high (mean of 3.67 – 5.00), moderate (mean of 2.34 – 3.66) and low (mean of 1.00 – 2.33). The Cronbach alpha values of the use and usefulness of quantum learning-and-teaching model in reading instruction were .95, and .92 respectively.

**Findings and Discussion**

This section presents the participants’ responses to the questionnaire regarding their teachers’ use and the usefulness of quantum learning-and-teaching model in reading instruction. The results of the two research questions are presented as follows:

**TABLE 1.** Overall Means and Standard Deviations of the Perceptions of Participants Regarding Their Teachers’ Use and the Usefulness of Quantum Learning-and-Teaching Model in Reading Strategy Instruction and Classroom Activities
Table 1 reveals that the participants’ perceptions regarding both their teachers’ use and the usefulness of quantum learning-and-teaching model in reading instruction were found at the high level (M = 3.92, S.D. = 0.30 and M = 4.10, S.D. = 0.15). In addition, Table 1 also shows the participants’ perceptions of the overall use and usefulness of the two subsections of the questionnaire, namely reading strategy instruction and classroom activities. For the overall reading strategy instruction, the quantum learning-and-teaching model was found to be used at the high level of usage (M = 3.84, S.D. = 1.01). Correspondingly, the participants’ overall perception regarding the usefulness of quantum learning-and-teaching model in reading strategy instruction was found at the high level (M = 4.06, S.D. = 0.89). Moreover, the overall participants’ perception regarding their teachers’ use of quantum learning-and-teaching model in classroom activities and that of the usefulness were also found at the same high level (M = 4.00, S.D. = 0.99 and M = 4.14, S.D. = 0.90).

Looking at specific items in the questionnaire, while the students perceived all 49 items regarding their teacher’s teaching practices of quantum learning-and-teaching model useful at the high level, 44 items (20 items of reading strategy instruction and 24 items of classroom activities) were found to be used at the high level. Item 3 “My teachers let me think about whether the content of the text fit my reading purpose”, Item 6 “My teachers let me adjust my reading speed according to what I read”, Item 7 “My teachers taught me to decide what to read closely and what to ignore when I read”, Item 23 “My teachers taught me to use typographical features like bold face and italics to identify key information”, and Item 33 “My teachers encouraged me to take part in classroom activities” were perceived by the students to be used by their teacher at the moderate level.

These findings indicate that even though in general the teachers used the quantum learning-and-teaching model in their reading instruction extensively (at the high level), and the students also perceived the model to be useful at the same level, specific teaching practices needed some attention. Regarding the teaching practices that the students perceived having usefulness at the high level, teachers might need to spend more time in the classroom on these teaching practices so as to help their students learn to read better. For the items perceived to be used only at the moderate level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<th>Usefulness</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall reading strategy</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instruction</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall classroom activities</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall reading instruction</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
level, one explanation for it might be that the teachers might focus only on students’ reading comprehension and keep helping students study words, phrases, and structures which resulted in understanding the overall meaning of the passage. In order to develop students’ reading proficiency, teachers should consider using every useful teaching practice. According to DePorter et al. (1999), telling students the purpose of lessons improves their proficiency and learning behavior. Moreover, Andre and Anderson (1979 as cited in Nurie, 2017) suggested that determining reading purposes by using questioning and answering betters reading comprehension ability.

Since students always rely on their teachers, friends, and other reference materials when they face reading difficulties, encouragement of autonomous learning is one of the essential factors for success (Chomchaiya & Dunworth, 2008). DePorter et al. (1999) also contented that enabling students to apply the learnt knowledge to their life in the future and creating autonomous students, are essential parts of students’ development. In addition, looking at significant features, such as headlines, bold type, pictures, and graphs, is helpful in trying to comprehend the passages because they convey some meanings and ideas (DePorter et al., 1999).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Item</th>
<th>Usage</th>
<th>No. of Item</th>
<th>Usefulness</th>
<th>Rank</th>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>My teachers taught me to underline or circle information in the text to help me remember it. (M = 4.36, S.D. = 0.93)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>My teachers taught me to underline or circle information in the text to help me remember it. (M = 4.43, S.D. = 0.82)</td>
<td>First</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>My teachers taught me to take an overall view of the text to see what it was about before reading it. (M = 4.27, S.D. = 0.85)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>My teachers taught me to paraphrase to better understand what I read. (M = 4.25, S.D. = 0.80)</td>
<td>Second</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>When text became difficult, my teachers taught me to pay closer attention to what I read.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>My teachers asked me to translate from English into my native language when I read.</td>
<td>Third</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My teachers taught me to take notes while reading to help me understand what I read.
(M \text{= 4.15, S.D. = 0.97})

My teachers taught me to take notes while reading to help me understand what I read.
(M \text{= 4.22, S.D. = 0.88})

My teachers asked me to translate from English into my native language when I read.
(M \text{= 4.15, S.D. = 1.16})

My teachers informed me the reading purpose.
(M \text{= 4.17, S.D. = 0.77})

Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations of the participants’ perceptions regarding the five most used and useful teachers’ teaching practices in reading strategy instruction. It can be seen from Table 2 that Items 2, 4, and 18 were perceived as the top five in both usage frequency and most useful teaching practices in reading strategy instruction. It is noticeable from the table that Item 4: “My teachers taught me to underline or circle information in the text to help me remember it” was perceived at the highest mean scores in both usage and usefulness. One explanation for this might be that this reading strategy is popular among EFL students. Many studies reveal the use of underlying or circling information in the text at the high level of usage (Al-Rubaye, 2012; İnceçay, 2013; Rastakhiz & Safari, 2014; Solak & Altay, 2014; Zhang & Wu, 2009). Another explanation might be that when students learn through experience, labelling things they learnt is a very important stage (DePorter et al., 1999). Puspika and Don Narius (2014) also recommend some useful labelling activities such as using keywords, concepts, and models. Using graphic stuff like colors, props, and posters can help students to label and comprehend.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Item</th>
<th>Classroom Activities</th>
<th>Usage</th>
<th>No. of Item</th>
<th>Classroom Activities</th>
<th>Usefulness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>My teachers offered a variety of class activities such as watching videos, interpreting</td>
<td>(M = 4.15, S.D. = 0.92)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>My teachers offered a variety of class activities such as watching videos, interpreting</td>
<td>(M = 4.25, S.D. = 0.83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>My teachers taught me to take notes while reading to help me understand what I read.</td>
<td>(M = 4.15, S.D. = 0.97)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>My teachers taught me to take notes while reading to help me understand what I read.</td>
<td>(M = 4.22, S.D. = 0.88)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>My teachers asked me to translate from English into my native language when I read.</td>
<td>(M = 4.15, S.D. = 1.16)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>My teachers informed me the reading purpose.</td>
<td>(M = 4.17, S.D. = 0.77)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 3. The Five Most Used and Useful Teachers’ Teaching Practices in Classroom Activities as Perceived by Secondary School EFL Students
Table 3 presents the means and standard deviations of the participants’ perceptions regarding the five most used and useful teachers’ teaching practices in classroom activities. It can be seen from Table 3 that Items 25, 41, and 43 were perceived as the top five in both usage and usefulness. The use of a variety of class activities might indicate that the teachers might have been aware of their students’ different learning styles and multiple intelligences. Thus, they try to use a variety of classroom activities in order to cater to all learning styles.

DePorter et al. (1999) also claimed that, in order to design lessons, students’ differences in learning styles and multiple intelligences should be considered. Any lessons are more meaningful and vivid if they serve three following modalities: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Students also have their preferred modality combinations which facilitate their talents (Markova, 1992 as cited in DePorter et al., 1999). This also supports learner-centeredness. Matsua (2007) recommends nine learner-centered strategies: (1) collaborative learning, (2) using visuals and pictures in learning, (3) role-play, simulation and drama, (4) games and debates, (5) songs, music

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|   | passages, group games, listening to music, role-playing, and mind mapping.  
(M = 4.50, S.D. = 0.83) | interpreting passages, group games, listening to music, role-playing, and mind mapping.  
(M = 4.39, S.D. 0.84) |
| 25 | My teachers paid attention to everything in the classroom.  
(M = 4.37, S.D. = 0.85) | 43 My teachers reviewed the learnt content frequently.  
(M = 4.35, S.D. = 0.84) |
| 43 | My teachers reviewed the learnt content frequently.  
(M = 4.29, S.D. = 0.79) | 25 My teachers paid attention to everything in the classroom.  
(M = 4.31, S.D. = 0.84) |
| 42 | My teachers broke the reading text into small parts.  
(M = 4.29, S.D. = 0.89) | 32 My teachers let me work with other students in pairs or in groups.  
(M = 4.30, S.D. = 0.80) |
| 49 | My teachers told me what I would do later.  
(M = 4.25, S.D. = 0.95) | 28 My teachers treated my friends and me fairly.  
(M = 4.25, S.D. = 0.91) |

Table 3 presents the means and standard deviations of the participants’ perceptions regarding the five most used and useful teachers’ teaching practices in classroom activities. It can be seen from Table 3 that Items 25, 41, and 43 were perceived as the top five in both usage and useful teaching practices in classroom activities. It is noticeable from the table that Item 41 “My teachers offered a variety of class activities such as watching videos, interpreting passages, group games, listening to music, role-playing, and mind mapping” was perceived at the highest mean score in both usage and usefulness. The use of a variety of class activities might indicate that the teachers might have been aware of their students’ different learning styles and multiple intelligences. Thus, they try to use a variety of classroom activities in order to cater to all learning styles.

DePorter et al. (1999) also claimed that, in order to design lessons, students’ differences in learning styles and multiple intelligences should be considered. Any lessons are more meaningful and vivid if they serve three following modalities: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Students also have their preferred modality combinations which facilitate their talents (Markova, 1992 as cited in DePorter et al., 1999). This also supports learner-centeredness. Matsua (2007) recommends nine learner-centered strategies: (1) collaborative learning, (2) using visuals and pictures in learning, (3) role-play, simulation and drama, (4) games and debates, (5) songs, music
and dances, (6) working alone, (7) graphic design, (8) thematic instruction, and (9) areas for consideration.

TABLE 4. The Five Least Used and Useful Teachers’ Teaching Practices in Reading Strategy Instruction as Perceived by Secondary School EFL Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Item</th>
<th>Reading Strategy Instruction</th>
<th>Usage</th>
<th>No. of Item</th>
<th>Reading Strategy Instruction</th>
<th>Usefulness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>My teachers taught me to decide what to read closely and what to ignore when I read. (M = 3.20, S.D. = 1.15)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>My teachers let me adjust my reading speed according to what I read. (M = 3.78, S.D. = 0.96)</td>
<td>First</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>My teachers let me adjust my reading speed according to what I read. (M = 3.24, S.D. = 1.15)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>My teachers taught me to ask myself questions I like to have answered in the text. (M = 3.84, S.D. = 0.95)</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>My teachers taught me to use typographical features like bold face and italics to identify key information. (M = 3.30, S.D. = 1.27)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>My teachers taught me to decide what to read closely and what to ignore when I read. (M = 3.88, S.D. = 1.00)</td>
<td>Third</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>My teachers let me think about whether the content of the text fit my reading purpose. (M = 3.42, S.D. = 1.01)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>My teachers let me think about whether the content of the text fit my reading purpose. (M = 3.89, S.D. = 0.82)</td>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>My teachers let me use reference materials (e.g., a dictionary) to help me understand what I read. (M = 3.51, S.D. = 1.23)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>My teachers taught me to use typographical features like bold face and italics to identify key information. (M = 3.92, S.D. = 0.99)</td>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 illustrates the means and standard deviations of the participants’ perceptions regarding the least five used and useful teachers’ teaching practices in reading strategy instruction. It can be seen from Table 4 that Items 3, 6, 7, and 23 were perceived as the five lowest ranked in both usage and useful teaching practices in reading strategy instruction. In the Thai context, teachers might set their teaching
aim to help students comprehend texts so this means they might not give attention to some reading strategies. One possible explanation for this is that students might have believed the reading teaching practices less frequently used by their teachers were less useful for their learning how to read. That is why the students perceived these reading strategies the least frequently used and useful.

**TABLE 5. The Five Least Used and Useful Teachers’ Teaching Practices in Classroom Activities as Perceived by Secondary School EFL Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Usage</th>
<th>Usefulness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>No. of Item</strong></td>
<td><strong>Classroom Activities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>My teachers explained what they expected of me. (M = 3.34, S.D. = 1.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>My teachers told me that learning responsibility belonged to me and involved me in making decisions about classwork. (M = 3.68, S.D. = 1.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>My teachers knew my attempts in studying. (M = 3.72, S.D. = 0.96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>My teachers appreciated my success. (M = 3.72, S.D. = 0.96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>My teachers’ direction was easy to follow. (M = 3.78, S.D. = 1.12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 illustrates the means and standard deviations of the participants’ perceptions regarding the five least used and useful teachers’ teaching practices in classroom activities. It can be seen from Table 5 that Items 26, 27, 37, and 38 were perceived as the most five classroom activities in both usage and useful teaching.
practices in classroom activities. It is noticeable from the table that Item 37 “My teachers explained what they expected of me” was perceived at the lowest mean scores in both usage and usefulness. The first explanation for the finding is that a teacher-centered method is still commonly used in English reading instruction. Because such teacher-centered methods have been used for decades in Thailand, it might result in passive and dependent students. Thamraksa (2004) states that, in Thai society, a teacher’s image is of a person who has great knowledge, and if teachers want to maintain their status in the society, they use teacher-centered methods. This is supported by the conclusion that English teachers use teacher-centered approaches as a core method in their lessons, which is significant for lack of student involvement (Akkakoson, 2013; Chareonwongsak, 2002; Sitthitikul, 2011). This results in Thai students’ not being able to perceive learning as a life-long process, to realize learning value, and to take their own learning responsibility.

It can be concluded from the findings found in Tables 2 to 5 that the students perceived the teaching practices more frequently used by their teachers to be more useful, and they perceived the teaching practices less frequently used by their teachers to be less useful. This suggests that the perceptions towards the usefulness of the teaching practices in reading instruction might be the result of the familiarity with their teachers’ teaching practices in the classroom.

Conclusions
The present study aimed at investigating the perceptions of Thai secondary school EFL students regarding their teachers’ use and the usefulness of the quantum learning-and-teaching model in reading instruction. The results from the questionnaire indicate that Thai secondary school EFL students perceived their teachers used the quantum learning-and-teaching model in their reading instruction and that the quantum learning-and-teaching model was useful in reading instruction.

The item found in the top five and least five used rankings, and the useful teaching practices rankings in both reading strategy instruction and classroom activities also need attention. It was also found that the perceptions towards the usefulness of the teaching practices of the quantum learning-and-teaching model in reading instruction go with the students’ familiarity with their teachers’ teaching practices in the classroom. The finding that Items 2 “My teachers taught me to take note while reading to help me understand what I read”, 4 “My teachers taught me to underline or circle information in the text to help me remember it”, 18 “My teachers asked me to translate from English into my native language when I read”, 25 “My teachers paid attention on everything in the classroom”, 41 “My teachers offered a variety of class activities such as watching videos, interpreting passages, group games, listening to music, role-playing, and mind mapping”, and 43 “My teachers
reviewed the learnt content frequently” were found to be perceived as the top five in both use and usefulness suggests that both the teachers and the students agree about the need to use these teaching practices in reading instruction.

On the other hand, the finding that Items 3 “My teachers let me think about whether the content of the text fit my reading purpose”, 6 “My teachers let me adjust my reading speed according to what I read”, 7 “My teachers taught me to decide what to read closely and what to ignore when I read”, 23 “My teachers taught me to use typographical features like bold face and italics to identify key information”, 26 “My teachers knew my attempts in studying”, 27 “My teachers appreciated my success”, 37 “My teachers explained what they expected of me” and 38 “My teachers told me that learning responsibility belonged to me and involved me in making decisions about classwork”, which were perceived as the lowest five in both usage and usefulness suggests the teachers’ less use of these teaching practices might result in the students’ perceptions of less usefulness of these items.

**Recommendations and Future Considerations**

There are a few implications seen from these findings. First, Thai teachers can help their students learn how to read English text better if they follow a quantum learning-and-teaching model in their reading instruction (Abdulah, 2012; Fadillah, 2013; Khasanah, 2012; Koeswandi & Saleh, 2014; Martika & Hermayawati, 2016; Suwarni et al., 2014). Moreover, teachers should spend more time in class using the five teaching practices found to be use at the moderate level. (Item 3 “My teachers let me think about whether the content of the text fit my reading purpose”, Item 6 “My teachers let me adjust my reading speed according to what I read”, Item 7 “My teachers taught me to decide what to read closely and what to ignore when I read”, Item 23 “My teachers taught me to use typographical features like bold face and italics to identify key information” and Item 33 “My teachers encouraged me to take part in classroom activities”).

The findings from this study can be interpreted to show that as the use of the investigated teaching practices seems to result in the students’ positive perceptions of the usefulness of the teaching practices, using a quantum learning-and-teaching model in reading instruction is recommended in a reading class. Abdulah (2012) and Koeswandi and Saleh (2014) recommended that the quantum learning-and-teaching model could be applied as a reading comprehension model as the results of their study showed that quantum teaching lessons improved the students’ language proficiency and as well they assisted the teachers in providing an appropriate learning atmosphere.
Martika and Hermayawati’s (2016) study also confirmed that quantum learning bettered their students’ reading skill and learning behaviours. In addition, Fadillah (2013) found that the activities and characteristics of quantum learning gave a positive effect on the students’ abilities in learning reading since they encouraged an enjoyable and comfortable learning atmosphere. Moreover, Khasanah (2012) emphasized that the quantum learning-and-teaching model is a good choice for creative reading instruction, especially to motivate student interest.

In conclusion, to complete their learning goals, students should be highly motivated and active when participating in the reading instruction. Institutions or schools, thus, need to support their teachers in terms of both teaching materials and teaching process.

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A CORPUS-BASED STUDY OF ENGLISH SYNONYMS: 
*ASSESS* and *EVALUATE*

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**Abstract**

The aim of the study is to examine two synonymous verbs: *assess* and *evaluate*. The reason for choosing these verbs is their high frequency incidences in the Ordinary National Educational Test (O-NET). The data were acquired from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). The usage of both verbs was analyzed in terms of grammatical patterns and collocations. The study’s finding reveals that although *assess* and *evaluate* have the same core meaning, they are not absolute synonyms as they differ in terms of grammatical patterns and collocations.

**Keywords:** COCA, synonym, grammatical patterns, collocations

**1. Introduction**

As English is substantial for Thais and people all over the world, Thai Basic Education Core Curriculum necessitates English language to be studied for 12 years in Basic Education and 9 years in Compulsory Education. When L2 learners learn and use English, they might be confronted with various vocabulary choice due to the enormous size of the English words and this can affect the choice of words suitable for context. The learners can notice that there are different words that have the same meaning; they are called *synonyms*. However, not all synonymous vocabulary can be interchanged in any contexts and this is what L2 learners need to understand.
Moreover, incorrect wording use may also ensue when students cannot differentiate the vocabulary (Gass and Selinker, 2008). As the researcher is an English instructor, the most challenging tasks is to instruct and enhance students’ English ability especially for the tutorial preparation course of the Ordinary National Educational Test (O-NET). Many students are concerned about the similarities and differences of synonyms, namely, assess and evaluate. So that they set this doubtful point and ask for the exact answer. To clarify the question, in this paper, the corpus linguistics techniques on the Corpus of Contemporary American English use is applied to prove that there are similar and dissimilar arguments among two synonyms namely assess and evaluate in terms of the collocations and grammatical patterns are significant to reveal findings.

2. Literature Review
2.1 Synonym
Cambridge Dictionary Online (2018) and English Oxford Living Dictionaries Online (2018). describe that synonym is “a word or phrase that has the same or nearly the same meaning as another word or phrase in the same language: The words ‘small’ and ‘little’ are synonyms”. and “a similar definition as a word or phrase that means exactly or nearly the same as another word or phrase in the same language, for example, shut is a synonym of close: ‘shut’ is a synonym of ‘close’.” Besides, dictionary.com, mentioned by Kariger and Fierro (1995) but under present control of the Inter Active Corporation, defines this word as “a word having the same or nearly the same meaning as another in the language, as happy, joyful, and elated.”

2.1.1 Near synonym
Near-synonyms are words that are closely connected as to just about be undistinguishable but have unique implications that investigators want to consider and make one word more proper for a situation than additional context. For example, lie word can appeal falsehood, fib, misrepresentation, and untruth. Each near-synonymous vocabulary contains divergent shades of meaning that each could offer to apposite context (Nordquist, 2019).

2.1.2 Absolute synonym
Absolute synonym is the replacement vertical for vocabulary in any framework which its truth value cannot be fixed, transformed communicative effect, or meaning. This type of synonym is pretty hard to find in English words. Additionally, Quine (1951) and Goodman (1952) also declare that the it is impossible to see absolute synonymy according to the pragmatic in English.
2.1.3 Synonyms: assess and evaluate

**ASSESS**

The Collins Free Dictionary Online (2019) defines *assess* in the following order:

**Verb** – (a) To consider them in order to make a judgment about someone or something.  
**Example sentence:** The test was to assess aptitude rather than academic achievement.

(b) To rate the amount of money that something is worth or should be paid, you calculate or estimate it.  
**Example sentence:** Ask them to send you information on how to assess the value of your belongings.

Moreover, Oxford Living Dictionary Online (2019) also defines its definition and part of speech as follows;  

**Verb** – (a) To calculate or estimate the price or value of.  
**Example sentence:** He said it was too early to assess the oil damage but added that the entrance to the wetlands was mostly protected by a natural sandbar.

(b) To set the value of a tax, fine, etc., for (a person or property) at a specified level.  
**Example sentence:** This meant she was assessed as a person living alone and did not have to pay the full council tax for her home.

**EVALUATE**

The Collins Free Dictionary Online (2019) defines the word *assess* as in the following:

**Verb** – (a) To consider them in order to make a judgment about someone or something and how good or bad they are.  
**Example sentence:** They will first send in trained nurses to evaluate the needs of the individual situation.

Furthermore, Oxford Living Dictionary Online (2019) affords the definition of *assess* as follows;  

**Verb** – (a) To form an idea of the amount, number, or value of; assess.  
**Example sentence:** The system it uses to evaluate drugs is admired by public health experts worldwide.

(b) To Find a numerical expression or equivalent for (an equation, formula, or function)  
**Example sentence:** Substitute numbers in a simple formula and evaluate the answer.
2.2 Criteria for distinguishing synonyms

2.2.1 Collocation
Cambridge Dictionaries Online (2018) remarks that *collocation* is “a word or phrase that is often used with another word or phrase, in a way that sounds correct to people who have spoken the language all their lives, but might not be expected from the meaning: In the phrase ‘a hard frost’, ‘hard’ is a collocation of ‘frost’ and ‘strong’ would not sound natural.” Likewise, English Oxford Living Dictionaries Online (2018) explains that *collocation* is “the habitual juxtaposition of a particular word with another word or words with a frequency greater than chance: ‘strong tea’ and ‘heavy drinker’ are typical English collocations”.

2.2.2 Grammatical patterns
Grammatical pattern analysis is a very interesting criterion to distinguish English synonyms. This method is able to lead the investigator to meet the conception that any words that have the same meanings partake an influence on the different possible patterns of grammar (Phoocharoensil, 2010). O’Keeffe et al (2007) also notes that grammatical patterns can direct not only about the constructions but also typical social and discourse circumstances which are connected with extraordinary grammatical elements.

2.3 CORPUS
In 1990, Ayto announces that the term *corpus* was introduced from the Latin which was meant to be *body*. In modern English, *corpus* had been explained two different issues as follows;

(a) corpse (it came via Old French *cors*) and th
(b) corps (it came via modern French *corps* in the 18 century)

Lately, the terminology ‘*corpus*’ holds on a large collection of linguistic data which included with written manuscripts and recorded speech in an agreement of new corpus linguistics. It can be modified as a preliminary idea of linguistic description or as a meaning of authorizing ideas about wording (Crystal, 1995). Likewise, Dash (2018) outlines corpus linguistics as a noteworthy segment of computational linguistics. It suggests enormous quantities of practical language records composed in a systematic way from diverse fields of actual language utilize following some statistical techniques of data sampling in the interest of examine and discern linguistic data, samples, and desirable info.

2.3.1 Concordance Lines
Kennedy (1998) points out that the collocated investigation is started with the examination of concordances use as they are the main tool for gaining corpora. A significant aspect of adapting concordance lines in any exploring dialectal is that learners have to keep in mind not to understand all of the vocabulary in concordances
in order to produce the efficacy of receiving an overview and looking at only the essentials. Since concordance lines show how a speech or expression is presently being used upon a variety of real typescripts such as books, newspapers, blogs, websites and radios of all categories that all are from natural language corpus. It encompasses the ‘node’; the vocabulary that are elected to be inspected. The position of node is at the center and lines are not combined. The cut-off occurs at each end and they are not always complete sentences. The trick of inspecting concordance lines is to point at the target word in the center (node) and go centrifugally, to the left and right, to make sense of the word in setting (Teachitworld, 2008). This following figure displays five concordance lines from the BNC with the target word assess.

![Figure 1: Example of concordance line](image)

From figure 1, ‘assess’ is a node word and surrounded by the context or collocates.

**2.3.2 Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)**

Henry (2011) cites that the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) has created by Mark Davies who is a professor of Corpus Linguistics of Brigham Young University. The corpus is the only one comprises the most wide-ranging usage of American English and the variety of English corpora connotation. More than 560 million words of 220,225 texts are encompassed (Corpus of Contemporary American English Online, 2019). According to the free encyclopedia, Wikipedia (2019), all the composited texts of COCA are parted into five categories; Spoken texts, Fiction, Famous magazines, Newspapers, and Academic Journals.

**2.4 Previous related studies**

Phoocharoensil (2010), considers five English synonyms; ask, beg, plead, appeal and repeat. Those are attentive on their lexis, syntax, and styles. Three learners’ dictionaries are compared in the corpus-informed process for receiving the data. In order to determine the definitions of all the synonyms, the author applies Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary which deliberated the meaning terminologies,
contexts of use, and grammatical patterns. The result is shown that some excluding information are not presented in the dictionary, for example, grammatical patterns, collocations and the others while corpus-based data can provide the extension. Hence, it is beneficial for pupils to find, in corpora, for synonymous sample discourses to recognize words meaning. Not only Phocharoensil’s utterance, Darvishi (2011) also scrutinizes undergraduates by provoking the collocation errors in their writing performance. The application is a questionnaire series in concordance with the resolving the facts by using British National Corpus (BNC). The conclusion reveals that mother tongue of learners is the most useful factor piloting to faults and followed by the collocation restriction and interlingual reversal. Moreover, Ruengrong (2014) emphases on the investigation of three synonyms: ruin, demolish, and destroy. The explanation of those words’ disparate usage is identified; grammatical patterns, degrees of formality, collocation, and classification using Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) to analyze concordances and its result exposes that the three synonyms eventually share the same characteristics such as meaning and collocations while their degrees of formality are dissimilar. Moreover, the three synonyms are not the same in the way of the degrees of formality criticism. Ruin and destroy are not usually used in formal contexts while demolish is often involved in formal contexts. In addition, those synonymous words cannot be replaced by each other in any various functions; formality, grammatical patterns and collocations. So that ruin, demolish, and destroy are absolute synonyms but each still carries their own characteristics. Stockdale (2007) besides spots that the application of many corpus linguistics techniques on the Bank of English corpus to examine the resemblances and dissimilarities in the use of lots and plenty. The researcher uses the investigation of collocation to be a key concept in this paper, following with a wordlist examination. The consequence illustrates that Moreover, both words contain the similarities and differences in various functions of collocations and wordlists. Finally, the last research observes the words strong and powerful about their patterns. Castello (2014) uses concordance lines to examine demonstration of the prominent lexical pattern forms and grammatical usage of the two adjectives. The result exposes that both words do not share all perspectives. They are found with distinguished classes of noun, utilized in various conjunctions, part of semantic preference.

3. Methodology

3.1 Data collection

3.1.1 Research instruments

A hundred concordance lines of assess and evaluate from the COCA are comprised in order to compare the usage of collocations and grammatical patterns. The number of 100 concordance lines are under the examination based on the previous study; corpus-
based study of three English synonyms, *ruin*, *demolish*, and *destroy*, conducted by Ruenroeng (2014). COCA is the main one that the researcher elects to adapt.

**3.1.2 Sampling techniques**
Collins Free Dictionary Online (2019) and Oxford Living Dictionary (2019) are applied to verify the definition of the *assess* and *evaluate* distinctly on their own functions. Then, the COCA corpus will be used to collect 100 concordance lines for each word in order to observe the similarities and differences by its own collocations and grammatical patterns. Both words will be drawn for choosing key words in contexts (KWIC) display. The analysis will be accessible in timetables and charts to display results of the two synonymous verbs.

**3.2 Data analysis**
The corpus-based inquiry of the two synonymous words will be completed after the information is all collected from the Collins Free Dictionary Online (2019), Oxford Living Dictionary Online (2019) and one hundred concordance lines of Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA).

**3.2.1 Collocations**
*Assess* and *evaluate* will be studied for screening the collocations that are seeming from the top co-occurring words respectively. The collocations are looked over for the frequent occurrences to pursue the vocabulary that co-occurred with the headword commonly and their wording classes. Furthermore, the collocation examination can eventually govern that nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs are really co-occurred with the targeting vocabulary.

**3.2.2 Grammatical patterns**
Syntactic structures are concerned in this stage and barely to express grammatical patterns by using a hundred concordance lines in the investigation. Since both verbs are near synonyms, it is scarcely to describe that they can be applied in every similar context. In this paper, *assess* and *evaluate* are dealt with shared and dissimilar characteristics.

**4. Results and discussion**

**4.1 Grammatical patterns**
Since *assess* and *evaluate* are regarded as near synonyms, both may not be used to substitute one another in every situational discourse. The following truly fit-in patterns are stated as well as not-likely ones.

**ASSESS**
The following sample concordance lines from the corpus data parted by each possible pattern;

1. *Assess + noun/noun phrase*
currently in use within the rehabilitation field to assess activity and participation domains as defined by the

Assess + noun pattern is the highest most frequent pattern found for assess.

2. Be + assessed
All applications to the MA TESOL program will be assessed according to the following admissions criteria

From observing 100 concordance lines of Be + assessed, only 3 past tenses from above are found.

3. Assess + adverb
mathematics, and science. States are also required to assess annually at least 95 % of their students in the

4. Adverb + assess
a slow and deliberate precision, careful to individually assess each hand or foot placement.

Through frequency, the pattern Adverb + assess happens more frequently than ‘Adverb + evaluate’

5. Assess + noun clause with question words
shared past as “enemies, “can we actively assess what might be worth knowing from the past and what

6. Assess + noun clause with if/whether
and the binomial distribution provides a criterion to assess if there is dependence among subsets of items.

7. Be + assessed + for + noun/ noun phrase
progress.” Roos said defender Colin Garland would be assessed for a potential fractured cheekbone, but

8. Assess + for + noun/ noun phrase
skills and strategies understand how to assess for key mathematical ideas and how to translate

Conjunction for exists after assess.

EVALUATE
The following sample concordance lines from the corpus data parted by each possible pattern;

1. Evaluate + noun/ noun phrase
recommended data from a variety of assessment sources to evaluate student products of learning. While this

The pattern Evaluate + noun is the is the highest most frequent pattern found for evaluate at frequency of 70 which is much higher than assess in the same pattern.
2. **Be + evaluated**

   well your thyroid gland is functioning. You may also be evaluated for Addison’s disease and diabetes.

   From observing 100 concordance lines of evaluated, only 1 past tense from above is found.

3. **Evaluate + adverb**

   in reducing concentration of droplet nuclei has not been evaluate a directly or adequately. The American

4. **Adverb + evaluate**

   , and an attempt should be made to systematically evaluate its reliability and relevance for research on.

   Through frequency, the pattern ‘Adverb + evaluate’ happens more frequently than ‘Evaluate + adverb’. Furthermore, adverbial vocabulary is used in front of assess more than evaluate

5. **Evaluate + noun clause with question words**

   and major. the objective of the study was to evaluate how all these available impacted on ethics. All analysis

6. **Evaluate + noun clause with if/whether**

   is bored and difficult. Two-hour social worker visits to evaluate if she and her husband will be allowed to

7. **Be + evaluated + for + noun/ noun phrase**

   thyroid gland is functioning. You may also be evaluated for Addison’s disease and diabetes. The white

8. **Evaluate + for + noun**

   treated require urease breast testing or endoscopic biopsy to evaluate for active infection. If perforation is

   Conjunction for exists after evaluate.

The below Table 1 is offered to illustrate what can be found from the investigation of assess and evaluate in case of making it easier in understanding all above grammatical patterns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible patterns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assess</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patterns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 1: The possible patterns of assess and evaluate

Table 1 shows the numerical findings from the collection and enquiry of hundred concordance lines of *assess* and *evaluate* analyzed about possible grammatical patterns. Some of them cannot be deliberated as the reason of its function and the author needs to examine them as only verbs. So that these are eliminated while the other are accepted in the study. To make it clearer in comprehension, the following concordance are the sample of adapted lines one while the other could not be accepted respectively.

a) their approach, the study proposes some criteria for assessing federal economic development programs

b) There! Helene backed off a few paces to assess her work. Atop Stan Kmiec’s head she had created the

Since the Table 1 implies to Adverb + *assess/evaluate* is the second rank of the investigation while ‘Assess/Evaluate + adverb’ pattern takes the last rank used by real English users and it is interesting that the first mentioned pattern obsesses the positions likely and more than a half of the second one respectively. Therefore, it could be implied that most of English users usually put adverb in front of the *assess* and *evaluate*, not after the verb. As to make it clearer about this phenomenon, the findings are exemplified in the below Table 2.
Table 2: Adverbial vocabulary which are involved in assess/evaluate or Assess/evaluate + adverb pattern

4.2 Collocations
A hundred concordance lines of assess and evaluate are retrieved in the investigation and the findings are parted into two sub-investigations severally and shown as below;

1) The result of investigation of assess
2) The result of investigation of evaluate

1) The result of investigation of assess in COCA
A hundred-lined concordances are grabbed by 5 prominent noun collocations; candidate, effect, effectiveness, impact, and quality. All are counted 3 times. In this way, textbook, need, information, reliability, student, performance, and situation takes 2 times per each concordance and the result is shown as in below Table 3.
Table 3: Frequency of each collocation of *assess*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Collocations</th>
<th>Frequency (times)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Candidate</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effect</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Textbook</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Need</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Situation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) The result of investigation of *evaluate* in COCA

In this section, function words are also excluded from collocations leaving us only with the noun collocations in Table 3. The finding exposes that the first rank is dominated by *effect, impact* and *quality* collocations while *benefit, risk, and strategy* hold 3 times. However, *ability, degree, domain* and *effectiveness* take only 2 times of each concordances. To make it clearer, the Table 4 might suitable for represent the phenomenon.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Collocations</th>
<th>Frequency (times)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Effect</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Benefit</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ability</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Domain</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4: Frequency of each collocation of evaluate

As the finding divulges that there are shared collocations as well as dissimilarities. Consequently, to make it easier to conceive the collocated investigation of assess and evaluate, the below Table 5 may be the best one to describe this occurrence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Collocations</th>
<th>ASSESS Frequency (times)</th>
<th>EVALUATE Frequency (times)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ASSESS</td>
<td>EVALUATE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency (times)</td>
<td>Frequency (times)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared collocations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Effect</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissimilar collocations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ability</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Benefit</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Candidate</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Domain</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Shared and dissimilar collocations of assess and evaluate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Collocations</th>
<th>ASSESS Frequency (times)</th>
<th>EVALUATE Frequency (times)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Need</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Situation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Textbook</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Table 5 proves that Effect, effectiveness, impact, and quality are the shared collocations and each numerical frequency are not truly dissimilar among the two words as similar as the frequent number of dissimilarities. Ability, benefit, candidate, degree, domain, information, need, performance, reliability, risk, situation, strategy, student and textbook are defined as differentiated collocation.
5. Conclusion and recommendations

5.1 Summary of the study
   a) Objective of the study
      The paper aims to determine the similarities and differences among two targeting words; assess and evaluate in terms of grammatical patterns and collocations.
   b) Data collection
      Collins Free Dictionary Online (CFDO) and Oxford Living Dictionary Online (OLDO) were applied to assemble the definition of the two synonyms while corpus data from one hundred concordance lines extracted from COCA were analyzed.

5.2 Summary of the findings
   a) The two synonymous verbs are used in mostly similar grammatical patterns and found as the slight dissimilarity.
   b) The two synonymous verbs co-occur with shared and dissimilar collocations.

5.3 Conclusion
   a) Even though both verbs have the same core meaning, they are not absolute synonyms since there are some differences with regard to grammatical patterns and collocations. The analysis of grammatical patterns show that most patterns are shared, but there are a few differences.
   b) Assess and evaluate are near synonyms.

5.4 Instructional implications
   Since it is found that assess and evaluate are near synonymous verbs, every teacher who is in this filed should focus on the shared and dissimilar incidences and then apply these in grammatical and collocation pedagogy in furtherance of enhancing teachers’ and students’ ability in English language teaching and learning.

5.5 Limitations of the study
   a) The form of the two words is limited to the base form and -ed form. Henceforward, the finding may be not similar if the research is tended to involve more verb forms such as –ing form.
   b) One hundred concordance lines are stored as the limited number in the analyzing. By observing higher number of concordance lines, more patterns can be identified.
References:

AN INVESTIGATION OF MOST FREQUENTLY USED ENGLISH IDIOMS: AN ANALYSIS AMONG A PUBLISHED RESOURCE, COCA AND L2 LEARNER CORPUS

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Abstract
English idioms are an important part of English language which ESL/EFL learners should master since fluency in using the idioms reflects language proficiency level and effectiveness in communication of the learners. One important challenge in teaching idiom is which idioms should be selected and taught in a classroom first, due to the fact that most idiom materials are primarily based on intuition and some of them include a substantial number of seldom-used idioms in real life. Using a corpus can provide empirical data to support decision making on idiom selection. Thus, this corpus-based study aimed at identifying the most frequently used English idioms from a published resource for teaching and learning by using COCA as a tool and further investigating the idioms used among ESL/EFL learners of Asian backgrounds using a learner corpus, ICNALE. This study obtained a list of the top 50 most frequently used English idioms, one that teachers can use as a basis for their idiom-related lessons. It also reveals interesting findings; e.g. the usage of idioms found in COCA was remarkably greater than that in ICNALE (93.8% vs. 3.7%). Despite minimal usage of idioms, ESL/EFL learners seem to be aware of the usage of idioms as the idioms they used are close to the top 5 and 10 frequently used idioms of native English speakers.
**Keywords:** English idioms, Corpus, Teaching idioms, Frequently used idioms, ESL/EFL learners, L2 learners

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Widely spoken throughout the world, the English language has long seen a growing demand for learning; therefore, one should learn not only its standard vocabulary but also its different styles of expressions such as idioms. Idioms exist in every language, and English in particular has approximately over 10,000 of them, some relatively current and some that have been used for more than 2,000 years (Brenner, 2011). They are an essential part of the language and all native speakers regularly use them in both spoken and written English; moreover, they use them spontaneously without thinking of their figurative meaning. In order to achieve native-like fluency and effectiveness in communication, English learners, both learners of English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL), need to learn and be able to use them fluently and effectively.

As Liu (2003) stressed, idioms are “a notoriously difficult” aspect for ESL/EFL learners because of their inflexible structure, unpredictable meaning, and fairly extensive use, but they are very useful aspect of English as they “can be a great asset to learners in acquiring a new language” (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999, p. 39). Consequently, it is very challenging for the learners to learn and attain a mastery of idioms. As might be seen, there are many great resources available for idiom teaching and many teachers may considerably question where they should start, and which idioms should be taught in a classroom. This is even more challenging and burdensome when teachers must prepare idiom instruction and materials for teaching.

Liu (2003) indicated that one of the first important issues that always emerge from all teachers to consider for idiom instruction is which kind of idioms should be initially selected for teaching and in what sequence. It is quite difficult to make principled decisions about the selection since most idioms in existing idiom teaching and reference materials are primarily selected based on teachers’ favorites and material writers’ intuition rather than empirical data. Therefore, their selection may not reflect the actual use of idioms in real life situations and the teaching reference materials may include many seldom-used idioms while leaving out some frequently used ones.

To determine the most frequently used idioms as an initial list for teaching, introducing a corpus as a tool can provide empirical data for appropriate decision-making on idiom selection for teaching. This can be supported by Biber and Conrad’s
(2001) statement that a corpus is not only valuable for providing authentic examples of words or grammatical features in context, but it also offers a unique perspective on the use of quantitative analyses to investigate and identify the most important linguistic exemplars to teaching. This present study reports a corpus-based study aimed at identifying the most frequently used English idioms from a published resource for ESL/EFL teachers and learners as well as investigating how frequently the learners use those idioms in real life.

1.2 Research Questions
This study attempts to explore the answers to the following research questions:

1.2.1 How often do the selected English idioms from a published resource occur in the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)?
Given the answer to research question 1, only the top 50 most frequently used English idioms in COCA will be used as a basis to investigate their occurrences in the L2 learner corpus which leads to research question 2.

1.2.2 How frequently do the top 50 idioms above occur in an L2 learner corpus? We have chosen the International Corpus Network of Asian Learners of English (ICNALE) as a representative for L2 corpora.

1.3 Scope of the Study
Because of their broad definitions and various categorizations of idioms, we will exclude idioms of the following types from this study.

a) **Variable classes** A variable class, as defined by Spears (2005), is an element, usually nouns or pronouns, included in idiomatic expression, e.g. *someone*, which refers to any person, or *something*, which refers to anything or object. Some idioms are very particular as to whether they include either *someone* or *something*. For example, play *something* at full blast, grease *someone’s* palm, etc.

b) **Phrasal verbs** A phrasal verb consists of a verb plus one or more particles and operates syntactically as a single unit, such as *give in, put up with*.

c) **Interpersonal idioms** These idioms perform interactional functions and are closely associated with politeness routines in social interactions, e.g. *mind you, guess what*, etc. (Fernando, 1996).

d) **Relational idioms or textual idioms** These idioms are phrases that ensure the discourse is cohesive and coherent, for example, *on the contrary, on the other hand, on the grounds of*, etc. (Fernando, 1996).
The present study focuses on idioms whose figurative meanings cannot be inferred easily because the individual words’ normal meanings do not directly contribute to the idiom’s overall figurative meaning; for example, *play it by ear, twist your arm, spill the beans, kick the bucket* and so on.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The importance of this study lies in the fact that numerous published books and even textbooks for teaching idioms on the market do not indicate how popularly the idioms are used. Some teachers may select idioms for teaching based on their favorites or intuition and this can have a negative impact on what idioms teachers will teach and learners will learn. The selection of idioms in many idiom instructions and reference materials may not reflect any empirical data and a large number of the idioms contained in these materials are seldom used. Thus, the idioms are relatively useless because learners rarely encounter them in daily life.

Consequently, the results from this study will provide a comprehensive list of idioms in an American context and serve as a useful guideline to EFL teachers when it comes to choosing appropriate idioms for teaching, material writers, and certainly to ESL/EFL learners. In addition, EFL teachers will learn about a popular group of idioms and in what sequence they should be taught in the classroom. In sum, it is significant in terms of idiom instruction for ELT, as EFL teachers can readily integrate the vocabulary group found in this study into their lessons.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definitions of Idioms

In any idiom research, the first and important question that must be asked is “what is an idiom?” An idiom, as defined by Cambridge Dictionary Online (2018), is “a group of words in a fixed order that have a particular meaning that is different from the meanings of each word on its own”. In addition, an idiom, generally known as a slang expression, a proverb, a simile, a dead metaphor or any name an “idiom” may be called, has been defined by various researchers with different definitions based on a variety of criteria and context. In a narrow sense, Moon (1998) refers to idioms as multi word expressions which are not the sum of their parts, the meanings of which cannot be inferred from the component words’ meanings. For some scholars, in a broad sense, the term is more or less inclusive; for example, Cooper (1998), Katz and Postal (1963) have included idioms as individual words that are used metaphorically. Yet other scholars, for instance Simpson and Mendis (2003), summarized these definitions and identified an idiom as “a group of words that occur in a more or less fixed phrase whose overall meaning cannot be predicted by analyzing the meaning of its constituent parts”.

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What constitutes an idiom is, thus, a decision up to the researchers’ choice. As Fernando (1996: p. 40) stated, the task of “identifying idiom is simply an attempt to differentiate and label one class of common expressions with specific functions from others, on the basis of criteria which strike the analyst as being the most illuminating.” For that reason, “different analysts will come up with somewhat different criteria and different identifications”, was a pertinent remark by Fernando, which we will adopt in the current study.

2.2 Classification of Idioms

Classification of idiom also varies at the discretion of the researchers because many of them have classified the idiom in various ways. Based on Fernando’s (1996) classification, idioms can be simply divided into three categories: pure idiom, semi-idiom and literal idiom. The definition of each category is described as follows:

A pure idiom is a type of idiom in which there is no connection between the meaning of individual constituents and the meaning of the whole idiom. It is always non-literal and said to be opaque. For example, *spill the beans* is recognized as pure idiom, because its true meaning has nothing related to the beans. In fact, its meaning as the idiom is ‘commit an indiscretion’.

A semi-idiom is said to have one or more literal components and at least one with a non-literal meaning. For example, *fat chance* (a very poor chance) is a semi-idiom, in which *fat* is non-literal, whereas the word *chance* is used literally.

A literal idiom, e.g. *in sum, on the contrary, and in the meantime* is semantically simpler than pure and semi-idioms, and therefore it is easier to understand even though one is not accustomed to these expressions.

2.3 Teaching of Idioms

As Liontas (2017) described, idioms have not received much attention in second language acquisition (SLA) studies because of little knowledge and few studies about the linguistic and cognitive mechanisms for the understanding and acquisition of idioms in second languages. Liontas (2017) further remarked that even less is known about the idiom processing mechanisms that enhance the ability to understand and use them appropriately and accurately in various sociocultural contexts with the least effort similar to that of native speakers.

Those who teach English as a second or foreign language are thus left on their own to incorporate the idioms into their idiom instructions for second language learners. A lot of teachers choose not to teach idioms at all, arguing that idioms are such “specialized lexicalized items” for language learners that they should best acquire them on their own time when traveling abroad or when they have a chance to interact.
with native speakers. Others, taking a hands-off approach to idioms, feel that idioms are difficult to teach and that they create more problems than they solve.

Therefore, why teach idiom? Liontas (2017) makes the following suggestions as to why it is very important to teach idioms in the L2 classroom. Firstly, idioms help learners to encounter authentic language and gain an intense knowledge of human expression and development of language over time. Secondly, learners can go beyond the literal meaning of idioms and gain understanding through the context. Thirdly, learners are required to produce idioms like native speakers normally do to enhance learners’ mastery of them. Finally, learning idioms in the classroom can help teachers to build up learners’ idiomatic competency.

2.4 Applying Idiom Research to Teaching
Cooper (1998) investigated the teaching of idioms and suggested that one select idioms that are frequently encountered in the target language in one’s lesson. In a more recent study on the teaching and learning English idioms by Zimmerman-Edison (2015), three key practices for comprehension, production, and retention of idioms are proposed. The first practice is to apply trials and errors by using strategies such as contextual guessing, taking the idiom’s literal meaning to understand the figurative meaning, and discussing and analyzing the idiom to reach the figurative meaning. The second practice is to start with the most common idioms; idioms can be easily learned from high-frequency use in conversation and texts. This way, a corpus can play a crucial role in providing empirical evidence so that one can identify high frequency idioms for teaching and learning. The last practice is to use underlying themes or origins of the idioms. The underlying theme such as idioms from colors, numbers, food, parts of the body or historic origins of where the idioms were derived from can help one understand and recall their figurative meaning easily.

Therefore, selection of the appropriate idioms for teaching the topic is very crucial when it comes to classroom teaching and learning as well as materials development. Many EFL educators follow on their favorable manner and prior knowledge to make their choices based on intuition and personal experience on topic, key words and idiomatic themes. However, some researchers such as Liu (2003), Simpson and Mendis (2003), and Grant (2005) have preferred language corpora as a basis for selecting idioms to the biased approach above and suggested incorporating idioms which are the most frequently found in the corpora into EFL teaching materials. They believed that a corpus-based selection of idioms would be objective and free from personal bias or attitudes. In addition, the learners would be able to benefit more from a course including the extra vocabulary which is more frequently used in real life and more relevant to their needs.
2.5 Previous Studies

Early studies on idioms such as Makkai’s (1972) studies often emphasized assembling collections of idiom examples rather than finding how frequent they might be. Later, a number of studies changed from text-based to corpus-based study of idiom frequencies, forms and functions. There were corpus related idiom studies, similar to this present study, such as a study by Alavi and Rajabpoor (2014), which identified and quantified the idioms used in three advanced level textbooks and compared them across three different English corpora: MICASE, BNC, and the Brown Corpus. The results showed that there were different numbers and type of idioms in all the books and the idioms chosen did not meet frequency criteria set as per the literature.

Next was a corpus-based study of phrasal verbs (PVs) conducted by Liu (2011). The study used COCA and BNC to identify the frequency and usage patterns of the most common PVs in these two corpora. The results provided useful information about the use of PVs, a comprehensive list of the 150 most common PVs in American and British English, and a cross-register list of the most frequent PVs showing in which register (s) each of the PVs is mainly used. For example, some of the most common PVs in American and British English found in Liu’s study were go on, pick up, come back, go back and find out.

The reason to put phrasal verbs together in this idiom study is because of a linguistic rationale. As the definition of phrasal verb is idiomatic and the meaning of the verb and particle which formed a particular phrasal verb is different from the base verb on its own, therefore, by this definition, in some respect it is consistent with the definition of idiom given earlier in this chapter.

Another corpus-based study of idioms was conducted by Grant (2005), who examined the frequencies of 103 ‘core idioms’ in the British National Corpus (BNC). This study focused on a comprehensive list of one category of idioms and compared it to the 5,000 most frequent words of English. Grant’s (2005) study revealed that none of the 103 core idioms occurs frequently enough to appear in the 5,000 most frequent words of English. Examples of 103 core idioms that do not occur in the 5,000 most frequent words of English include by and large -, so (-) and (-) so -, such (-) and (-) such -, out (-) of (-) hand - and take the piss -.
3. Methodology

3.1 Published Resources Used
The idioms that were analyzed for frequency of use in this study were extracted from one published idiom book which was a non-corpus-based book. In order to come up with an initial list of commonly used idioms for a search for their frequencies in COCA, it would not be applicable to obtain them all from any idiom dictionary as it would contain numerous idioms, and this would create a lot of burden as well as time consuming extraction. The best possible and most practical way that was adopted in this study was to extract the idioms from a well-known publication (to be discussed in 3.1.1) as the first filter of a commonly used idioms list and then to examine their idiomatic validity against an idiom dictionary (to be discussed in 3.1.2), after which the initial list would be formed.

3.1.1 Scholastic Dictionary of Idioms
Scholastic Dictionary of Idioms is the published resource used in this study. This book was written by Marvin Terban, published by Scholastic Inc. in New York, USA and first printed in July 2006. According to Amazon.com, Marvin Terban is an author of bestselling and award-winning English language books for children. He has teaching experience in various fields such as the art of language, English, Latin, and Public Speaking at the Columbia Grammar and Preparatory School in New York City. This book is designed for Grade 3-7 learners and it introduces more than 700 everyday American idioms including sample sentences. The book has been chosen because it is a popular book with more than 1 million copies sold in hard copies and online via Amazon website, which is accessible to customers from all over the world. Moreover, it is highly recommended by more than 200 online reviewers. Even though this book was partly entitled a dictionary of idioms, it is not a conventional dictionary since it stores only the meanings and sample sentences of idioms.

3.1.2 Dictionary of American Idioms and Phrasal Verbs
Dictionary of American Idioms and Phrasal Verbs is the dictionary written by Richard A. Spears, published by The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. USA in 2005. It is considered as the most practical reference to idiomatic and verbal expressions of contemporary American English, containing over 24,000 phrases and expressions.

3.2 The Corpora Used
In this study, the main focus is on the most frequently used English idioms extracted from an American published resource and comparing those idioms with a learner corpus; therefore, an applicable corpus representing American contexts was the prominent COCA and a learner corpus representing data from Asian learners of English was ICNALE with AntConc as an interfacing concordance program for concordance search.
3.2.1 The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)
One of the main two corpora used to obtain the overall frequency count for most frequently used English idioms in this study was *The Corpus of Contemporary American English* or COCA. The COCA corpus is a large free web-based online interface provided by Professor Mark Davies of Brigham Young University. It was chosen for this study because of its representativeness and contemporariness of American English, as well as largeness in word size and the coverage of various academic disciplines. With more than 560 million words of texts, updated with about 20 million words each year during 1990 - 2017 (Latest update was on December 2017), it is considered to be the largest freely available and the most widely used corpus of English. In addition, it consists of 5 genres which are fiction, spoken, popular magazines, newspapers, and academic texts, with more than 80 million words each. In this study, the search of the most frequently used English idioms was not restricted to any specific genre. It included all genres available in COCA since it was a general search for the most frequently used English idioms in an American context.

3.2.2 The International Corpus Network of Asian Learners of English (ICNALE)
Another corpus used for the concordance search of most frequently used English idioms in this study was *The International Corpus Network of Asian Learners of English* or ICNALE. The ICNALE corpus is an international learner corpus focusing on Asian learners of English, developed and gathered by Dr. Shin'ichiro Ishikawa of Kobe University, Japan. It consists of approximately 2.0 million words with more than 10,000 topic-controlled speeches and essays produced by L2 English learners (ESL/EFL) of various proficiency levels; e.g. college and graduate students from some countries in Asia namely, Japan, Korea, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Indonesia, Singapore, the Philippines, Pakistan and Thailand, as well as data from 200 native English speakers. The corpora also included the same essays written under the same conditions by native speakers from a range of English-speaking countries which makes it ideal for comparisons between L1 and L2 output. Currently, it comprises of four modules which are Spoken Monologue, Spoken Dialogue, Written Essays, and Edited Essays. It is considered as one of the largest learner corpora publicly available and a reliable database for a contrastive interlanguage analysis of Asian learners as well as studies of World Englishes in Asia. This study will use the download version, not online, as it is more up-to-date than the online version.

3.2.3 A Concordance Program (AntConc)
*AntConc* is a simple freeware corpus analysis program for concordancing and text analysis, developed by Professor Laurence Anthony, Director of the Centre for English Language Education, Waseda University, Japan. This program is available in different versions such as for Windows, Mac and Linux, and it can be downloaded for
free use with online guide and video tutorials. The program used in this study was AntConc version 3.5.7.0.

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection procedure of this present study is described in detail in two parts: the first part is the procedure conducted to answer the first research question (consisting of four steps) and the second part is to respond to the second research question.

3.3.1 Data collection for the first research question

The first step was an extraction of idioms to identify an initial idiom list from a published idiom book, which, in this study, was *Scholastic Dictionary of Idioms*, based on the criteria of in-scope idioms set in Section 1.3 ‘Scope of the study’ in Chapter 1. Idioms that were not within the scope of the study were left out. These included idioms with variable classes such as hold one’s breath, lose one’s shirt, grease someone’s palm, and take one’s time because these kinds of idiom would need to perform a number of concordance search attempts substituting one for nouns and pronouns to eventually obtain complete search of idiomatic tokens; moreover, it would be even more complicated and time consuming for the search and the result from each search might not be significant. The next procedure was to examine idiomatic validity of the initial idiom list by looking up the idioms in the idiom dictionary, *Dictionary of American Idioms and Phrasal Verbs*, before proceeding to the second step. When the idioms were found in the dictionary, they were then verified as valid idioms.

The second step involved a concordance search for frequency of occurrence of all idioms in the initial list received from the first step. This was conducted by entering each idiom one at a time in COCA. In this querying step, the search for the frequency would be challenging since one would not accomplish the search by simply entering the idiom and getting concordance lines with a final number of frequency. This was because not every concordance line displayed by such a search is a real idiom. Comprehensive justification on whether they could be a real idiom or just a normal phrase would be required. For example, the *piece of cake* entry was found in 502 tokens in COCA. This number included both idiomatic and non-idiomatic expression results in the concordance lines. Some lines were non-idiomatic such as ‘she asked forking a piece of cake into her mouth’ and ‘After taking just a small piece of cake, she left.’ So, in this step, a thorough review of each concordance line was done to ensure the accurate frequency that reflected the real idiom usage.

In the third step, for any idiom which contained a main part of the phrase as a verb, all forms of the verb such as infinitive, past, and past participle forms were verified. For
example, for the *break the ice* entry, the search found 152 tokens of the verb in the infinitive form, 57 tokens of the verb in the past form and 10 tokens of the verb in the past participle form; therefore, the total frequency of *break the ice* included all three forms, which were 219 tokens, in order to complete the *break the ice* entry search. In addition, for other variations of idiom forms such as a multi-word idiom which came with a hyphenated form, the corpus searched for both hyphenated and non-hyphenated forms. For example, the list of *down-to-earth* (hyphenated form) and *down to earth* (non-hyphenated form) instances were processed for a search. Therefore, the total number of tokens included both forms.

The fourth step involved ranking the listed idioms by their frequency counts received from COCA. This was conducted by arranging the idioms based on the highest to the lowest frequency counts. Then, the top 50 ranked idioms in frequency were utilized as a comprehensive list to investigate further in a learner corpus (ICNALE) in order to answer the second research question.

### 3.3.2 Data collection for the second research question

In response to the second research question, we examined the list of 50 idioms obtained from the process discussed in section 3.3.1 against their frequency counts in ICNALE. Prior to that, we employed AntConc, an interface program used for concordance search in ICNALE. Then we were able to find out how frequently the top 50 idioms occurred in ICNALE, and finally accomplished the results for further analysis.

### 4. Results

#### 4.1 Research question 1: How often do the selected English idioms from a published resource occur in COCA?

In answering the first research question, firstly, we followed the first step of data collection procedure section 3.3.1 in Chapter 3. Idioms were extracted from *Scholastic Dictionary of Idioms* and the total number of idioms found was 749. Next, we identified in-scope idioms according to the criteria set in section 1.3 in Chapter 1; the result came up with 696 in-scope idioms and after these idioms were checked with regard to their idiomatic validity from the dictionary, the number was reduced to 535 idioms which were used as an initial list of idioms. The results of this step of data collection procedure were summarized and are displayed in Table 1 below.

| Table 1 Initial List of Idioms and Related Data |  |
After receiving the initial list of idioms, we followed the second and third steps of data collection procedure for a concordance search from COCA and checked whether or not each token was a real idiom. Based on the list of 535 idioms above, we obtained a comprehensive list of the top 50 most frequently used English idioms. This list together with their frequency counts appears in Table 2 below.

**Table 2** Top 50 Most Frequently Used English Idioms in COCA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Top 50 Idioms</th>
<th>Freq. Count</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Top 50 Idioms</th>
<th>Freq. Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>bottom line</td>
<td>8,959</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>labor of love</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>cutting edge</td>
<td>1,381</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>get away with murder</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>down-to-earth</td>
<td>1,253</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>in the same boat</td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>word-of-mouth</td>
<td>1,086</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>red herring</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>red tape</td>
<td>953</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>scratch the surface</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>hang in there</td>
<td>847</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>turn the tables</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>in a nutshell</td>
<td>721</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>cold turkey</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>hit the road</td>
<td>662</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>on top of the world</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>down the drain</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>point of no return</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>right off the bat</td>
<td>531</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>off-the-wall</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>tip of the iceberg</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>call the shots</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>raise an eyebrow</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>for the birds</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>tongue-in-cheek</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>cold feet</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>by the book</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>food for thought</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>out of the woods</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>on the rocks</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>get real</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>break the ice</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>up against the wall</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>drop in the bucket</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>chill out</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>in the driver's seat</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>on a shoestring</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>throw in the towel</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>bells and whistles</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>back to the drawing board</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>last straw</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>see eye to eye</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>out on a limb</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>in the limelight</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>lame duck</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>par for the course</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>breath of fresh air</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>call it a day</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2 Research question 2: How frequently do the top 50 idioms above occur in an L2 learner corpus (i.e. ICNALE)?

In answering research question 2, we followed data collection procedure section 3.1.2 in Chapter 3. A concordance search of all idioms in the initial list from ICNALE was performed with AntConc, the interface program, to investigate frequency counts of the top 50 most frequently used English idioms received from research question 1, and to find out how many idioms occurred in a learner corpus, ICNALE. The results of the concordance search of all idioms in the initial list are displayed in Table 3 below.

Table 3 Commonly Occurring Idioms in COCA and ICNALE and Frequency Counts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>List of idioms</th>
<th>Freq. Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>in a nutshell</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>bottom line</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>breath of fresh air</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>chill out</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>couch potato</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>put the cart before the horse</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>down-to-earth</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>with flying colors</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>word-of-mouth</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>bite the bullet</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>cutting edge</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>down the drain</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>drive you mad</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>face the music</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>in the same boat</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>jump the gun</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>money burns a hole in your pocket</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>piece of cake</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>red tape</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>school of hard knocks</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

25 piece of cake 359 50 mince words 210
From the total number of idioms in the initial list, there were only 20 idioms with frequency counts equaling or higher than 1 found in ICNALE whereas there were 502 idioms found in COCA. Considering those 20 idioms found in ICNALE, half of them appeared in COCA’s top 50 idioms. Interestingly, all the top 5 idioms in COCA were also found in ICNALE. The results showing the number of idioms with ‘Hit’, i.e. those with 1 occurrence and above, and the number of idioms with ‘No Hit,’ i.e. those without any occurrence, in COCA and ICNALE appear in Table 4. Interestingly, the pattern of ‘Hit’ and ‘No Hit’ of COCA is the opposite direction of that of ICNALE. In addition, given the data in Table 4, native English speakers use idioms 25 times more often than non-native speakers.

Table 4 Number of Idioms with ‘Hit’ and ‘No Hit’ in COCA and ICNALE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corpus</th>
<th>Idioms with ‘Hit’</th>
<th>Idioms with ‘No Hit’</th>
<th>Total No. of Idioms</th>
<th>% of idiom with ‘Hit’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COCA</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>93.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICNALE</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*‘Hit’ = Idioms with frequency count > 0 and ‘No Hit’ = Idioms with frequency count = 0*

Table 5 below illustrates five idioms that we found in ICNALE which also appeared in the top 5 most frequently occurring idioms of COCA.

Table 5 List of Idioms found across ICNALE and COCA’s Top 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>List of idioms</th>
<th>Ranking in top 50</th>
<th>Freq. Count (COCA)</th>
<th>Freq. Count (ICNALE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>bottom line</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8,959</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>cutting edge</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1,381</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>down-to-earth</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,253</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>word-of-mouth</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1,086</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>red tape</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>953</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apart from the results given above, while performing data collection and review of concordance lines in COCA, we needed to find out the meaning of each idiom in order to understand the whole context and justify which context was used as an idiom. Therefore, we obtained the idiom meanings and contexts as additional data for the results of this study. Here below are definitions of five idioms found across ICNALE and COCA’s Top 5, as shown in Table 5. Dictionary of American Idioms and Phrasal Verbs and COCA are the resources from which the definitions and contexts are presented. We also incorporate remarks on how these idioms are used.
1. **bottom line**: This idiom is a noun, with literal and figurative meanings. Literally, it refers to the last figure on a financial profit-and-loss statement, or the last figure on a bill. It is typically used in the register of financial results of a company, organization or institution. Figuratively, *bottom line* means the result or final outcome reached after a decisive point such as the result of a game, negotiation, and a meeting. Below are contextualized examples.

   - Chief Executive Lawrence A. Hough also said the company's **bottom line** has benefited from its success in holding down costs and servicing loans more efficiently.
   - She just didn't deserve it and that's just the **bottom line**.

2. **cutting edge**: This idiom is a noun with a figurative meaning, i.e. the most forward or leading part of a trend. It is mostly used in the context of new evolution of science, technology and equipment. Below are contextualized examples.

   - This morning, our fitness expert Bonnie Kaye is back on the **cutting edge** with equipment that will take your workout to the next level.
   - They've been at the **cutting edge** of technology and digital journalism for over a decade.

3. **down-to-earth**: This idiom is an adjective, with two figurative meanings. The first meaning is “direct, frank, and honest”, which is normally used in the context that conveys the personality or characteristics of a person. The second meaning is “practical, not theoretical, not fanciful,” which can be found in the context that conveys effectiveness, practicality and suitability of the subject matter under discussion. Below are contextualized examples.

   - The needs may be concrete and **down-to-earth**, such as cheaper power or a cure for a particular disease.
   - She would give everybody the impression she was this kindhearted, **down-to-earth** person.

4. **word-of-mouth**: The part of speech of this idiom is adjective; its meaning is associated with oral communication, e.g. telling people about something. Normally, it is used in the context of sales and marketing, services, news, social media, advertisement and announcement, which can be conveyed in both positive and negative ways. Below are contextualized examples.
- *The Sixth Sense*, in 1999, turning a small-scale ghost story into a *word-of-mouth* smash hit that dominated the box office for an entire summer.

- We started with a limited product range, zero cash flow and only *word-of-mouth* marketing.

5. **red tape**: The part of speech of this idiom is noun, with a figurative meaning of “over-strict attention to the wording and details of rules and regulations, especially by government workers”. It is generally used in the context of rules and regulation, procedure of the government administration, company or organization. Below are contextualized examples.

- *She said the Administration has taken steps to reduce the law’s red tape.*

- *That’s why my administration will keep cutting red tape and speeding up new oil and gas permits.*

**5. Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations**

5.1 Discussion

From the results in Chapter 4, this section discusses the aspects concerning the research questions that have been raised earlier in Chapter 1. The study has uncovered the frequency information of English idioms extracted from a published resource using COCA to provide a comprehensive list of the most frequently used idioms for idioms learning and teaching. According to Zimmerman-Edison (2015), one of the three key practices in teaching and learning English idioms is to start with the most frequently used idioms. This means that idioms should be selected for teaching from high-frequency use in real life. Besides, a comprehensive list of the top 50 most frequently used idioms, which is provided in Table 2, can be used as a guideline or reference for teachers to select for idioms teaching.

However, it is up to the teachers’ consideration to determine which idioms should be incorporated into idiom instruction and materials. Each teacher may select idioms that are consistent with the topics and context they plan to teach in their classroom. The selected idioms may not be necessarily a fit with the top 50 list provided in this study. Sometimes teachers may select idioms in lower frequency counts which are suitable for the topic but should not select the idioms with too low frequency counts because they reflect seldom-used idioms in real life situations.

For the use of idioms among Asian ESL/EFL learners, the study found that of a total number of 535 idioms in the initial list, 93.8% of the idioms were found in COCA
whereas only 3.7% of idioms were found in ICNALE. This is a much lower percentage in term of idioms range used among Asian learners and it reflects a need to enhance competency in using idioms. As a teacher, the comprehensive list of the 50 most frequently used English idioms from this study can be used for idiom selection to teach the learners. In addition, the results show that all idioms in COCA’s top 5 such as bottom line, cutting edge, down-to-earth, word-of-mouth, and red tape also appeared in ICNALE. When comparing these five idioms in term of frequencies found between the two corpora as in Table 5, the frequency of ICNALE is greatly lower than COCA. This revealed an inadequacy of idiom usage among Asian learners compared to native speakers. Some reasons behind this might be lack of idiom teaching and teaching without practicing through the context. Therefore, this result can considerably ensure that the aforementioned idioms should be chosen and explicitly taught through the context in a classroom.

When we compared the results of this study with those of previous studies, especially results from Grant (2005), we found that some of his idioms also appeared in this study. For example, piece of cake, red herring, and cold turkey were found in the top 50 COCA list. In addition, some other idioms such as white elephant, chew the fat, eat crow, kick the bucket, and put your foot in your mouth in Grant’s study were tokens that appeared in a greater pool, beyond the top 50 COCA list.

In terms of Alavi & Rajabpoor’s (2014) and Liu’s (2011) studies, even though their results cannot be compared methodologically with this study since the idioms they focused on were phrasal verbs, this study, with the exclusion of phrasal verbs, can contribute to these other aspects of idiom studies. However, facts about commonly used idioms across L1 and L2 corpora have not yet been discovered, given the literature that we have reviewed.

5.2 Conclusion
This corpus-based study on an investigation of most frequently used English idioms is contributing to studies in the field of idioms teaching, which, in fact, have not received much attention according to Liontas (2017). Idiom frequency study through a corpus can provide a practical support to idiom teaching and learning and help with decision making of idioms selection as it provides an empirical data rather than depending on intuition. The results of this study can be more or less beneficial to all teachers and learners; particularly, ESL/EFL learners can gain a deeper knowledge on idioms used as well as understanding through the context in authentic language. Ultimately, this can help enhance language proficiency level and idiomatic competency of the learners.
5.3 Recommendations for Future Research

This study has contributed to the field of idiom frequency, which still takes a backseat in second language research. Liu (2003) pointed out that there was lack of literature and research interest in the selection of idioms for L2 learners. Throughout the past decade, a few studies have contributed to this field, and this study is a continuation in line with past research studies based on the seminal studies in this area such as Liu (2003) and Liontas (2017). There are several directions recommended for future research which should be taken into consideration to investigate further.

Firstly, additional research can be conducted to investigate the frequency of the idioms included in other idioms books. More published idiom books or idiom textbooks adopted can be examined to expand wider the range of idioms to cover more frequently used idioms as much as possible. One possible alternative is to employ the initial list in this study as a starting point and add more idioms from other resources. Moreover, language learning textbooks in particular may have substantial impact on what ESL/EFL learners are learning and what is happening in their classroom. Therefore, if most idiom textbooks tend to include low frequency idioms in general, there is a pressing need to rectify this situation to ensure that the learners are learning what they need in order to use the language effectively in real life.

Secondly, a comparative study between American and British English idioms using an additional corpus such as British National Corpus (BNC) representing British English should be beneficial for those idiom differences. This can provide more insight into the most common idioms that are generally rather similar between the two English varieties which are used in different parts of the world. Learners or teachers of English need not be concerned about the problem of learning idioms that are useful only in American or British English.

Thirdly, providing a study on discussion and examples of various idiom usage patterns found in different contexts would level up the learners’ competency in using idioms. For example, learners can enhance their ability in distinguishing the different meanings of an idiom by going through concordance lines of an idiom query to determine the meaning of each specific idiom, whether they are literal or figurative meanings. Such exposure to idioms can also help learners become more familiar with idioms and then more comfortable in using them, hence helping overcome their inclination to avoid using idioms.

Lastly, future researchers may desire to explore the differences in the use of English idioms between ESL/EFL learners from Asian and Western countries. Such future
study may include other learner corpora for comparison of idioms used such as the International Corpus of Learner English (ICLE) which includes data from L2 learners mainly from European countries.

References
ENGLISH SKILLS NEEDED BY HEALTH SERVICE PROFESSIONALS OF THE ASEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY: A STUDY IN PRACHUABKIRIKHAN

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Abstract

The study focuses on English language functional skills needed for health service professionals involved in three ASEAN occupations that are associated with mobility in the labor market: medical, dental, and nursing services. The participants, selected by stratified random sampling, comprised 30 doctors, 11 dentists, and 210 nurses (251 health services professionals in total) from eight governmental hospitals in Prachuabkirikhan, Thailand: Hua Hin Hospital, Pranburi Hospital, Samroiyod Hospital, Kuiburi Hospital, Prachuabkirikhan Hospital, Thapsakae Hospital, Bangsaphan Hospital, and Bangsaphan Noi Hospital. The instrument used in this study was a self-administered questionnaire which included authentic tasks from medical setting. The participants were required to rate their current proficiency and needs of four English skills in performing each medical task. The finding revealed that the language proficiency of the doctors and dentists ranged from moderate to high and nurses rated their ability as low and moderate. The majority had highest ability in reading and writing; nevertheless, four English skills were highly demanded in every medical task. For doctors, reading skill was ranked the highest; for dentists, the four English skills were equally rated as high and for nurses, listening, speaking, and
reading skills were rated the highest. Recommendations given to researchers and curriculum developers were to further the study with health services professionals in various health facilities in different areas to enrich the current literature, design ESP courses regarding particular needs and interests of learners, and promote professional communication among Thai health services workers as a preparation for the integration of the ASEAN Economic Community.

**Keywords:** English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Needs Analysis (NA), English for Occupational Purposes (EOP)

### 1. Introduction

According to the International Labor Organization (2014), the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community, followed by the free flow of goods, services, investment, capital and skilled labor engaged in eight service sectors: engineering services, nursing services, architectural services, surveying qualification, accountancy services, dental services, medical services, and hotel services and tourism requires the awareness of the direction of changes in employment patterns and standards, including preparation for the challenges from the increasing internationalization of the labor market from the stakeholders involved in the ASEAN integration process. In order to be able to compete with skilled labor from other ASEAN member countries for positions in foreign industries, skilled workers who have both professional and language skills and are able to demonstrate them when required in their work fields would have greater career opportunities in ASEAN integrated market.

However, when compared to other member countries, English abilities of Thai people, on the whole, are rather minimal (Wiriyachitra, 2003). According to the annual survey of Education First English Proficiency Index, among Asian countries, Thailand was one of a few countries that have been continually ranked in the group of very low proficiency since 2011 (EF EPI, 2015). Furthermore, reports on TOEFL scores and ranking of countries by English proficiency revealed that Thailand was ranked behind other ASEAN member countries such as Singapore, Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, including Vietnam and Myanmar (Test and Score Data Summary for TOEFL, 2016). Therefore, the readiness for the AEC of Thai skilled labor in terms of English language proficiency is still questionable.

Based on the problem statement, in this study a needs analysis of English functional skills and an investigation into English proficiency of Thai skilled labor involved in eight ASEAN occupations were conducted. Considering the fact that the importance
of the healthcare industry in Thailand has risen and the country is striving to be the World Class Healthcare Destination and Academic Medical Hub of Asia (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2010), the focus group of the study was the healthcare workers involved in medical, dental, and nursing services.

The findings of this study allow readers to gain more insight into English skills needed in medical tasks and current proficiency of Thai doctors, dentists, and nurses. Moreover, the results can be used as part of a database for researchers and curriculum designers in developing English for Medical Purposes (EMP) courses that serve the needs and interests of the learners in medical contexts.

2. Literature Review

2.1 English for Specific Purposes

The term English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has been defined by a number of scholars and practitioners. According to Kennedy and Bolitho (1984), ESP is one particular aspect of English Language Teaching (ELT) that emerges due to the growth in demands of English language speaking as a common medium of communication. These demands come from groups of learners with specific purposes or particular reasons connected with their studies or their jobs. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) explain that the new generation of learners did not learn English for the pleasure or in order to be regarded as educated people, instead they learned English for their specific purposes, for example, learners who were businessmen wanted to learn English in order to be able to sell their products in international markets and learners who were mechanics needed English in order to be able to read instruction manuals and work with foreign companies. Due to this new interest in English language learning, ESP courses were developed and designed according to linguistic characteristics of learners’ area of work and study and what they need the language for.

According to Widdowson (1983), many discussions on the characteristics of ESP also involve the comparative relationship between ESP and EGP (or English for General Purposes). Widdowson states that the distinctive difference between ESP and EGP lies in their focuses: the main focus of ESP is on training while in EGP, the main focus is often on education. The selection of contents for an ESP course thus tends to be easier than the selection of contents for an EGP course since the language context and objectives of learning are clearly specified from the beginning. Fiorito (2006) adds that the difference between ESP and EGP is also in the aims of instruction. In
EGP all four English skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing are stressed equally. However, in ESP it depends on an assessment of purposes and needs of the learners and the functions for which English is required, for example, an ESP course for learners who study English in order to work in the tourism industry may center on the development in speaking skill while an ESP course for learners who study English in order to work in business administration may emphasize reading skill more than the three other skills.

2.2 Needs Analysis

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) regard the term ‘needs analysis’ as the basis of any course design in a sphere of teaching English for Specific Purposes. An awareness of the needs can determine what is and what is not acceptable as reasonable content in the language course and what potential can be exploited. Robinson (1991) explains that the term ‘needs’ is what learners would like to gain from the language course. Learners may have personal aims in addition to, or even opposite to, the requirements of their studies or jobs. In other senses, the term may be interpreted differently, for instance, in a goal-oriented definition, the term ‘needs’ can refer to what learners have to be able to do at the end of their language course. Needs in this sense can be regarded as objective needs. In process-oriented definition, however, the term refers to what learners need to do to actually acquire the language. Furthermore, ‘needs’ can also be considered as lacks which means what the learners do not know or cannot do in English.

To investigate learners’ needs, there are many ways to gather the data for needs analysis. Munby (1978, cited in Gillett, 1989) recommends a highly-detailed set of procedures that consisted of a range of questions about variables that affect communication needs called the Communication Needs Processor (CNP). The comprehensive data banks are regarded as a ‘profile of needs’ which simply means a description of what the learner will be expected to do with language at the end of the course (Gillett, 1989). Once learners’ target situation is completely plotted, the insight can be used as checklists for a resultant syllabus and the stage at which ‘good enough’ competence for learners’ goals can be determined (Robinson, 1991). Hutchinson and Waters (1987) provide other alternatives such as using a questionnaire, conducting an interview, observation, case studies, and tests. They add that the analyst may choose methods as suggested or any other options that they consider desirable and in accordance with the time and resources available.
2.3 English for Occupational Purposes

English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) is one of English for Specific Purposes (ESP)'s main divisions. EOP is generally taught in a situation in which learners need to use English as part of their work or profession (Kennedy and Bolitho, 1984). Robinson (1991) divides EOP courses into three types: (1) pre-experience, (2) simultaneous/ in-service, and (3) post-experience. The classification and the components of the course are determined by learners’ professional stages whether they are newcomers to the field of work, on the way to become expert, or already expert. She suggests that EOP teachers need to take learners’ stages and situation into consideration since they will determine the kind of content knowledge and the degree of generality or specificity of the course.

2.4 Previous Related Studies

With the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community, the role of English language became even more important as it was formally adopted as an official language of the ASEAN Community (Kirkpatrick, 2008). The development in English proficiency, particularly in English communication skills, will benefit both the workforce and agencies in moving forward sustainably towards the AEC (Ministry of Labor, 2014). Within this circumstance, it is not surprising that in recent years literature and studies on English for Specific Purposes and English teaching and learning as a preparation for AEC have increased substantially (i.e., Purwanto (2014)'s research on Needs Analysis of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) for the students of Business and Economic Faculty (FEB) UNISBANK Semarang (Indonesia); Prommeechai (2014)'s study on needs of English preparation for Thai undergraduate students in the Faculty of Architecture in response to the AEC; Araminta and Halimi (2015)’s research on the ASEAN Economic Community 2015: Needs Analysis of Universitas Indonesia’s engineering students; Nguyen and Ngo (2015)’s article on English Language Teaching and Learning in ASEAN Countries and Preparatory Steps to Integrate into the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) 2015; Chen, Chang and Chang (2016)’s research on Needs Analysis of English learning in Taiwan).

A wide range of subject matters in ESP has been investigated in various contexts. Many researchers took an interest in communicative skills and English needs of medical students and employees who work in medical settings (i.e., Shi, Corcos, & Storey, 2001; Orr, 2002; Tongvivat, 2008; Gass, 2012). Through using questionnaires,
videotapes, conducting observations, interviews, and other data gathering methods, their findings revealed that medical students and workers need English skills specifically in medical discourse such as doctor-patient consultation, reporting case histories, giving an explanation of an illness, and explaining the procedures of physical examinations. In order to enhance English proficiency of medical students and workers, the concept of English for Medical Purposes (EMP) needs to be applied appropriately in courses that cover both linguistic and communicative features of the topic and the content areas related to medical discourse.

Based on the review of literature and the theory of needs analysis, a research instrument in this study was developed to investigate English needs of medical workers which involve core English skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and micro-skills in terms of medical-related competencies. The content of the questionnaire used in the study includes topics of medical discourse and authentic communication tasks that the medical workers perform in healthcare settings:

- **Listening tasks**: listening to patients’ histories, medical needs, and inquiries, listening to diagnosis and symptom management, listening to lectures, talks in conferences, podcast and video instructions, and listening to various dialects and accents;
- **Speaking tasks**: greeting, making general conversation, asking for patients’ histories, describing symptoms and diagnosis, explaining medication and treatment, giving medical advice and response to patients’ inquiries, communicating on the telephone, giving presentation, lectures, and talks at the seminar or international conference;
- **Reading tasks**: reading patients’ medical records, reading medical diagnoses, examination results, medical prescriptions, and manuals or instructions about medical equipment, reading medical journals, research articles, textbooks, and general publications;
- **Writing tasks**: writing medical records, medical notes, prescriptions, medical research and articles for medical journals, writing a letter, email, memo, and resumes.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Participants

The participants of this study are 30 doctors, 11 dentists, and 210 nurses (251 health services professionals in total) from eight governmental hospitals in
Prachuabkirikhan, Thailand: Hua Hin Hospital, Pranburi Hospital, Samroiyod Hospital, Kuiburi Hospital, Prachuabkirikhan Hospital, Thapsakae Hospital, Bangsaphan Hospital, and Bangsaphan Noi Hospital.

3.2 Instrument

The instrument used in this study was a set of self-administered questionnaire, comprising three parts of questions: (1) general background information, (2) linguistic profile, and (3) English abilities and needs of English skills for the AEC. The participants were required to provide their background information, including gender, age, education, profession, and work experience in the first part and frequency of using English in the workplace, experience with international conferences, experience with training in medical facilities abroad, experience with working abroad, and experience with taking standardized tests (e.g. TOEFL, IELT, and TOEIC) in the second part. In the third part, the participants had to rate their proficiency and needs in listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills through a 5-point Likert scale.

3.3 Data Collection

The questionnaire developed from the review of literature was pretested with 10 participants (three doctors, two dentists, and five nurses who worked and resided in Prachuabkirikhan) to confirm the comprehensibility of the questionnaire and extract specific responses from the participants. After receiving feedback from the participants, the format and language use of the questionnaire was adjusted. To verify the validity of the instrument, the Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC) was conducted by three experts: a physician, Weerawit Wateetip, M.D., a dentist, Unchalee Wongpanich, D.D.S., and an English lecturer who was a former nurse, Chalong Rattanapong, Ph.D. The result for each item in the questionnaire was higher than 0.50 which confirmed the validity of the questionnaire. To collect the data from doctors, dentists, and nurses, the consent form was sent to the director of each hospital in advance. After receiving permission, the researcher distributed questionnaires to the participants of eight governmental hospitals in Prachuabkirikhan. Due to the tight schedules of the participants, the completed questionnaire was collected 1-2 weeks later and the analysis of data was carried out.
3.4 Data Analysis

The data obtained was analyzed by the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version number 21, using the form of frequency and percentage to determine the results of self-rated proficiency and self-rated needs in four English skills of the participants. In addition, to study whether participants’ background had any influence on their proficiency, all variables involved in the general background information section were analyzed by using a Chi-squared ($\chi^2$) test to find correlations between the data.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 English abilities of the participants

Figures 1-4 show level of proficiency of each skill rated by the three professional groups.

*Figure 1 Listening ability of...

*Figure 2 Reading ability of...

*Figure 3 Speaking ability of...

*Figure 4 Writing ability of...
According to the findings, the majority of doctors and dentists rated their listening ability as moderate, while nurses rated themselves as low in proficiency. In terms of speaking ability, doctors and dentists were found the most in the group of moderate proficiency and nurses were found the most in the group of low proficiency. For reading and writing skills, doctors and dentists considered themselves as highly proficient, while nurses rated themselves as moderately proficient.

4.2 English needs of the participants
Figures 5-8 show level of need of each skill rated by the three professional groups.
Analyzed by using a Chi-squared ($\chi^2$) test, the variables that were found correlated with the proficiency of the participants were gender, profession, education, work experience, frequency of using English in the workplace, experience with training in medical facilities abroad, and experience with working abroad (the variables were found statistically significant at the 0.05 level with $\chi^2 = 37.016, 91.387, 94.057, 12.921, 11.090, 9.624,$ and $10.451$, respectively).

**Discussion**

The objective of this study was to investigate English functional skills needed for three ASEAN occupations—medical, dental, and nursing services—thus, the study seeks answers to the following questions:

**What are the English functional skills needed for Thai skilled labor involved in medical services?**

The results revealed that the majority of the doctors rated their needs in English skills as high in every medical task. Out of four categories of needs, reading skill was ranked the highest. It was needed the most when they had to handle patients’ medical records, examination results, prescriptions, referral letters, and medical terminology and abbreviations. The second was listening skill, which was needed when they had to listen to patients’ history and inquiries. Need in speaking skill was ranked third and was highlighted in giving medical advice and responding to patients’ inquiries, while writing skill was in the last place and was needed especially for medical prescriptions, records, terminology and abbreviations writing.

**What are the English functional skills needed for Thai skilled labor involved in dental services?**

According to the findings, needs in English skills of the dentists were rated as high in every medical task. Similar to the group of doctors, the results showed that needs in receptive skills of the dentists were higher than needs in productive skills. The top rank was reading skill, which the majority agreed was essential to every medical task except for general publications reading (e.g. English newspapers, journals, novels) for which the rating was slightly lower than the others. The next was needs in listening skill. The dentists specifically needed the skill for listening to patients’ inquiries, diagnosis and symptoms, and in other situations such as listening to talks in conferences, video instructions, and a variety of dialects and accents. Need in speaking skill was ranked third, followed by need in writing skill. The former was rated as high in almost every medical task, while the latter skill was needed for
medical records, medical notes, prescriptions, and referral letter writing, and a few work-related tasks such as letters and emails writing.

**What are the English functional skills needed for Thai skilled labor involved in nursing services?**

Overall, the majority of nurses rated their needs in listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills as high in every medical task. The findings revealed that reading skill was needed the most, especially for medical prescriptions, terminology and abbreviation reading. The second was listening skill which was intensively used for listening to patients’ histories, inquiries, and diagnosis. Need in speaking and writing skills were ranked the third and the fourth needs, respectively. Nurses needed speaking skill mostly when they had to ask for patients’ histories and explain care plan and follow-up to patients. For writing skill, although the demand was lower than other categories, the majority agreed it was necessary for medical records, terminology and abbreviations writing.

**What background factors correlate with English proficiency of the skilled labor?**

Concerning the influence of personal background on English proficiency, the results indicated that seven out of ten background factors correlated with level of proficiency of the participants. These were gender, profession, education, work experience, frequency of using English in the workplace, experience with training in medical facility abroad, and experience with working abroad. The variables were found statistically significant at the 0.05 level with \( \chi^2 = 37.016, 91.387, 94.057, 12.921, 11.090, 9.624, \) and 10.451, respectively. However, factors such as age, experience with international conferences, and experience with taking standardized tests had no correlation with the proficiency of the participants.

**5. Conclusion**

This study was aimed at investigating English functional skills needed for three ASEAN occupations—medical, dental, and nursing services. The study was conducted with 251 doctors, dentists, and nurses from eight governmental hospitals in Prachuabkirikhan, Thailand. The participants were required to rate their current proficiency and needs in four English skills through a self-administered questionnaire which included authentic tasks from medical settings. After the data was statistically analyzed, the results revealed that among the four skills, needs in reading skill were ranked the highest, followed by needs in listening skill, speaking skill, and writing skill, respectively. Although the results were in contrast with findings from other
studies in similar fields, the matters being confirmed were that English functional skills were rather more demanded in medical tasks than tasks that were not directly involved with medical settings. In order to effectively develop an ESP course and promote professional communication among Thai skilled labor of the AEC, giving attention to their background, particular needs, and interests would be recommended.

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A CORPUS-BASED WORDLIST OF GRADE-12 ENGLISH O-NET EXAMINATIONS

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Abstract
This study aimed to gather the most frequent content words occurring in the grade 12 O-NET examination of English subjects and to compare the proportion of word families in General Service List (GSL) and Academic Word List (AWL) in O-NET Word List (OWL). 10 grade 12 O-NET examinations in English subject were compiled to create the O-NET Examination Corpus. Coxhead’s frequency criterion for Academic Word List was applied to word selecting criteria of the O-NET Word List. Every word family occurring 5 and more than 5 times from 10 examinations were included in the wordlist. The software called AntWordProfiler was used to analyze and generate the O-NET Word List. After excluding the function words, 419 word families were displayed on the OWL. The results revealed that 81.62 percent of the OWL’s word families belonged to 1st 1,000 of GSL, 12.89 percent of word families belonged to 2nd 1,000 of GSL, 4.30 percent were AWL, and the other 1.19 percent did not belong to previous wordlist. O-NET Word List was created to help both students and teachers for O-NET examinations. Students can learn and study many important words from it. While teachers can decide which sets of vocabulary that they should focus and introduce to students to improve their lesson. Besides, OWL is a great tool for building the basic foundation of English vocabulary for every EFL learners.

Keywords: Corpus-based study, word list, O-NET examinations
1 Introduction
Many students have wondered since they started studying in grade 12 that what are the words and vocabulary that they must remember to take the O-NET examination. Many grade 12 students expect to use English as a tool for university admission, not for communication. The most important goal for English learning for almost all students in Thailand is to take a test, especially the national test such as O-NET, GAT, and 9 common subjects. However, there seems to be no book or word list compiling the only vocabulary for each specific test, and different schools use different textbooks. English vocabulary taught in the classroom is so varied. For this reason, a vocabulary list is the goal here to help grade 12 students and to be a great device for vocabulary teaching throughout a teaching career.

O-NET examination is the best choice among the Thai national examinations to make the word list because of many reasons. Firstly, every grade 12 student can take the O-NET examination of their level once in their lives. O-NET scores play an important role in the university admission system since the score proportion is quite high. Thus, it is a crucial part of the requirements for entering the university. Secondly, compared with other Thai national examinations in the English subject, the O-NET examination lasts longer than the others. Also, the data about the examination’s specifications, test patterns, and vocabulary choices can be found more easily than other national tests. With many test years, a great amount of information can be analyzed for an accurate result. The third reason is that the O-NET examination is a main focus for Thai schools. Nonetheless, there is no information or clear specifications indicating what kinds of vocabulary or grammatical structures will be used in the test. Even the O-NET examinations’ test blueprint states only the number of test items and their indicators from the basic education core curriculum (2008). Thus, students have no clue to guess about the vocabulary used in the national tests.

The final outcome of this corpus research is the word list which has several advantages. The first advantage is to give students a useful word list so that they can prepare themselves for the O-NET examination. As mentioned before, there is apparently no vocabulary or word list showing the key vocabulary for this national test due to the differences of textbooks used in each school. Thus, if this study can produce a complete word list for O-NET examination, grade 12 students will benefit from it as the vocabulary knowledge foundation. Not only grade 12 students but also other lower grade students who want to prepare themselves for O-NET examination can also use the list as well. This is because this list also contains some common and frequent words from West’s (1953) General Service List or GSL. Vocabulary in GSL has very high frequency and it is important for EFL learners. All in all, all secondary
students, grade 7 – 12 Thai students, can use it as a guideline to gain more vocabulary knowledge.

The second advantage belongs to English teachers. Teachers can use this word list to produce additional and appropriate worksheets for their students. With this word list, teachers will know what vocabulary should be focused on and what should be excluded. Commercial textbooks contain a large amount of vocabulary. This word list can therefore help teachers choose the content, lessons, and learning activities better than before. To illustrate, some units or reading passages in the commercial textbooks may include many unfamiliar words which are rarely used or found in the O-NET examination. As a result, teachers should not pay too much attention to them.

With the objectives that can provide many benefits to both teachers and students in order to prepare themselves for O-NET examinations, this corpus research aims to investigate and answer the following questions

1. What are the most frequent content words used in the grade 12 English O-NET examinations?
2. What is the percentage proportion of the General Word List (GSL) and the Academic Word List (AWL) that covers the vocabulary in the grade 12 O-NET Word List (OWL)?

2 Literature Review

2.1 Corpus
The term “corpus” is defined in a similar way by different scholars. Timmis (2015) defined corpus as “the electronic texts, both written and spoken forms, that occur naturally with its own purposes.” Sinclair (1996, as cited in Tanprasert, 2014) stated that a corpus is a collection of language which is selected and compiled with some linguistic criteria. A corpus represents a sample of natural language used. Thus, the definition of a corpus is a set of natural language used which is stored or compiled on the computer for the linguistic analysis.

2.2 Wordlist
Word list is a group or set of vocabulary arranged by applying some criteria such as the frequency of occurrence in the context or the importance of each word in the context. For language learners, a word list benefits them in terms of learning the new vocabulary. According to Nation and Waring (as cited in Schmitt and McCarthy, 1997), the frequency list is important for language learning. However, it does not mean that learners must know a huge amount of vocabulary as a main learning resource. It is necessary for instructors or course designers to indicate which and how
many words should be given to the students. At the same time, course designers have to judge whether or what kind of vocabulary should not deserve attention from students.

2.3 Previous studies
Cherngchawano and Jaturapitakkul (2014) studied the lexical profiles of Thailand University Admission Tests. This study aimed to see the scattering of the lexical profiles of Thailand university admission tests which are O-NET, A-NET, GAT, and BGAT. The researchers wanted to know how many words in these tests were found in two famous word lists, which are the General Service List (GSL) and Academic Word list (AWL). The researchers used Nation and Coxhead’s range and frequency programs (2002) to analyze the data. The final results showed that GSL covers up to 85 percent of the words in the tests while AWL covers around 4.5 percent. The combination of both GSL and AWL covers 89.63% of the texts. For this reason, GSL and AWL are worth introducing to students to give them the vocabulary knowledge and prepare them for the Thailand University Admission Test.

Chanasattru (2014) created a high frequency word list including only content words from the Social Science Corpus (SSC). The Social Science Corpus was mainly compiled from ScienceDirect Website. The researcher used two main programs to create the Social Science Word list (SSWL), which were AntWordProfiler and AntConc. The Coxhead range and frequency criteria were applied while creating the SSWL. Finally, the SSWL, with 394 high frequent headwords and 1,120 word members, was collected. This SSWL also revealed that 267 headwords of this SSWL also occur in the New General Service List (NGSL). The other 127 academic words from The Academic Word List also belong to this SSWL. Thus, this Social Science Word list (SSWL) is worth introducing and teaching to students in an English for specific purposes (ESP) or English for academic purposes (EAP) class as it covers many necessary words for reading and writing social science research papers.

3 Methodology
This corpus research procedure has been divided into 4 main stages which are: compiling the O-NET Examination Corpus (OEC), setting word selection criteria, removing the function words and unrelated words, and arranging and indicating the words into the word list.
3.1 Compiling the O-NET Examination Corpus (OEC)

This O-NET Examination Corpus (OEC) was generated from the actual grade 12 O-NET examinations. There are 10 grade 12 O-NET examinations used in this study which are O-NET in the years of 2005 – 2010, 2012 and 2015 – 2017. Some of the tests were collected from the official website of the Thai National Institute of Educational Testing Service (NIETS). NIETS is the organization which provides the educational services on testing and measurement. It was established in 2005. The first O-NET examination from this organization was the 2005 one. However, nowadays the official website provides only the last three years of examination. To make a good word list, every O-NET examination should be used. Therefore, other sources such as other websites and scanning files were appropriate alternatives in order to obtain the data.

All the examinations used in this study are the actual tests which were scanned in form of picture or .pdf file. They were re-uploaded and converted into the plain text format or .txt file in order to use in the corpus software. All the pictures, graphs, charts, and everything which was not directly part of test items was excluded from the .txt file. The number of word tokens and word types in each year’s examination is displayed in Table 3.1.

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<td>1,071</td>
<td>4,279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>942</td>
<td>3,813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1,050</td>
<td>3,967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>1,081</td>
<td>3,949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>949</td>
<td>3,298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>964</td>
<td>3,620</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2 Setting Word Selection Criteria
Laurence Anthony’s AntWordProfiler 1.4.0w (Anthony, 2014) was the main corpus tool to generate the word list in this study. Coxhead’s range and frequency criteria for Academic Word List (AWL) were applied with the O-NET Examination Corpus (OEC).

The word range was mainly considered as the main criterion prior to the others because this wordlist was created to inform students of the most frequent words. Therefore, the word range is very important. According to Coxhead (2000), the word range criterion used in AWL was that each word must occur 15 times or more in all subject areas or sub-corpora from the total of 28 sub-corpora. This is about 53 percent. Thus, the criterion of 50 per cent was applied to the O-NET Examination Corpus (OEC) analysis. It means that every word in OEC must occur at least 5 years or more from 10 years of O-NET examination. Nonetheless, this criterion did not work well for the word frequency. Coxhead’s frequency criterion was that each word family has to occur at least 100 times in the whole AWL. The O-NET Examination Corpus (OEC) has only 37,966 running words, which is considered a very small corpus. After calculation by using Coxhead’s criterion, the words occurring only 1 time in the corpus had to be included in the word list. Since the word range of the OEC is 5 out of 10 sub-corpora, the lowest frequency of each word is 5 times. With this calculation, it was not practical to use the word frequency criterion from Coxhead. After finishing setting the criterion, the AntWordProfiler was used to make a wordlist from O-NET examinations arranging the word families by their range only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Coxhead’s AWL</th>
<th>O-NET Word List</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corpus size</td>
<td>3.5 million</td>
<td>37,966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>15 from 28 sub-disciplines (53%)</td>
<td>5 from 10 examination (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>100 times from the whole corpus</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the AntWordProfiler contains the function to remove the vocabulary listed in world famous wordlists such as General Service List (GSL) in 1953 and Academic Word list (AWL) in 2000, this function cannot be applied to the O-NET Examination wordlist. Due to the different purposes and smaller number of running words, it was not appropriate to remove them.
3.3 Function Word and Unrelated Word Removal
After the preliminary wordlist was created, all function words had to be removed from the list manually. Function words play a less important role in the word list because of many reasons. Firstly, students have known and used some of the function words such as propositions and conjunctions a lot since they have studied in secondary levels for many years (Ward, 2009). They were expected to be able to acquire and use them effectively. Secondly, the total number of function words can overwhelm the content words in the wordlist. The function words excluded from this word list are proper nouns, pronouns, modal verbs, prepositions, conjunctions, abbreviation, numbers, and non-words. The second version of this word list includes only content words.

The next step was checking each content word with Laurence Anthony’s AntConc (3.5.7 2018). AntConc is the software which is mainly used to obtain the concordance lines from each corpus. Every word in the preliminary list that passes the range criteria was keyed in the AntConc in order to check the use of each word. Some content words can be used as function words as well. For example, like can be both verb and preposition. Since all function words must be excluded from the previous process, the frequency of like as a preposition must not be counted and included in the wordlist.

3.4 Arranging the Wordlist and Indicating the Word Families
After manually deleting irrelevant words, the complete version of the O-NET wordlist was finished. The vocabulary in this wordlist was arranged from the highest to the lowest frequency. Since the Coxhead’s range criteria were already applied to the wordlist and unrelated vocabulary was all excluded, all the words left in the AntWordProfiler were chosen to be part of the list. Therefore, in the arranging process, it would be better to show the most frequent words first because students will be able to see which word occurs more often in the O-NET examinations. Then, AntConc was used to identify the word members in each word family. Word members were shown along with their frequency to allow students to access the word members that appear in the tests. With these final processes, the final version of the Grade 12 O-NET examination Word List (OWL) was completed.

After the grade 12 O-NET examination Word List (OWL) was completely created, the word families in the OWL were matched with the various famous wordlists in order to see the difficulty of each word family. The results of the OWL are analyzed in the next chapter to see how many word families belonged to each famous wordlist and to see the similarity and differences between the OWL and other studies.
4 Finding and Discussion

4.1 Results

O-NET Word List (OWL) was completely created by compiling 10 grade-12 O-NET examinations from the English subject exams. There were 419 word families in the OWL. All words in the OWL were matched with 3 important word lists, which were the first 1,000 high frequency words in the General Service List (GSL), the second 1,000 high frequency words in GSL, and the Academic Word List from Coxhead. Among 419 word families in OWL, there were 342 word families belonging to the first 1,000 frequency words in GSL, 54 word families belonging to the second 1,000 words of GSL, and the other 18 word families are in the AWL. Lastly, there are 5 word families that do not belong to any famous wordlist. These word families are wedding, dialogs, usage, phrase, and apartment. The example of the word families covered in each of the famous wordlists are shown in the table 4.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The 1st 1,000 GSL</th>
<th>The 2nd 1,000 GSL</th>
<th>AWL</th>
<th>Not belong to previous wordlists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>Infer</td>
<td>Wedding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best</td>
<td>Sorry</td>
<td>Job</td>
<td>Usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go</td>
<td>Tour</td>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>Park</td>
<td>Identify</td>
<td>Apartment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>Extract</td>
<td>Dialogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Say</td>
<td>Passage</td>
<td>Item</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make</td>
<td>Shop</td>
<td>Method</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ten highest frequency content words from OWL are say, time, all, go, best, some, make, take, more, and word respectively. All of these 10 words belonged to the first 1,000 high frequency words in GSL. These words are basic and commonly used in many contexts. Moreover, the first 66 words in OWL also belonged to the first 1,000 high frequency words in GSL. The proportion of the words belonging in these three word lists showed that the English examination of grade 12 O-NET used a number of high frequency words. In the O-NET examination, there are various sections of the test such as conversation, vocabulary, cloze test, or reading comprehension in which these words can frequently appear in both questions and choice items. Furthermore, the use of these words was reasonable and related to the objectives of O-NET examination which is aimed at measuring students’ overall English proficiency. The only 18 word families belonging to the AWL also indicated that O-NET examinations in general do not use many specific words or words for undergraduates.
From Table 4.2, the percentage of both 1st 1,000 and 2nd 1,000 GSL covered in the grade 12 O-NET Word List is 94.51, while the Academic Word List covered in OWL is only 4.30 percent. The data leads to the point that not only the grade 12 O-NET Word List (OWL) but also the General Service List (GSL) is worth introducing to students as a tool for their national examinations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word List</th>
<th>OWL Word families</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The 1st 1,000 GSL</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>81.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 2nd 1,000 GSL</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>12.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWL</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of above</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 Discussion

After the O-NET Word List (OWL) was made, the final outcome of the study showed that there were both similarities and differences among the results of this corpus-based study and the previous research.

According to Cherngchawano and Jaturapitakkul (2014), GSL covered up to 85 percent of the vocabulary used in the Thai National Examination such as O-NET, A-NET, GAT and BGAT, while AWL covered only 4.5 percent of the vocabulary items in the tests. The statistical information from the research of Cherngchawano and Jaturapitakkul was quite similar to the data of the O-NET Word List (OWL). Up to 94.51 percent of the words in OWL belongs to the first and second 1,000 of GSL. Only 4.30 percent of the OWL words belonged to the AWL. This data showed two main points. The first point was to confirm that the high frequency words play a major part in the grade 12 O-NET examination in the English subject. Significantly, the vocabulary for undergraduates was rarely used in the same tests since the goal of AWL is to provide English foundation for university students (Coxhead, 2000). The second point from this data was to support both GSL and OWL as the appropriate word lists for taking the national examinations in Thailand since GSL covered up to 85 percent of the test vocabulary and OWL was created specifically in line with the test taking objectives.

In terms of word list, the results showed the differences among OWL and other previous word lists. There are some word lists that AWL words covered with a higher proportion than what AWL covered in OWL. One of the word lists that AWL took a higher proportion in AWL was the Social Science Word List (SSWL) of Chanasattru
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(2014). SSWL contained 394 frequency head words. In particular, 127 out of 394 belonged to the AWL, which was calculated as 32.23 percent. From the data, these three word lists contained a higher proportion of words belonging in AWL than the number of AWL words in the O-NET Word List. AWL words covered only 4.30 percent in the O-NET word list. The different number of words occurred because of the different target group of audience. The O-NET Word List was created for upper secondary students (grade 9 - 12) to prepare themselves for the national tests. Hence, the words in OWL are the actual high frequency words that could be commonly used in any part of the age-group test context. However, the other wordlists aimed to provide basic vocabulary knowledge in each specific area such as Social Science.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion
This corpus-based study created the Thai grade 12 O-NET Examination Word List (OWL). The data, from ten grade-12 O-NET Examinations of the English subject, was compiled to make the word list through the corpus-based processes. There are 419 content word families in this word list.

5.2 Limitations
There are two important limitations in this test analysis. The first limitation of this corpus research is the lack of some grade-12 O-NET tests. The National Institute of Educational Testing Service or NIETS is the organization which has been in charge of the O-NET examinations since 2005. Up until now, there have been 13 grade-12 O-NET examinations. It means that all the 13 examinations should be used in this study for the complete result. However, the website of NIETS does not provide all of the tests. Although many scanned versions of the O-NET examination were collected from various resources, there was no complete data of all the examinations. Only 10 tests were actually analyzed for this research. It would be better if all the 13 tests were collected and used for wordlist compilation. The range criterion could be changed if the sub-corpora were 13 instead of 10. There will probably be some other high-frequency words appearing in the O-NET word list.

Another limitation of this study is the word frequency counting. The core program used in this study was AntWordProfiler. It is a very useful corpus tool to make a word list which gives researchers the important data of both sup-corpora and the whole corpus. One main function that was applied in this software is categorizing the vocabulary in the corpus by its word family. However, this function still has some weaknesses. It groups up the words together without consideration of their word class or their meaning in context. For example, the word family present in OWL occurs 24
times. Present itself can belong to three word classes with three different meanings. According to the Dictionary of the Cambridge University Press, present can be a noun (something people are given for a special occasion, or the current time), a verb (to introduce, to make something known), and an adjective (happening now or in a particular place). These three classes are grouped up together in the same word family even though they have different meanings in each context. This similar situation occurs to other word families as well such as fine, state, and kind. This study cannot tell readers how many times these words which belong to more than one word class occur in the O-NET examinations.

The last limitation in this study is the word selection criteria of the O-NET Word List (OWL). From the results in chapter 4, the first 10 word families appearing in the wordlist were say, time, all, go, best, some, make, take, more, and word. These word families are so basic that they cannot reach students’ higher vocabulary expectations for taking the national examinations in English subject. These word families are the results of the word selection criteria adapted from Coxhead’s Academic Word List (AWL). Every word family appearing 5 times and more were collected as a part of OWL. Thus, many of them are so common they do not require individual learner attention. On the other hand, the more difficult vocabulary which affects students in the examinations did not occur much and were excluded from the OWL due to the application of Coxhead’s criteria. So, the final version of OWL might not attract students since the first word families are too easy for them. If there are other criteria or formulae that can be applied along with the wordlist, the word families in the list will change and it can better reach the target audiences’ needs.

5.3 Pedagogical Implications on Grade-12 O-NET Wordlist (OWL)

There are many ways to get benefits from the grade-12 O-NET wordlist (OWL). Both teachers and students who can access this wordlist can use it for their own objectives. First of all, this wordlist can be provided for grade 12 students directly to inform them about high frequency words in O-NET examinations in the English subject. Before looking at the wordlist, English teachers should introduce and explain the list briefly about the meaning of the number after each word or what the meaning of the bold words is. This is to prevent confusion and to highlight the members of word families which have the most frequency. Below is an example of the word family care:

Care* 33
Care 6
Caring 4
Careful 7
Carefully 13
Careless 2
Carelessly 1

From the data above, word family care has 33 occurrences from the 10 grade-12 O-NET wordlist and the word member with the highest frequency is carefully (13). The frequency points out that the adverb form carefully (7 tokens) is worth learning before taking the O-NET Examination in the English subject. Even though the other members of the family have fewer frequencies than carefully, they are interesting for students to gain a wider range of vocabulary knowledge as well. Not only can grade 12 students benefit from this wordlist, OWL is probably suitable for all levels of secondary students. With the range criterion, many common words were compiled in the OWL. Many of them may be too simple for grade 12 students, but they may be worth learning for some lower level students. To illustrate, grade 7 students who are recognized as secondary students may have low proficiency in English from their primary school. OWL, with its many common words can help them gain the necessary foundation of English vocabulary with these convenient guidelines.

Apart from secondary students, English teachers can also use OWL as a tool to improve their teaching. OWL is probably a great tool to select what vocabulary should be included in or excluded from the lessons. Many commercial books provide a lot of difficult words which are rarely used in real life. In addition, these kinds of words rarely occur in the O-NET Examinations as well. For this reason, OWL is a reference list for English teachers to choose the appropriate words for students. This is in line with Nation and Waring (1997), who recommended that the course designers should have a list to refer to when they consider the vocabulary parts of a language lesson and at the same time teacher should have a reference list to decide which words should be taught in the class.

Another way to bring the full potential of OWL into teaching English is to expand the area of each word in the list. Since there are many common words in the list, teaching them straightforwardly is not enough for students to take the national examinations. English teachers can extend the use of OWL by introducing collocations and phrasal verbs to students.

Collocations are a pair of words or group of words that usually occur together. They sound correct and people usually use them in both written and spoken language. An example of collocation is commit suicide. Commit suicide sounds correct and natural while nobody uses the term do suicide. Thus, do suicide is a non target-like collocation.
Phrasal verbs are the combinations of verb and preposition or adverb. The meaning of the phrasal verb changes when the particle is changed: for example, *turn over* / *turn up*, *put off* / *put away* / *put into*, etc. As a phrasal verb, *put off* does not mean to move something out but from the Oxford University Press’ Dictionary (2019), it means to postpone or delay the event or activity. These two language features are important for students when they take the examinations, and even to use in their daily life. Teachers can find some examples from the O-NET examinations to teach them as well. To demonstrate, the word family *look* has 71 frequencies and many of them are used as phrasal verbs such as *let the family members look after their pets, feel free to look away for a moment when you are changing a subject, and Great! I'm looking forward to it*. Teaching only *look, looking, or looks* is not worth spending time on, but teaching both phrasal verbs and collocations is very beneficial for them.

### 5.4 Recommendations for Further Research

There are several ways to further this corpus research. Firstly, other researchers can apply the methods from this research and conduct similar research with grade 6 and grade 9 O-NET examinations. Grade 6 and grade 9 O-NET examination play a similar role to the grade 12 O-NET examination. For grade 6 O-NET, some secondary schools require an O-NET score in order to assess the achievement of each student. Apart from the school admission test, students have to hand in their O-NET score as well. Grade 9 O-NET score plays a very similar role to the grade 6 one. Thus, it will be useful to create wordlists compiling the frequent vocabulary for students in both levels.

The second way to improve this research is to expand the range of Thai national tests from O-NET to the others. There are still other important Thai national tests of English, such as the English section of GAT (General Aptitude Test) and the English section of the 9 common subject test. These two play an important role in the admission system as well. Unlike O-NET, Thai students can apply and take these tests once a year. Students have one more year to prepare and retake these tests, while students cannot do the same thing with their O-NET test. With the same benefits, researchers can conduct research and create the word lists for particular Thai national tests. In addition, if researchers can compile the frequent vocabulary for three important tests, which are O-NET, GAT and the English subject of 9 common subject test, it will be a very interesting word list. It will be obviously useful for grade 12 students since only one word list could help them access all the necessary words appearing in crucial admission tests.
Another thing that researchers can do to improve and further this research is to match the vocabulary from the wordlist with the CEFR scale. The Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR) is an international standard for describing people’s English language ability. There are 6 rating scales, which are A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2. A1 level signifies beginner level, while C2 level signifies the advanced level of language. After getting a word list, research can match up between each vocabulary item and the CEFR rating scale by using reliable resources such as http://vocabularypreview/englishprofile.org. These rating scales allow teachers and students to know the difficulty level of the words. The key benefit of matching the vocabulary with the CEFR scale is especially for teachers. Teachers can choose the level of vocabulary that matches their students’ proficiency level. CEFR rating scales can also help researchers improve their own wordlists. For instance, since the vocabulary items of OWL mostly are the basic words that may not attract the students with high English proficiency, researchers can gather all word families occurring in the O-NET examinations and match them with the CEFR rating scale. Then, only word families with appropriate CEFR rating scales should be compiled as a wordlist such as a wordlist of grade 12 O-NET examinations with word families of CEFR rating scale at B1 and above. This kind of wordlist will be more interesting for some groups of teachers and learners.

References
Chanasattru, S. (2014). *A corpus-based lexical study of distribution of new general service list (NGSL) and academic word list (AWL) in social science research papers.* (Master’s thesis). Thammasat University, Language Institute.


**Appendix**

The example head words of word families in O-NET Word List (OWL)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Able</th>
<th>Back</th>
<th>Call</th>
<th>Danger</th>
<th>Each</th>
<th>Fact</th>
<th>Get</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abroad</td>
<td>Bad</td>
<td>Car</td>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td>Early</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accept</td>
<td>Beauty</td>
<td>Care</td>
<td>Day</td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Give</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accident</td>
<td>Become</td>
<td>Carry</td>
<td>Decide</td>
<td>Eat</td>
<td>Far</td>
<td>Go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accord</td>
<td>Believe</td>
<td>Case</td>
<td>Deep</td>
<td>Effect</td>
<td>Favor</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act</td>
<td>Best</td>
<td>Cause</td>
<td>Delicious</td>
<td>Employ</td>
<td>Feel</td>
<td>Great</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrive</td>
<td>Big</td>
<td>Certain</td>
<td>Department</td>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Grow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual</td>
<td>Birth</td>
<td>Change</td>
<td>Describe</td>
<td>Enjoy</td>
<td>Few</td>
<td>Hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add</td>
<td>Blood</td>
<td>Check</td>
<td>Develop</td>
<td>Enter</td>
<td>Find</td>
<td>Happen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advantage</td>
<td>Body</td>
<td>Child</td>
<td>Dialogs</td>
<td>Error</td>
<td>Fine</td>
<td>Hard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A SEMANTIC PROSODY AND GRAMMATICAL PATTERNS ANALYSIS OF NEAR-SYNONYM PAIR QUIT AND STOP IN THE COCA

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Abstract
This corpus-based study aimed to investigate the semantic prosodies and grammatical patterns of a near-synonym pair quit and stop, which were chosen from the academia vocabulary list. Longman and Cambridge online dictionaries were used as reference for meanings and grammatical patterns. Data in terms of collocations and concordance lines are obtained from Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). Both quit and stop were found to have neutral semantic prosodies through collocational behaviour and contextual analysis. Despite sharing core meanings, the grammatical patterns of quit and stop cannot be completely shared or used interchangeably in all contexts since passive structure, past participle, phrasal verbs, base form as a noun, adjective + noun, and conditional present do not exist for quit but only for stop.

Keywords: corpus, COCA, near-synonym, semantic prosody, grammatical patterns

1. Introduction
Research on semantic prosody has been done since the early 1990s and has become of popular interest for many linguists or others alike who recognize the essential role semantic prosody in English language teaching and learning, especially in the context
of ESL and EFL. Semantic prosody’s primary function has been emphasized as the expression of speaker’s and writer’s attitudes discourse and pragmatic functions. In addition, by deliberately inserting a word for the attitudinal function of semantic prosodies results in irony, which will collide with the collocates in terms of the prosody's consistent (Louw, 1993; Partington, 1998; Zhang & Ooi, 2008).

The term semantic prosody was first derived from the term phonological prosody which was coined by John Rupert Firth in 1957. Similarly, the term semantic association was used by John MaHardy Sinclair in 1987. Up until that point, the term semantic prosody and other terms alike were only known to linguists in the field related to semantics and pragmatic. The term semantic prosody, however, was introduced to the public for the first time in the early 1990s by Bill Louw in 1993. Prior to Louw’s claim, in 1991, John Sinclair observed that there is a high tendency for many words and phrases usage to occur in a particular semantic environment. Furthermore, semantic prosody was defined by Ping-Fang and Jing-Chun (2009) as the meaning of a word resulting from its association with collocates. Clearly, semantic prosody is collocational. Collocations are categorized into two major categories: (1) lexical collocations and (2) grammatical collocations (Benson, Benson & Ilson, 1986), and that both lexical collocations and grammatical collocations lead to semantic prosody and grammatical patterns of words. Semantic prosody can be categorized into three different categories: positive, neutral and negative. Semantic prosody can be observed grammatically. English collocations are categorized into two categories: (1) lexical collocations and (2) grammatical collocations. Lexical collocations consist of nouns, adjectives verbs and adverbs in different possible combinations such as argue heatedly (V + Adv), strong coffee (Adj + N), or quite good (Adv + Adj). However, grammatical collocations are combinations of words such as nouns, verbs, adjectives or with a preposition or other grammatical structures such as commit crime and commit suicide (V + N), provide funding and detonating a bomb (V + N), or bomb explode and runners ran off (N + V) (Benson, Benson, and Ilson, 1986).

Another direction for research on synonyms is to focus on the grammatical patterns that they are used in. Synonyms and near-synonyms express nearly identical meaning, but in many cases, they are not completely interchangeable. This is because near-synonyms convey the same concept in different manners and contexts from different perspectives; and should be used appropriately in particular situations (Edmonds & Hirst, 2002). Pairs of near-synonyms are usually different in their collocational behaviors and grammatical patterns (Duan & Qin, 2012). English language learners
wishing to improve their English skills must be aware of, practice synonyms and near-synonyms in contexts, and try to master them (Phoocharoensil, 2010).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Semantic Prosody

2.1.1 Definition

The definition of semantic prosody is still being greatly debated among linguists. Whether it is entirely determined by collocations or identified through evaluation of the speaker, there is no reliable and consistent method to approach it which researchers agree to be the best (Wachter, 2012). However, the main objective of semantic prosody studies is to establish the semantic prosody and also the grammatical patterns of words such as verbs and adjectives and so on.

2.2 Establishing semantic prosody

Semantic prosody can be identified through collocates. It is, however, much more feasible and believable for any word that has a neutral meaning such as doing, commit, happening, completely, certainty, and absolutely. In other words, identifying the semantic prosody is not always feasible and applicable for words with clear positive or negative meanings (Chung and Lin, 2016). Examples by Whitsitt (2005) included verbs such as ease, heal, and relieve. These words usually co-occur with words indicating undesirable things or state of affairs; however, their semantic prosody is rather positive e.g. ease the pain, heal sickness, and relieve stress.

2.1.3 Types of semantic prosodies

Stubbs (1995) who studied the semantic prosody of the verb cause by using a corpus of 120 million words of General English. It was concluded from the findings that the most frequent collocates with the verb cause had negative connotations (Stubbs 2000, as cited in Wachter, 2012). Clearly, it is important to distinguish between the nature of collocates (negative or positive collocates) and the implication and association of a lexical item (negative or positive prosody). Stubbs (1995) and also Xiao and McEnery (2006) stated that semantic prosody is seen to fall into three different categories: positive, neutral and negative connotations. Louw (2000) stated that words contain negative semantic prosodies much more frequently than positive entries.

2.2 Near-synonyms

The importance of synonyms has gained more attention in collocational classroom-based researches (Daskalovska, 2015; Hashemi, Azizzinezhad, & Dravishi, 2012). The use of corpus in English language teaching and learning is becoming more widely applicable and applied. This is because concordance lines can provide evidence for
both learners and teachers to observe the various distinguishing patterns between synonymous words (Tsui, 2005). Both synonyms and near-synonyms are considered to be lexical pairs “that have very similar cognitive or denotational meanings, but which may differ in collocational or prosodic behavior. As such, synonymous words are not interchangeable” (McEnery & Xiao, 2006 as cited in Hu, 2015). This was confirmed by Hu (2015), stating that even though two words may share similarity in terms of cognitive and/or denotational meaning; however, in specific contexts, they may reveal different collocational behaviours and have distinct semantic prosodies. More importantly, synonymous words should be used carefully since they usually differ in their semantic prosody and collocational behaviors (Gu, 2017).

2.3 Collocational behavior and semantic prosody

2.3.1 Collocations

The best way to describe a corpus is as a collection of written and spoken texts that underlie with various linguistic forms and information (McEnery, Xiao & Otono, 2014). Research benefiting from corpora have gained popularity among linguistic analysts since the corpus-based study provides guidelines to their efficiency and convenience (Lee, 2011). More precisely, studies and researches on collocation have been conducted for more than half of a century. The term collocation was first introduced by Firth (1957) as a technical term. The emphasis on the importance of collocations for English language learner’s vocabulary evaluation, and also the communicative competence approach, has been noted by many researchers such as Cowie (1981), Lewis (1997), and Altuwairesh (2016).

2.3.2 Collocational behaviour

John Sinclair, the father of semantic prosody studies, first introduced semantic prosody as collocational behavior of words in the year 1987. It is defined as a specific collocational phenomenon which can be categorized into three categories; negative, positive, and neutral (Stubbs, 1995 as cited in Fuqua, 2014). According to Zhang (2010), semantic prosody represents an important concept in corpus linguistics and it has claimed more attention from most, if not all, corpus linguists and other researchers alike. In terms of language teaching, Ahmadian, Yazdani, and Darabi (2011) stated that “The importance of semantic prosody in language pedagogy has been well recognized by researchers including Sinclair (1991), Louw (1993), Stubbs (1995), and Hoey (2005).
2.3.3 Lexical collocations and grammatical collocations
A lexical collocation does not consist of any grammatical structure. It is simply a combination of a noun and an adjective or a verb with an adverb (Bahns, 1993). Benson had explained lexical collocations as frequently consisting of two lexical elements; they also consist of various content words combinations. These combinations will never be consisted of prepositions, relative clauses or infinitives. Grammatical collocations, however, are a combination consisting of a noun, adjective, verb, and adverb together with a grammatical structure which might include a preposition, clause, infinitive, or gerund, (Bahns, 1993).

2.3.4 Types of grammatical collocations
Grammatical collocations of English are categorized into eight combinations below according to Benson, Benson, and Ilson, (1986): (1) noun + preposition, (2) noun + to-infinitive, (3) noun + that-clause, (4) preposition + noun, (5) adjective+ preposition, (6) predicate adjective+ to-infinitive, (7) adjective+ that-clause, and (8) nineteen verbs patterns.

2.4 Grammatical Patterns
Grammatical patterns analysis is a very interesting aspect that can be used to distinguish near-synonyms and synonyms in the English language. Certain grammatical patterns may apply to one word but do not apply to its synonymous counterpart. For example, the word keen, interested, and passionate are regarded as synonyms since they mean a subject concerning enthusiasm to do something. Nevertheless, these three words do not occur in the same grammatical patterns.

a. Anna is keen on the idea.
b. Anna is interested in the idea
c. Anna is passionate about the idea.
Even though a. b. and c. are equivalent in meaning, clearly, each word is associated with different prepositions. To alternate the patterns grammatically, these three words will ultimately become ungrammatical.

3. Methodology
3.1 Word selection
The synonymous word pairs quit and stop were chosen based on the following two criteria: (1) core meaning and (2) Academic Vocabulary List.
3.2 Choosing corpus

The corpus used in this study was the Corpus of Contemporary American English or COCA. It is available for free and is considered to be the largest corpus of American English. As of 2018, COCA consists of more than 580 million words or texts that are divided equally into newspapers, magazines, fiction, and academic texts, and also spoken. This corpus is being regularly updated. More importantly, COCA is the only English corpus suitable for looking at current news, language in-use, and ongoing changes in the English language.

3.3 Procedure

This section describes the procedures of data collection from COCA for the analysis of near-synonym pairs quit and stop. The researcher selected the corpus-based data only from all genre extracted at random in COCA to analyse the data. The focus will mainly be on the words quit and stop. The semantic prosody of both words will be investigated through their collocates which will be explored in the collocation function and concordance lines in the COCA. More precisely, the top 10 most frequently occurring collocates (five left collocations and five right collocations) and surrounding contexts analysed from 500 concordance lines will be considered for semantic prosody. For the grammatical patterns analysis, the investigation will rely on 500 concordance lines for both quit and stop. In terms of the family words of stop, 100 concordance lines of stopping and stopped will be investigated. As for quit, 600 concordance lines of quit were investigated since all verb forms of quit (v1-v2-v3) are all the same; together with 100 additional concordance lines for quitting. This adds up to the total of 1,400 concordance lines.

3.4 Data analysis

3.4.1 Semantic prosody analysis

In this study, the word quit and stop were examined for their semantic prosody, which is collocational. The words quit and stop were also compared in terms of semantic prosody by observing the semantic relations among collocates and query of frequency by analyzing from data extracted from the collocation function on the COCA and 500 concordance lines for contexts. The semantic prosody will be categorized into one of the three categories: positive, negative, or neutral, based on the contexts evident from the concordance lines.

3.4.2 Grammatical patterns analysis

For the grammatical patterns analysis, data was derived from the online Cambridge dictionary and Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English. These two dictionaries yield information in terms of meanings and significant grammatical patterns. In addition to the two online dictionaries, the Corpus of Contemporary
American English (COCA) is another important data source for this study. Seven hundred concordance lines each for quit and stop (including the –ing and –ed forms) will be investigated. The corpus-based data provide information about common and uncommon grammatical patterns. The corpus data is expected to provide more information than the online dictionaries, but it is possible that the extracted concordance lines do not cover all the information about quit and stop due to randomness in extraction of the concordance lines.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1.1 Lexical collocations of Quit from COCA’s collocates function

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Left collocates of Quit</th>
<th>Collocations</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>never quit</td>
<td>198</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>finally quit</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recently quit</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abruptly quit</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>smokers quit</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Right collocates of Quit</th>
<th>Collocations</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>quit smoking</td>
<td>564</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quit school</td>
<td>234</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quit drinking</td>
<td>201</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quit work</td>
<td>74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quit college</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1.2 Semantic prosody of Quit

After closely observing 500 concordance lines containing the word quit, it was found that quit was used in political contexts as well as decision making contexts. However, it was found in neutral contexts at 83%, negative contexts at 12.4%, and positive contexts at 4.6%. Some evident examples of the concordance lines are as follows:

**Quit in neutral context (83%)**
- The Paris Climate Accord is like every politician agreeing to quit Twitter…
- Press secretary Sean Spicer quit last Friday…
- Oregon State’s Gary Anderson quit Oct. 9 but will remain under contract…
- Lescak doesn’t think her son would quit football entirely, in part of the lesson…
- To quit metaphor, it has been urged that the austere and lofty spirit of…

**Quit in negative contexts (12.4%)**
- Mere hours after reports emerged that he refuses to quit, Bharara tweeted…
- She said she quit because of stress created in her branch to meet the new customer-service measures.
- That man later said he quit his job because Dao pursued him aggressively…
- Three staffers have quit in the wake of the recent violence…
- …placing responsibility on him for the firing that he threatened to quit after only two weeks on the job.

**Quit in positive contexts (4.6%)**
- …students also have told university official the rule change led them to quit smoking or using other tobacco products.
- They’ve have been used as birth control and as a method to quit smoking…
- …I quit drinking on my own. And I quit smoking on my own.
- A few years back a bunch of us quit smoking and the one I knew …
- …those who use e-cigarettes daily were significantly more likely to have quit cigarettes compared to those who have never tried e-cigarettes.

From the concordance lines, it is evident that quit is mostly used in politics and topics related to decision making, specifically leaving a work place or discontinuing the use of addictive substances. Despite its occurrence in theses specific situations, the overall contexts are relatively neutral. Thus, quit has neutral semantic prosody.

### 4.2.1 Lexical collocations of Stop from COCA’s collocates function

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collocations</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>just stop</td>
<td>965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>first stop</td>
<td>906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>next stop</td>
<td>878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>never stop</td>
<td>797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>please stop</td>
<td>451</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collocations</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>stop immediately</td>
<td>617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stop smoking</td>
<td>398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stop now</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stop drinking</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stop short</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.2.2 Semantic prosody of Stop

After closely observing 500 concordance lines containing the word quit, it was found that quit was used in political contexts as well as decision making context. However, it is found in neutral contexts at 76.8%, negative contexts at 20.6%, and positive contexts at 2.6%. Some evident examples of the concordance lines are as follows:

**Stop in neutral contexts (76.8 %)**
- The Grand Canyon proved to be the kids’ favourite stop.
- It stands in an empty lot near the school-bus stop.
- This is the first stop on the location Irish culture tour.
- Ray Charles can’t stop the music because music, he says, is his life.
- One thing is certain: the questions are not going to stop.

**Stop in negative contexts (20.6%)**
- …the country is being overwhelmed and not only is your government powerless to stop it but in many cases…
- …you must stop oppressing the slaves with your tyranny, stop oppressing the freed men with your disdain.
- …individuals that want to take advantage of it, and there’s nothing to stop them. …United States runs out of patience and forces him to stop his production of mass weapons of destructions?
- Addicts can never stop their addictions outside of 12-stop programs.

**Stop in positive contexts (2.6%)**
- Stereotactic irradiation can be successfully used to limit or stop the growth…
- For a company this size to realize a mistake and stop it and try to change…
- …their determination to stop the clear-cutting remains strong.
- …the region will stop generating anti-American terrorism. Promoting democracy in the Middle East…
- …we will promote our values in this region and we will stop the spread of terrorism in Central and South America.

From the concordance lines, it is evident that stop is mostly used in various contexts. The word stop is used much more frequently than the word quit. However, stop is found to be used even less in positive contexts than quit. At first glance, stop may seem to have more sinister underlying negative contexts (intuitively). After observing the concordance lines and its occurrence in these specific situations above, the overall contexts are relatively neutral. Thus, quit has neutral semantic prosody.

**Discussions on grammatical patterns of Quit and Stop**
Grammatical patterns of stop and quit will be discussed in terms of similarity (shared) and differences (unshared) patterns from COCA. There are also many grammatical patterns, such as verb to do, modal verbs, independent clauses, that are not included in the analysis and discussion due to their essentialities in structures occurring with various types of words naturally. However, the majority of shared grammatical patterns of quit and stop that will be discussed belong in the grammatical collocations stated by Benson, Benson, and Ilson 1986. This is because the importance of vocabulary teaching, in general, can be enhanced through grammatical collocations. The relationship between learning vocabulary and collocation is fundamental and collocations are an essential principle in the vocabulary of any language (McCarthy, 1990).
Grammatical patterns shared by *Quit* and *Stop*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shared grammatical patterns of Quit and Stop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. to infinitive forms: to <em>stop</em>, to <em>quit</em> / verb + to infinitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. verb + noun or preposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. verb + adverb / adverb + verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. verb + noun / noun + verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. verb + preposition / verb + preposition + object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. linking verb / verb + ing-verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. present/past perfect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. present participle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clearly, the various grammatical collocations with verb dominate the shared patterns. The highest frequency of the grammatical pattern found for both *quit* and *stop* is the infinitive structure. There exist many unshared and uncommon grammatical patterns of *quit* and *stop*, all of which are important structures encountered daily by English language learners and teachers.

### Unshared grammatical patterns of *Quit* and *Stop*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grammar patterns</th>
<th>Unshared and Rare grammatical patterns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Passive structure</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Past participle</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Phrasal verbs</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Base form as a Noun</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Adjective + ___</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Compound noun</td>
<td>Rare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Gerund / Gerund phrase</td>
<td>Common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Conditional present</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the results, clearly *quit* and *stop* shared do share grammatical patterns which belong in the grammatical collocations defined by Benson, Benson, and Ilson (1986). However, Table 9 revealed that *quit* and *stop* do not share 6 important grammatical patterns. Passive structure and past participle patterns do not exist for *quit*. The base form *quit* does not exist as a noun and very rarely as a compound noun. Particularly, there are 2 grammatical patterns (based form noun and compound noun) that are very common for *stop* but not for *quit*. Overall, there are more grammatical patterns in-use that are found in corpus data than there are in dictionaries. It is found as well that contexts are very important in identifying appropriate usage when comparing synonyms and near-synonyms. Generally, the findings suggest that *quit*
and *stop* cannot be used interchangeably in all grammatical contexts since *quit* and *stop* do not share all grammatical patterns, despite sharing core meaning.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Summary of the study
The objective of this study was to examine the semantic prosody of near-synonym pair *quit* and *stop*, as well as examining the differences between *quit* and *stop* in terms of grammatical patterns. This study was corpus-based and relied on data extracted from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). The differences between *quit* and *stop* were focused in terms of their use in contexts and interchangeability.

Near-synonym pair *quit* and *stop* were the main subjects of this study, together with their word family *quitting*, *stopping*, and *stopped*. Both *quit* and *stop* were selected from the Academic Vocabulary List (AVL). The core meanings were checked by using online Longman and Cambridge online dictionaries. For semantic prosody analysis, the data were obtained from COCA using the collocation function to identify the top 10 most frequent collocations (five from the left and five from the right side). The contexts from the concordance lines containing identified collocations were then analyzed. For grammatical patterns analysis of *stop*, 500 concordance lines for *stop*, 100 concordance lines for *stopping*, and 100 concordance lines for *stopped* were analyzed. For grammatical patterns analysis of *quit*, 600 concordance lines of *quit*, and 100 concordance lines for *quitting* were analysed.

5.2 Pedagogical implications

5.2.1 Semantic prosody and ELT
It is essential to learn vocabulary in context with various examples provided for learners to differentiate particular meaning in specific contexts. This is important especially when synonymous vocabularies are taught. One of the most prominent challenges in vocabulary teaching and learning involves the semantic prosodies of synonymous words (Tsui, 2005). There are two implications that can be applied to ESL and EFL vocabulary learning and teaching from corpus-based studies related to semantic prosody.

(1) In order to learn vocabulary effectively, ESL/EFL learners will need to master more than just memorizing spelling, meanings, and grammatical patterns. The awareness of semantic prosody is immensely beneficial for the interpretation of texts’ and/or speakers’ hidden intentions and attitudes. Semantic prosody can also enable learners to comprehend how to appropriately use lexical items properly, resulting in effective communication (Xiao & McEnery, 2006).
(2) Integrating semantic prosody into ESL/EFL classroom will help develop language learners’ communicative competence. Intuition of ESL/EFL learners of English is much less reliable in comparison to that of native speakers. When ESL/EFL learners are learning and applying lexical items, they rarely notice the semantic prosody of words they are learning; semantic prosody errors would be made in communication (Wei, 2006).

5.2.2 Grammatical patterns and ELT
When teaching vocabulary, especially synonymous words, it is essential for English language teachers to use implicative examples of words being taught in various grammatical patterns. A pattern may be common for a word but may be rare or does not exist for its synonymous counterpart. However, English teachers must know, or at least be aware much more beyond grammatical patterns; they also need to know which patterns are frequent and infrequent. Thus, teachers can and should, when applicable, use corpus data for class instructions. With it, examples and frequencies from both written and spoken texts can be used to compare, so learners can differentiate and be aware of various usages of the vocabulary they are learning. According to Schmidt (1990), grammatical patterns and forms are necessary for learners; they enable learners to develop from intermediate communicative competence to an advanced level of grammatical accuracy.

5.3 Limitations of the study
5.3.1 For the word stop, stopping, and stopped, 500, 100, and 100 concordance lines were investigated respectively due to time limitation. More concordance lines should be investigated, and also at equal proportions for both semantic prosody and grammatical patterns.
5.3.2 For the word quit, quitting, and quit (compensation for past form) 500, 100 and 100 concordance lines were investigated respectively due to time limitation. More concordance lines should be investigated, and also at equal proportions for both semantic prosody and grammatical patterns.
5.3.3 Establishing the semantic prosody of quit and stop was done only on the lemma quit and stop but not with their word families.
5.3.4 The formality of contexts of quit and stop was not considered for this study since both quit and stop belong in AVL.

5.4 Conclusion on Semantic prosody and grammatical patterns
5.4.1 Semantic prosody
The word quit, together with its most frequent collocation, are found to be used mostly in contexts related to decision making with an overall neutral context, resulting in neutral connotations. Thus, quit has neutral semantic prosody. The word stop, together with its most frequent collocations, is found to be used in mostly in
contexts related to politics and decision making, in a relatively neutral context, resulting in neutral connotation. Thus, stop has neutral semantic prosody. It is concluded that both quit and stop have neutral semantic prosody.

5.4.2 Grammatical patterns
The word quit and stop cannot be used interchangeably since they do not share all grammatical patterns. Grammatical patterns that exist for stop but do not exist for quit include (1) passive structure, (2) past participle, (3) phrasal verbs, (4) base form as a noun, (5) adjective + noun, (6) and conditional present. Also, (7) compound noun form is common for stop but rare for quit. Finally, (8) the gerund and gerund phrase patterns are rare for stop but common for quit.

5.5 Recommendations for further studies
5.5.1 Near-synonyms related to the core meaning of quit and stop such as pause, cease, finish, and halt can be studied in a similar manner.
5.5.2 Data from other corpus, such as the British National Corpus (BNC) can be used to gain more collocations, context, connotation, and grammatical patterns for analysis, and may show British/American differentiations.
5.5.3 Formality and cross-sociolinguistics aspects can be included in the analysis in order to gain a wider range and perspective comparison.
5.5.4 An analysis using learner corpora could be completed as an error analysis of the synonymous words in question. This will include how English language learners use synonyms in certain contexts and can help identify common errors made by learners.
References
…….doi:10.1075/fol.2.1.03stu


EFL STUDENTS’ PERSPECTIVES OF A SELF-ACCESS LANGUAGE CENTER ON AUTONOMOUS ENGLISH LEARNING PROMOTION: A CASE STUDY OF A THAI UNIVERSITY

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Abstract
The rationale behind the study is to maximize the self-access language center (SALC) in a Thai university for the purposes of preparing learners for autonomous English learning. Thus, the study aims to grasp learners’ perspectives in order to find out the important elements of self-access that facilitate autonomous English language learning, and also explore learners’ perspectives on how the SALC facilitates autonomous learning. This research adopted mixed-method approach to address two research questions. Quantitative results indicated that the participants in this context considered the importance of various elements of self-access, which facilitates autonomous English language learning. These were learning materials, activities, learners’ perceptions of responsibility in learning, assistance from teachers, and different kinds of learning support such as advisory service, learner training, technology, supporting staff, self-access system and environment. Moreover, qualitative findings were found to support quantitative results, which indicated that the participants were found to view the SALC with the specified 15 elements of self-access based on Gardner and Miller’s (1999) theory as facilitating tool to enhance autonomous English language learning in two areas: 1) learners’ awareness of time management, 2) self-assessment as well as English language learning practices in four
areas: 1) providing a wide range of resources and pleasant learning environment, 2) helpful in the improvement of English skills, 3) offering opportunity of developing language learning practices, and 4) offering opportunity of exploring learning needs and preferences.

**Keywords**: Self-access language center, autonomous learning, elements of self-access, learners’ perspectives

1. Introduction

Successful foreign language learning depends on not only effective approach to teaching but also effective approach to learning. Autonomous learning has been recognized as approach to learning in which learners direct their own learning. That is to say, autonomous learners are capable of determining the learning objectives, defining the contents of learning and materials to achieve that goals, monitoring and evaluating learning progress (Holec, 1981; Boud, 1988; Little, 1991; Dam, 1995; Dickinson, 1994; Cotterall 1995, Littlewood 1999; Thanasoulas, 2000; Little, 2015). These processes of autonomous learning has been proven to be effective in the development of English competence. For example, Thai EFL learners’ English pronunciation was improved as they played active roles in learning (Boonkaew, 2018). Besides that, autonomous learning contributed to positive attitude, confidence and motivation towards language learning (Cotterall, 2000; Sophocleous, 2013). However, not all language learners are able to learn by themselves especially Thai learners. Most of the Thais still believe that it is the teachers’ roles in making decisions concerning content of teaching and learning and form of assessment (Rungwaraphong, 2012). To help learners become more independent in learning, self-access language center (SALC) has been set up as a practical means of promoting autonomous learning beyond the classroom context within educational institutions all over the world including Thailand (Sheerin, 1991; Cotterall, 1995; Gardner and Miller 1999; Benson, 2001; Morrison, 2008; Reinders, 2012; Mynard, 2016). Within SALCs, a variety of self-access learning materials, equipment, and other learner supports that correspond to individual differences in learning purposes, needs, and aptitudes are provided. Learners are given opportunity for decision-making concerning what they want to learn and how to learn. A research on autonomous learning indicated that the SALC developed autonomy in learners in which learners could set their learning goals and self-determine what resources they wanted to interact with although they were required to do so (Koyalan, 2009). Nonetheless, Thai learners particularly learners at university level paid fewer attention to autonomous English language learning in SALCs (Suriyatham, 2004; Noomura, 2009;
Darasawang, 2016). Autonomous learning research studies point out that learners need preparation and support for the development of autonomy in learning. In an attempt to make use of the SALC in the promotion of autonomous English language learning, the current study aims to find out the elements of self-access in which the learners consider important to facilitate their autonomous learning and also explore learners’ perspectives of the SALC on autonomous English promotion. Although several research studies on evaluating SALC in terms of learners’ attitudes, behaviors and practices have been widely spread carried out within the context of SALCs in many countries including in Thailand, there has not been enough research on the use of SALC particularly a study conducted within a specific context in a Thai university. It is hoped that the present study may help provide some insight into what needed to be further organized and equipped in the center, in order to facilitate autonomous English language learning among Thai EFL learners. The research questions of the current study are:

1. What are the elements of SALC that the learners consider important to facilitate their autonomous learning?
2. To what extent do the learners consider SALC facilitate autonomous learning?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Autonomous Learning and Foreign Language Learning

To learn a foreign language, the ultimate goal in which most language learners desire to achieve is being proficient in a target language and successful in using that language in appropriate context including speech situation. To accomplish these goals, the learners need to know how to learn a target language by themselves outside the classroom context. For example, it is vital to use a target language outside the classroom since it will provide the learners greater opportunities to practice using the language as well as develop their language proficiency without the assistance from a teacher (Cotterall, 2000). In foreign language learning, autonomous learning is an approach with an ability to help learners learn more productively. Benson (2001) asserted that autonomous learning is likely to make the learners more productive than a non-autonomous approach. In order to support Benson (2001), Little (2002) added that being successful in second language learning results from planning, monitoring and reflecting one’s own learning. As suggested by many scholars, it can be seen that autonomous learning is closely linked to a foreign language learning. Some research studies illustrate the connection between autonomous learning and foreign language learning which contributes to successful language learning. For example, the effectiveness of autonomous learning affects students’ learning attitudes as well as
comprehensive ability of English study (Gang, 2015); students’ language competence, positive attitudes towards learning, confidence and high motivation in language learning (Cotterall, 2000; Sophocleous, 2013).

2.2 Self-Access Language Learning and Self-Access Center
In other countries and Thailand, self-access language learning has been set up as a result of differences among learners and changes in language teaching methods and country’s educational policy (Sheerin, 1989; Office of National Education Commission, 2003; Phungphol, 2005; Morrison, 2008). In response to these effects, a unique learning environment known as a self-access center (SAC) has been introduced to educational institutes. Sturtridge (1992) described a SAC as “a system which makes materials available to language learners so that they can choose to work as they wish, usually without a teacher or with very limited teacher’s supports”. Reinders (2012) used the term SAC to refer to “learner-oriented language learning environments that encourage the development of learner autonomy. The SAC provides materials, activities and staff supports to help learners develop the skills that are necessary for taking control over the content, pace and method of their learning”. It is believed that self-access learning that takes place at a SAC helps learners become more aware of the growth of learner autonomy. According to Gardner and Miller (1999), the following diagram is the figure of interaction between learners and the elements of self-access.

Figure 2.1 Interaction between Learners and Elements of Self-Access
Context of the Study
The Language Center aims to offer learners with a wide range of resources and learning supports to learn English language within welcoming learning environment outside the classroom context. It is open from 10.00am to 06.00pm on weekdays. System of the Language Center is an open access, which is not integrated into any taught English courses. Thus, the learners can freely use the Language Center on their own time with neither doing assignments as determined by the teacher nor accumulating self-study hours as part of the course. According to the attendance list recorded from 2014-2018 academic years, number of the Language Center user visits was around 11,435.

The whole area of the Language Center is taken up with resources for language learning. The access section of the Language Center includes computer booth, study and office zones. The computer zone is equipped with four PCs booths with headphones. Students can learn English from CD-ROMs, E-Learning system (e.g., small private online course), and get access to the Internet. The study zone is taken up with small learning spaces where comfortable beanbags, tables, and chairs are provided for users for pleasant learning environment. Students can use commercial books with CD-ROMs, worksheets, English magazines, outside reading books, dictionary and English board games. In addition, a widescreen LCD TV which broadcasts satellite TV programs and offers Netflix programs, a video player and a stereo are supplied around this area. The rest of the Language Center area is taken up with office area.

In addition, the Language Center offers learners activities and learning supports. The activities in the Language Center focuses on improving learners’ English language skills such as the Language Clinic for writing, and encouraging students’ participation in language exchange activities such as conversation club, movies club, speech and singing contest. Apart from such activities, the Language Center also offers learning supports. These include a brief training to deepen understanding of functions of self-access language learning, consultation services which offer expert advice to individual learners who have language learning problem, and the student log prepared for learners to record their learning plan.

The Language Center has only one full-time staff who is available to help learners locate resources and facilities and advise them on learning materials. The Language Center is managed by the faculty and functions as an independent unit within the Faculty of Liberal Arts.
3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design
This research is a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative approach using questionnaires was employed to illustrate the average scores and the standard deviations of how important specified 15 element of self-access language learning are as well as to illustrate the frequencies and the percentages of the participants who use the Language Center.

Qualitative approach using semi-structured interview, in addition, was used to gain 10 learners’ perspectives on the extent to which the Language Center facilitate autonomous English language learning more comprehensively and insightfully than using either quantitative methods alone.

3.2 Data Collection
In the process of data collection employing questionnaire, the researcher distributed the questionnaire to the 54 participants, which were selected based on a purposive sampling. They were undergraduate students and had different genders, study programs, levels of English proficiency, frequency of the Language Center use, and the amount of time. The participants were required to rate how important each elements of self-access language learning is as well as to suggest what needed to be further provided in the part of open-ended question. The data for this research was collected in the second semester of 2017 fiscal year between April and May 2018.

After the questionnaire data collection, 10 out of 54 questionnaire respondents who visited the Language Center more than twice a week volunteered to participate in the interview. The data were audio-recording during the interviews.

3.3 Data Analysis
Responses to close-ended questions in the questionnaire were analyzed to illustrate the frequencies, the percentages, the average scores, and the standard deviations using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program. The collected data from responses to multiple choices which required the participants to provide their demographic data were interpreted to indicate the frequency and the percentage. Later, the data derived from responses to rating scale items on a Likert scale were interpreted to illustrate the mean scores and the standard deviations. Furthermore, the data collected from responses to open-ended question were analyzed using content analysis.
The qualitative data collected from the interview were analyzed using content analysis method to understand the topic being discussed more deeply (Mayring, 2000). The collected data were analyzed based on the process of transcribing and coding data, categorizing the data into relevant issues, and conceptualizing themes emerged.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Learners’ perspectives on the elements of self-access language learning considered to be important to facilitate autonomous learning

The first set of analyses examines the elements of self-access that the participants consider important to facilitate their autonomous English learning. The data were interpreted according to a five-level Likert item ranged from number 1 to 5, which is described as 1 = not important; 2 = slightly important; 3 = moderately important; 4 = important; and 5 = very important.

Table 4.1 Overall Elements of the Self-Access Language Learning Considered Important to Facilitate Autonomous Learning in the Language Center

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Mean scores</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Advising</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Materials development</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Learners</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Other learners (peers)</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Activities</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Teachers</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Self-access system</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Staff training</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Evaluation</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Learner Training</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Management of self-access materials and facilities</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Assessment</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Materials</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Technology</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Learner supports</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>Important</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 4.1, quantitative data show that all these 15 elements of self-access were considered as important. Also, the data show that advising was the element of self-access which had highest mean score (4.29), while learner supports was rated lowest mean score (3.83). A type of advising focused on learning methods was rated as important (Interpreted mean score = 3.51-4.50). The interview data were
found to correspond with the questionnaire data. The opinions indicated four participants’ expectation of the Language Center to provide the relevant advises. As the following quotes illustrate:

I have problem with speaking practice, so I expect language support from the Language Center. I also need to be motivated by the Language Center people to use the language in real life, and to give me some feedback and tips.

Advising is necessary for every students. It is important to offer learners advice on language use more often in Language Center. About provided learner journal, umm…it could be used to measure to what extent students made use for study plan.

Table 4.2 The results of the participants’ perceptions of some elements of self-access to facilitate autonomous learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Mean scores</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learners</td>
<td>A learner performs the role of self-motivator who can encourage one’s self in independent English learning.</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>Very Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>Meeting English native speakers Conversation Club</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>Very Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>English movies</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>Very Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English songs</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>Very Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English TV or radio programs</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>Very Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English dictionaries</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>Moderately Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English research articles</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>Moderately Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners</td>
<td>The Language</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>Moderately Important</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As the data shown in Table 4.2, some items of each element of self-access were rated ranging from moderately important to very important.

Among five self-access elements, the questionnaire data indicate that the participants considered roles of learners as self-motivator in autonomous learning as very important (Interpreted mean score = 4.51-5.00). The interview data were found to be consistent with the questionnaire data. The opinions indicate some important roles of autonomous learners especially being self-motivator and learning organizer. Some advanced-level participants mentioned that students should primarily motivate themselves to study, set achievable goals of learning and keep practicing on their own, in order to achieve language learning.

In relation to activities, the questionnaire data report that the participants considered Meeting English native speakers and Conversation Club as very important (Interpreted mean score = 4.51-5.00). Consistently, the collected data from responses to the open-ended question in the questionnaires and interview data were found to relate to the questionnaire data. The opinions indicate the participants’ expectation of the Language Center to organize activities which encouraged language exchange community more often. Most of the participants requested weekly English Conversation Club by meeting English native speakers to increase motivation in English language use as well as to improve awareness of self-correction during activities, which were necessary for autonomous language learning.
According to learning materials, the questionnaire data show that the three types of materials (i.e. English movies, songs, and TV or radio programs) were rated as very important (Interpreted mean score = 4.51-5.00), while another two types (i.e. English dictionaries and research articles) were rated as moderately important (Interpreted mean score = 2.51-3.50). The data derived from responses to the open-ended question in the questionnaires and interview data were found to be consistent with the questionnaire data. Some of the participants indicated that authentic materials such as movies and music were materials of choice for self-improvement in listening and pronunciation skills, which are available and accessible for learning on their own time. However, none of the participants suggested further provision of English dictionaries and research articles.

Lastly, the questionnaire data indicate that a type of learner support for developing autonomous English learning, including the provision of learner journals that can be used to plan self-access learning such as learning goals and contents of learning, and record progresses and evaluations of learning was rated as moderately important (Interpreted mean score = 2.51-3.50). According to interview data, the opinion of an interviewee was found to support the questionnaire data. She viewed that it was slightly important to provide learners with learner journals as writing a learning log did not encourage self-reflection about learning, if students were not willing to do so; however, she realized that it was the method that a teacher encouraged learners to plan their learning on their own.

To conclude, the participants considered the importance of various elements of self-access which facilitates autonomous English learning particularly learners’ role as a self-motivator in learning, activities, learning materials, and other learning support. The results, in addition, pointed out what needed to be ongoing provided and developed for autonomous English learning promotion in the Language Center.

4.2 Learners’ perspectives on the extent to which the self-access language center facilitated autonomous English language learning

Qualitative findings were found to support quantitative results, which indicated that the participants were found to view the Language Center with the specified 15 elements of self-access based on Gardner and Miller’s (1999) theory as facilitating tool to enhance autonomous English language learning in two areas: 1) learners’ awareness of time management, 2) self-assessment. In addition to the enhancement of autonomous English language learning, the Language Center also facilitated English language learning practices in four areas: 1) providing a wide range of resources and
pleasant learning environment, 2) helpful in the improvement of English skills, 3) offering opportunity of developing language learning practices, and 4) offering opportunity of exploring learning needs and preferences.

4.2.1 The Language Center assisted the participants to become autonomous learner

Based on the principle of autonomous learning which requires learners to set learning goals; select preferred materials based on their learning strategies and styles; seek opportunities for practice according to pace and time; evaluate learning on their own. Data from the students’ interview transcriptions indicated that the Language Center promoted autonomous English learning in two areas: 1) time management, and 2) self-assessment. A participants’ response indicated that she believed self-access learning at the Language Center helped develop time management skill. As the following quotes illustrate:

I feel that self-learning in the Language Center encourages me to manage time because I have limited time of learning in the center. For example, I spend two hours completing my homework assignment, and I spend another one hour left working on some of English materials such as watching English movies.

In addition to time management, data from the interview revealed that the Language Center encouraged learners’ awareness of self-assessment to some extent. It was found that the participants recognized the importance of self-assessment in autonomous English learning. They used assessment materials available in the Language Center to assess their language learning outcome on their own. For example, two participants mentioned that they chose commercially published books available in the Language Center to assess achievement in reading and grammar, and occasionally spent time on peer-review of the work with their classmate in the Language Center. The other participant elaborated that she reviewed her English translation homework assignment and checked an error using my personal laptop and the Language Center’s computer on her own, and sometimes ask for teachers’ advice out of class. Moreover, the following opinion involves the approach to vocabulary learning assessment using facilities offered by the Language Center.

My mom asks me to memorize and repeat vocabulary every day. I feel that these ways are boring, thus I try new way to learn English vocabulary by listening to the music on Youtube. If I find an unknown word, I look it up in an online dictionary using a computer with
internet access at the Language Center. By doing this, I can improve my vocabulary.

Despite self-assessment being aware by some students, the interview data revealed that more than half of the interviewees lacked knowledge and confidence to assess their learning. To illustrate, few participants seemed not certain about how to assess their learning progress on their own and had neither idea to develop their own method of assessment nor the criteria for assessment. Moreover, the participants’ perceptions of assessment indicated that learning progress was measured by the results of the tests and grades, and it also involves discussion on the tests or examinations with their friends. Some of the participants commented that self-assessment was unreliable.

So far, findings of the study summarize that the participants recognized the importance of the Language Center as a facilitating tool in which learners could use for autonomous English learning. Obviously, the participants were become more aware of time management and self-assessment, which are learning skills necessary for the success in language learning.

4.2.2 The Language Center facilitated language learning.

Additionally, the study findings pointed out that the Language Center facilitated English language learning practices in four areas: 1) providing a wide range of resources and pleasant learning environment, 2) helpful in the improvement of English skills, 3) offering opportunity of developing language learning practices, and 4) offering opportunity of exploring learning needs and preferences.

4.2.2.1 Providing resources and pleasant learning environment

The interview data revealed that majority of the participants learned English by using the Language Center resources such as material, activities and technology. In addition, it was found that pleasant environment was one of the promoting factor in facilitating language learning practices. The following are some comments of the interviewees:

Previously, I was afraid of self-access learning at the Language Center as I believed that I had to use English to communicate with a Thai or foreign teacher. However, my attitude changed since I first came in to read outside reading books. I realize that the center has only one Thai staff, welcoming environment, and various resources. The staff is friendly and helps advice to select appropriate reading materials. Next occasion, I come back the center voluntarily, I am getting more
familiar with self-access learning, and I get more access to English materials. I feel that my attitude toward English change a little bit because of the Language Center.

4.2.2.2 Contributing to improvement of English skills

Participants’ responses from the interviews showed that self-access language learning at the Language Center supported them to improve English skill and knowledge, including reading skill, vocabulary and writing knowledge. Some comments are illustrated below.

I feel that I have more concentration on English learning when working in the Language Center. Moreover, I noticed the improvement in reading skills since I read TIME magazine available in the Language Center, as well as improvement in critical thinking since I played an English board games provided in the center.

4.2.2.3 Offering opportunity of developing language learning practices

According to the interview data, students’ responses indicated that some of the participants realized that English learning was not necessarily limited to the formal classroom and textbooks. Additionally, they viewed that self-access language learning is available more for studying than attendance of class, which is limited. Some comments are expressed in the following quote:

I think materials provided in the Language Center help me learn English easily on my own time. I get access to the Language Center materials more easily than I get access to classroom materials because I have an English class once or twice a week.

4.2.2.4 Offering opportunity of exploring learning needs and preferences

The interview data suggested that majority of the participants had opportunity of exploring their own learning needs and preferences after they used and worked on resource in the Language Center such. There were some comments of the participants on material useful for language learning such as games, research articles, leaflets and posters written in English and English quotations. The following are some comments from the interviewees:

According to my learning style, I do not think that game-based learning can improve my English skills, thus I rarely pick up board games available in the center for learning. However, it might be
working well for other learners. Personally, I believe that learning needs to be separated from entertainment as the learning requires concentration and discipline.

I think that the Language Center should prepare leaflets and posters written in English for the Language Center users. This should be done to motivate the users to learn English in natural way. When the users do not understand the message, they will try to find out its meanings. But, I do not think that workshop is an interesting activity.

Discussion
The present study found that the participants were found to view the Language Center with the specified 15 elements of self-access based on Gardner and Miller’s (1999) theory, for example, learning materials activities, learners’ roles in learning, assistance from teachers and different kinds of learning support such as advisory service, learner training, technology, supporting staff, and self-access system and environment as a facilitating tool to enhance autonomous English language learning as well as English language learning practices.

As maintained by Sheerin, 1991; Cotterall, 1995; Gardner and Miller 1999; Benson, 2001; Morrison, 2008; Reinders, 2012; Mynard, 2016, a self-access language center is an important facility beyond the classroom context in which learners can use to practice autonomous learning. From this study, it is evident that the Language Center within a Thai university context contributed to autonomous language learning promotion in terms of encouraging learners’ awareness of time management and self-assessment, which are learning skills necessary for the success in language learning. The findings of the study are partly consistent with, for instance, Jenwitthayayot and Tepsuriwon (2016)’s study, which indicated that self-access language learning in a self-access center improved learners’ sense of responsibility as it met their interest, and thus it encouraged the learners to manage time to practice English each week and solve some learning problems on their own ways. As stated by Sheerin (1989), self-access learning addresses differences among learners such as learning habits, personality, motivation, and learning purposes. Findings of the present study also suggested that self-access learning within the Language Center encouraged learners’ awareness of self-assessment as the learners had more exposure to a various kinds of assessment material and learning supports that met their learning purposes. This benefited them to develop methods of self-assessment.

Not only did the Language Center facilitate autonomous English learning, it was also a facilitating tool for English language learning. According to Morrison (2008),
self-access language center plays a major role in helping learners develop not only independent learning skills but also language skills at the same time. The present study found that the Language Center was beneficial to English proficiency improvement of the learners. Some participants believed that it benefited learners to increase vocabulary, writing, and reading knowledge. This finding was also reported by Koyalan (2009) in that 85% of the participants in the study revealed that the self-access language center helped them develop their English, and thus they got grade increase in grammar, reading, listening and vocabulary.

Furthermore, the present study also discovered that materials available in the Language Center and its environment facilitated learners’ English learning. The participants mentioned that they acquired English with the help of the Language Center resources such as books, games, movie DVDs and online English course. The Language Center, therefore, was partly seen as a resource center. The literature suggests that self-access system is flexible (Gardner and Miller, 1999; Morrison, 2008). Some authors reported that the participants visited the center to find something to use in English learning, thus the center played another role as learning resource center (Morrison, 2008). In addition to materials, environment in the Language Center also facilitated English learning. The participants suggested that the Language Center provided pleasant learning atmosphere, which encouraged English language learning. This finding also accords with the finding of Reinders’ (2000) study whose participants indicated that a quiet atmosphere in self-access language center was a promoting factor in self-access learning.

Additionally, it is evident that the Language Center offered learners opportunities for developing language learning practices. Some of the learners realized that English learning was not necessarily limited to the formal classroom and textbooks. They found that self-access learning was available more for studying than attendance of class, which was limited. The finding of the study echoes the finding of Koyalan’s (2009) study whose around 70% participants agreed that self-access the Language Center encouraged them to change their learning methods. Abidin et. al (2012) also concluded that self-access the Language Center with the provision of self-access materials absolutely helped motivate students to learn English on their own and the students displayed positive attitudes towards independent English learning in the self-access language center.

Lastly, it was found that the learners in the study had opportunities to explore their own learning needs and preferences when self-access learning. Sheerin (1991) and Cotterall (1995) mentioned that self-access center is designed to meet different
learners with different needs. Within a learning environment in a self-access center, each learners can independently interact with a wide range of resources by using their preferred learning styles, needs, strategies, interests and learning purposes, hence this helps motivate learners to perform their own needs analysis and decision-making concerning what they want to learn and how to learn (Sheerin, 1989; Brown, 1994; Gardner & Miller, 1997, 1999).

5. Conclusion
This study attempts to capture learners’ perspectives of a self-access language center on autonomous English learning promotion. In this study, the results indicated 15 important elements of self-access in which the learners considered important to facilitate their autonomous learning. In addition, the researcher gained a clear understanding from learners’ perspectives of how the self-access language center facilitates autonomous learning. Findings revealed that the self-access language center functioned to provide choices and resources for learning, and thus the learners had more opportunities to exercise their decision-making ability by selecting materials and working on them on their own. By doing so, it encourages the learners to determine goals and learning strategies. When the learners are involved in decision-making process, they are gradually developing autonomous learning and English language proficiency.

5.1 Recommendations and Future Considerations
The present study attempts to grasp learners’ perspectives of a self-access language center on autonomous English learning promotion. Firstly, the present study might help guide the writers of such research articles in autonomous learning to develop a self-access language center. In addition, it might serve as a valuable reference in considering the integration of autonomous learning course into curriculum in order to encourage learners to find out how to develop autonomous learning skills in and out of classroom, and thus a self-access language center may become one of a useful facility that the learners choose to foster autonomous learning.
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LEARNER AUTONOMY OF THAI SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS TAKING ONLINE ENGLISH COURSES: A MIXED-METHOD STUDY

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Abstract
In this digital age, the concept of learner autonomy and the application of technology in learning management play a crucial role in reforming Thailand’s education. An adequate degree of autonomy is required for students to be successful in online learning. Thus, the present study aimed to investigate the degree of autonomy of Thai secondary school students who study English through online courses as well as to identify the potential ways to encourage their learner autonomy. Data collection was carried out using questionnaires distributed to 120 online student participants and semi-structured interviews with four students as well as two tutors to obtain in-depth data from both perspectives. The research findings revealed that the online student participants, on average, had a high degree of learner autonomy. Finally, the study pointed out correspondences and mismatches between students’ and tutors’ views on autonomy development in the context of online English instruction.

Keywords: learner autonomy, online learning, degree of learner autonomy, students’ needs for support, practices/roles of tutors
1. Introduction

The importance of English has led to major reforms in Thailand education system. According to Hiranburana et al. (2017), the Basic Education Core Curriculum 2008 has required students to study English as a compulsory subject at the primary school level (Grades 1–6), and recently the Ministry of Education has announced the use of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) as the standard for all levels of education. Moreover, with the advent of Thailand 4.0 economic model, the education is required to keep up with the changing behaviors of learners in the innovative society. The application of technology in learning management and the promotion of autonomous learning have become the significant factors for a successful implementation of Thailand 4.0. In this aspect, Puncreobutr (2016) and Buasuwan (2018) noted that learning management should make the most of new technology in order to equip learners with the twenty-first century skills. In respect of autonomous learning, Viracharoenkit (n.d.) expressed his strong belief in reforming Thailand’s education in the 4.0 era that, “Schools and teachers should collaborate to change the old way of teaching … Most importantly, we should not adhere to the chalk and talk method. Let the student control their own learning and the knowledge discovered will be more meaningful to them”.

Even though there are many ways to apply modern technology to education in the innovative society, further investigation should be conducted so as to find the effectiveness of the specific technology in promoting autonomous learning. On the one hand, technologies can encourage learner autonomy as they are designed for autonomous use. On the other hand, there is a gap in the link between educational technologies and autonomy as Benson (2011) mentioned that “... educational technologies tend to presuppose autonomy, rather than foster it” (p. 17). Sometimes, the less successful learners, who undertake the out-of-school Internet-based foreign language learning, were found to lack the necessary skills such as knowing how to choose the appropriate keywords for a search on the Internet, or how to assess the quality of the learning resources they find (Bailley, 2010). Thus, provision of access to language and language learning opportunities through new technologies such as self-access, language advising, and distance learning has been changed in focus from the use of educational technologies as providers of content to the design of technologically-enhanced environments for self-directed learning (Benson, 2011).

Online learning is a main type of Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) or Computer-assisted Language Learning (CALL) which is widely exploited in Thailand education system. According to the previous research on learner autonomy of Thai distance English language learners, Vanijdee (2003) pointed out that student-centeredness, a predominant factor of learner autonomy, can be set up through online
learning because it provides more opportunities for learners to access to independent and collaborative language learning. However, it is not easy to encourage learner autonomy through online learning. If learners are not motivated and willing to learn by themselves, their capacity to learn autonomously will not be promoted, and certainly the learning objectives will not be achieved. Some researchers found that students’ attitudes towards online learning are a strong predictor of their benefits from learning, and have an impact on their success (Akbari, Eghtesad, & Simons, 2012; Cinkara & Bagceci, 2013).

Secondary school students nowadays are highly motivated to learn English and closely engage with technology. With reference to the National Scheme of Education B.E. 2560-2574, Thai students must be well-rounded; they are required to develop learning skills, self-management skills, problem-solving skills, social skills, language proficiency, and ICT literacy (Cleesuntorn, 2013). Thus, most Thai students, especially those in the secondary school level, are aware that they not only need to build a strong foundation of English but also need to foster the capacity to take charge of their own learning so as to prepare for higher education. Teenagers or students at this level are also known as ‘Generation Z (Gen Z)’, the generation that has Internet technology available at a young age (Prensky, 2001). Gen Z tends to embrace the learning environments where they can be directly involved in the learning process, and expects the easy access on-demand services that are available at anytime (Kozinsky, 2017). The expectations of Gen Z and the requirements of the National Scheme of Education relatively correspond with each other as they underline the importance of learner autonomy together with the influence of educational technology. Nevertheless, their voices tend to be marginalized in the context of online learning. Accordingly, researching learner autonomy in this group of students will be able to point out how online courses can be improved to meet their learning expectations. The following research questions were constructed:

1) What degree of autonomy are the online English language learners at?
2) How can online learners be supported to become more autonomous?
3) How do online tutors encourage learners to develop their autonomy?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definitions of Learner Autonomy

The idea of autonomy became prominent in language teaching since many of the autonomous learning projects had been carried out within the Council of Europe’s Modern Languages Project in the 1970s (Benson, 2003). Holec (1981), who played a key role in this project, provided the first definition of autonomy in learning as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” which means “to have, and to hold, the
responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning” (p. 3).

Holec’s definition implies that autonomous learners must possess three main qualities in order to take full responsibility for the learning process, which are metacognitive strategies that enable learners to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning, learners’ self-management skills and motivations, as well as the ability to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations (Little, 1996).

Moreover, Littlewood’s (1996) identified an autonomous person as “one who has an independent capacity to make and carry out the choices which govern his or her actions” (p. 427). As suggested by Littlewood (1996), this capacity consists of two components which are ability and willingness:

*Ability* depends on possessing both knowledge about the alternatives from which choice have to be made and necessary skills for carrying out whatever choices seem most appropriate. *Willingness* depends on having both the motivation and confidence to take responsibility for the choices required (p. 97).

As can be seen, the two main components that construct the concept of learner autonomy are capacity and willingness. In this study, the concept of learner autonomy is identified based on two central aspects: learners’ capacity to play an active role in the learning process and learners’ readiness and attitudes towards autonomous learning. Consequently, the definition of learner autonomy operationalized in the present study refers to the learner’s capacity to control over or take charge of his/her own learning. This capacity includes metacognitive strategies to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning, willingness to take learning responsibility, self-confidence to learn autonomously, and motivation in learning (Little, 2007; Littlewood, 1996).

### 2.2 Degree of Autonomy

With attempts to scaffold the concept of learner autonomy, a number of scholars in language learning and teaching have operationalized the notion that ‘there is degree of autonomy’. Littlewood (1996) stated that the levels of autonomy are reflected from the levels that learners behave when they make independent choices in their learning. Considering as a learner autonomy continuum, at the top are learners who make high level of choices, and thus they can decide whether to operate the learning activity or how to determine its direction. In contrast, at the bottom are those who make low level of choices that only control some specific performance of the activity, and therefore the level of autonomy is less than the former one.

In the context of distance learning in Thailand, Vanijdee (2003) also categorized the levels and the qualities of autonomous learners in terms of self-sufficient distance language learners and dynamic distance language learners. The
minimum level of autonomy is defined as the self-sufficient learners, referring to those students whose goal in learning English is to pass the examination to complete the requirements of the curriculum, and thus they are able to learn English by the application self-instructional materials. Conversely, dynamic learners refer to those who can be responsible for studying at a distance as well as extend their study and make use of a variety of resources in a wider context. It was found that Thai distance language learners had different average degree of autonomy, but over half of them were categorized into the self-sufficient group.

Swatevacharkul (2006) also studied the autonomy degree of Thai undergraduate students studying through web-based instruction and revealed that the students had high motivation while their self-confidence to learn independently was at a limited level. Consequently, she suggested that the teacher as a facilitator and counsellor can gradually give more responsibility to students until they can take charge of their learning independently.

2.3 Teacher-Related Factors in Language Teaching and Learning

2.3.1 Teacher Roles in Autonomous Learning Context

A learner-centered approach is a predominant factor in the autonomous learning context. In this approach, learners are actively involved in their own learning processes. It does not mean that teachers become redundant in the learning process. Therefore, learner autonomy can be promoted by transferring responsibility from the teacher to the learner. This transfer may include setting goals, selecting strategies and evaluating progress. Obviously, awareness of these ways plays an important role in promoting learner autonomy. If the responsibility transfer cannot take place, learners will only become ‘consumers’ of language (Cotterall, 2000; Dafei, 2007).

Indeed, the teacher can make most of the decisions at the beginning of the learning process, and then gradually guide the learners to develop the skills they need to begin taking control of their own learning processes (Nunan, 2003; Dam, 1995). Benson (2003) elaborated on this point that the steps that follow are varied, depending on the results of those first steps taken by the teacher and the learners. He also proposed five potential principles the teacher should follow so as to foster learner autonomy as follows:

1. Be actively involved in the students’ learning.
2. Provide a range of learning options and resources.
3. Offer choices and decision-making opportunities.
4. Support the learners.
5. Encourage reflection.
As has been noted, the teacher’s role is neither merely a director of the learning process nor a source of knowledge to be poured into the learners’ heads. Accordingly, Voller (1997) pointed out that in the autonomous learning context, the teacher may act as a *facilitator* who initiates and supports decision-making processes, a *counselor* who responds to the ongoing needs of individuals, and a *resource* who makes his or her knowledge and expertise available to the learners when it is needed.

### 2.3.2 Teaching Methodology

In the last century, the *Grammar-Translation Method* was prevalent in many contexts where English was taught as a second language. However, it was challenged in the 1950s and 1960s by the *Audio-Lingual Method* — the first method that was established based on ‘behaviorism’, which viewed language development as the formation of habits, and based on a theory of language, which was called ‘structural linguistics’ (Nunan, 2003). This method is still popular today, as can be seen in a variety of drill-based techniques and exercises.

Nevertheless, Nunan (2003) pointed out that behaviorism and structural linguistics were later criticized for being inadequate representations of both the learning process and the nature of language. Consequently, Methodologists developed the *Cognitive Code Learning* approach, which aimed to promote language learning as an active mental process rather than a process of habit formation. The grammar was brought back into a focal point of teaching, and classroom activities were designed in a way that encouraged learners to work out grammar rules for themselves through inductive reasoning.

Considering which method is better, Nunan (2003) indicated that it depends on the language point being taught and the learning styles of the students. For induction, it requires greater mental effort for learners to process the language, and that is likely to result in more effective learning in the longer term. However, the disadvantage of the inductive method is that it takes more time for learners to come to an understanding of the language point than the deductive method.

As can be seen from the body of literature, certain methods and techniques have been criticized, which reflects that language instruction is never a stable process; it needs improvement and development. The institution and the teachers organizing the online courses, therefore, need to consider the significant factors such as students’ characteristics, learning styles, needs and interests in order to provide them with an effective language instruction.
2.4 Learner-Related Factors in Language Teaching and Learning

2.4.1 Learner Roles in Autonomous Learning Context

To get back to the original definition of autonomy by Holec (1981), autonomous learners are those who can take charge of their own learning. This means that they have the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning (Holec; as cited in Little, 1991), i.e. determining the objectives, defining the contents and progressions, selecting methods and techniques to be used, monitoring the procedure of acquisition properly speaking, and evaluating what has been acquired. (p. 7)

In the online seminar about learner autonomy organized by Cambridge Assessment English, Warwick and Booth (2017) stated that autonomous learners need to be able to set goals for learning both in and outside the classroom, select an appropriate learning process to follow in order to achieve the goals, select and use learning materials and tools, select and use appropriate techniques, and finally reflect on their own process and performance. This concept corresponds with the responsibility of autonomous learners proposed by Holec (1981). Moreover, Warwick and Booth (2017) indicated that these processes should be implemented with the teacher’s support.

As for the learners to be able to perform these processes effectively, Wenden (1998) also described seven main attributes that characterize autonomous learners as those who:

1. have insight into their own language learning styles and preferences as well as the nature of the task itself;
2. take an active approach to learning task. They select learning objectives for themselves and deliberately involve themselves in the language they are learning;
3. are willing to take risks. They are willing to appear foolish sometimes in order to communicate, using any means at their disposal to convey meaning;
4. are good guessers. They use clues effectively and make legitimate inferences;
5. are prepared to attend to form as well as to content;
6. actively attempt to develop the target language into a separate reference system and try to think in the target language as soon as possible;
7. have a tolerant and outgoing approach to the target language.

As many scholars argued, it is not easy for learners to develop autonomy. The teachers should adjust their roles to suit the learners’ needs and preferences in their learning. However, studying through online courses entails a number of constraints; one of them is that the interaction between learners and tutors is not face-to-face. It is
therefore worth investigating what learners need to be supported in online learning and how online tutors can encourage learners to develop their autonomy.

### 2.4.2 Learner Personalities

A number of personality factors have been proposed as likely to affect second language learning (Lightbown and Spada, 2013). Considering the situation when Thai learners studying English through online courses, they typically sit in front of the computer, noting down what the tutor is teaching and doing what is guided such as completing exercises, or even trying to pronounce some words. These actions are obviously associated with learners’ inhibition and anxiety.

**Inhibition** means a feeling of embarrassment or worry that prevents someone from saying or doing something. Guiora, Beit-Hallahami, Brannon, Dull, and Scovel (1972) called this factor as a component of ‘language ego’ which refers to the very personal, egoistic nature of second language acquisition. Thus, it has been suggested that inhibition discourages learners to take risks, which is the significant behavior for progress in language learning (Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

**Learner anxiety** refers to feelings of worry, nervousness, and stress that many students experience when learning a second language. According to Lightbown and Spada (2013), anxiety can interfere with the learning process.

The aforementioned factors appear to correspond with the *Affective Filter* hypothesis by Krashen (1982). A number of research studies has confirmed that there is the relationship between a variety of affective variables and learners’ success in second language acquisition. As concluded by Krashen (1982), most of those studies were conducted based on one of these three categories:

1. **Motivation** — Learners who have high motivation in second language learning generally perform better in language acquisition. Indeed, it is usually, but not always, related to “integrative motivation”.
2. **Self-confidence** — Learners who have high self-confidence and a good self-image tend to outperform those who have low self-confidence in second language acquisition.
3. **Anxiety** — Low anxiety is likely to contribute to second language acquisition, whether it is measured as personal or classroom anxiety.

Consequently, this hypothesis implies that the goals of teaching and learning should not only include supplying comprehensible input, but also creating a situation that encourages a low filter (Krashen, 1982). It can also be applied to the context of online learning. In order to facilitate the students’ acquisition of the target language, the teachers or tutors should be able to provide input and help make it comprehensible in a low anxiety situation.
3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

The population in this study was 120 secondary school students who were studying the online English courses offered by a private language institution in Bangkok, Thailand. In order to meet the research objectives, the convenience sampling method was applied to select the participants due to the fact that they were willing to cooperate in the study and were accessible. Additionally, four students out of 120 were selected for interviews. Their genders, educational levels and durations of studying online courses were varied, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Ethnographic Information of the Student Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Ethnographic Information</th>
<th>Duration of Studying Online Courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Educational Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Upper Secondary (Matthayom 4-6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Upper Secondary (Matthayom 4-6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Lower Secondary (Matthayom 1-3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Lower Secondary (Matthayom 1-3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second group is two tutors who are responsible for teaching online English courses in secondary school level. Their ethnographic information were illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2
Ethnographic Information of the Tutor Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tutor</th>
<th>Ethnographic Information</th>
<th>Duration of Teaching English through Online Courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Teaching Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Lower Secondary (Matthayom 1-3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2 Data Collection

Since this study exploited both quantitative and qualitative methods, the data collection procedures were divided into two phases. In the first phase, a questionnaire survey was conducted 120 secondary school students who were studying English through online courses offered by a private language institution at the Bangkok branch. The questionnaire in this study was a 4-point Likert scale adapted from two previous research studies: the Questionnaire on Readiness for Learner Autonomy and Learning Approaches (QRLALA) by Swatevacharkul (2010) and the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire (for students) by Joshi (2011). This quantitative instrument mainly aimed to investigate the autonomy degree of the online students and pinpoint the characteristic of learner autonomy that should be encouraged.

In the second phase, data about the students’ needs for support in online learning and the tutors’ instructional practices were elicited through semi-structured interviews. The process for the interview began by informal talk with the students about their feelings, experiences, and problems that they have when studying online English courses. Then, the researcher developed the interview guides for students and tutors, consisting of a list of questions and topics which needed to be covered during the conversation. Each participant took part in the interview session for approximately 15-20 minutes. All interviews were proceeded in Thai so as to ensure that all participants were able to express themselves clearly, precisely, and explicitly. The interviews were also audio-recorded for transcription and analysis.

3.3 Data Analysis

As the present study was conducted in a mixed-method survey design, the collected data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Results from the 4-point Likert scale questionnaire regarding the participants’ readiness for learner autonomy were analyzed by descriptive statistics to find the degree of learner autonomy. As for scoring purposes, the positive statements were
given weights of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively whereas the negative statements (Item 6 and 7) were given weights of 1, 2, 3 and 4.

The evaluation criteria of the questionnaire results were as follows:
- 1.00 - 1.75 means the degree of learner autonomy was ‘very low’.
- 1.76 - 2.50 means the degree of learner autonomy was ‘low’.
- 2.51 - 3.25 means the degree of learner autonomy was ‘high’.
- 3.26 - 4.00 means the degree of learner autonomy was ‘very high’.

The IBM SPSS Statistics program was used to compute mean scores and standard deviation (SD). The data were illustrated in tables and reported in details so as to identify certain characteristics of learner autonomy that needs to be improved.

Interview findings from students’ and tutors’ perspectives were transcribed and analyzed by thematic analysis. The researcher listened to the audio recordings and read the transcripts in order to identify, organize, and report themes found within the data set. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the thematic analysis is a highly flexible approach that can be modified for the needs of many studies, providing a rich and detailed account of data. In addition, the interview data were interpreted and reported in form of quotations to support and clarify the research findings.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Degree of Learner Autonomy of the Online Student Participants

The analyzed data from the questionnaire survey showed that the grand mean (M) was 3.17 and the Standard Deviation (SD) was 0.80. According to the evaluation criteria, the range from 2.51 to 3.25 suggests the high level of learner autonomy; therefore, learner autonomy of the online student participants, on average, was at the high degree. In addition, the mean on each characteristic and the overall degree of learner autonomy were presented in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of Learner Autonomy</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Degree of Learner Autonomy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to take learning responsibility</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence to learn autonomously</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As can be seen from Table 1, the overall degree of learner autonomy was measured at the high level (M = 3.17, SD = 0.80). Among all the characteristics of learner autonomy, motivation is the outstanding one as it was rated at the very high level (M = 3.46, SD = 0.71). Therefore, it is important to note that the participants had very high motivation to learn English. Their capacity to learn autonomously was high (M = 3.20, SD = 0.70), and they also had a high level of willingness to take learning responsibility (M = 3.14, SD = 0.71). Interestingly, the students’ self-confidence to learn autonomously obtained the least mean score (M = 2.78, SD = 0.92); however, the range of this characteristic is still at the high level according to the evaluation criteria.

The findings were similar to Swatevacharkul (2006)’s research which found that Thai students had high motivation to learn English, but limited degree of self-confidence to learn independently. The fact that the students heavily lean on the teachers may be influenced by the traditional education system, cultural values and norms in Thailand where the teacher is the authority who controls learning. Then, the students tend to be familiar with teacher-dependent learning habits and seem to be unconcerned about the ability to initiate learning by themselves. Accordingly, the teachers need to adjust their role and teaching approach to be more learner-centered in order to develop the students’ self-confidence to learn autonomously.

4.2 Students’ Needs and Tutors’ Practices Concerning Comprehension in Online Learning

From the interviews, it was found that the online students have a major concern over the problem of comprehension due to the limited opportunity to ask for clarification from the tutors. Since the nature of online learning involves self-pacing, the first thing that all students do when they do not understand what the teacher is explaining is to replay certain pieces of information.

“If I do not understand or cannot catch up on some parts, I usually pause the video and go back to the point again”. (Student A)
Correspondingly, the tutors themselves tried to clarify what they are teaching by taking time to elaborate any challenging points, giving examples to clarify the points, and using quizzes to check students’ comprehension.

“If there are some language points that may be challenging for the students, I try to explain it clearly and comprehensively... Yes, I would rather take time for that”. (Tutor X)

“In terms of explanation, I put the emphasis on giving examples”. (Tutor Y)

“To check the students’ understanding, I normally set some quizzes or comprehension questions. But most of the time I use quizzes with multiple choices so that the students will be able to know why some choices are wrong and why the other one is correct, as I can explain the rules in details right away in the video”. (Tutor Y)

Even though the tutor’s inductive teaching method of using examples, exercises and quizzes can encourage the students’ thinking process, it may not work well with those who have low language proficiency. Another arising problem is that some students may be able to comprehend the points, but some may not.

“Although I pause the video and pay attention to what the teacher is explaining, I cannot comprehend the lesson anyway”. (Student D)

As a result, Student B, C and D reported that they had to seek help from their friends and the teacher at school, and sometimes, for Student D, his friend could not give an answer or explanation either. Moreover, it was found that Student A and C also searched for additional explanation on the Internet, but the tutors did not report that they suggest websites or Internet resources for the students to refer to.

“I use the keyword to search and read online”. (Student A)

“I note down the information that the tutor demonstrates in the video, and then search for additional explanation on the Internet”. (Student C)

Such findings agree with the principle proposed by Benson (2003) that the teacher should support the student’s learning approach by providing a range of resources in order to promote the development of learner autonomy. Finally, the students indicated the needs for online communicative channels to contact the tutors, such as an instant messenger or a web-broad with quick response.

“If there is a chat system, I will expect to receive an answer from the tutor within one week... But it would be great if the tutor could shortly respond on that day. For example, I send a question in the morning, and the tutor answers in the evening”. (Student B)
“On the web-board, other students who are studying the same course have a chance to learn and get the answer if they do not understand the same point”. (Student A)

This implies that the online tutors should also assume the role as a resource who makes his or her knowledge and expertise available to the learners when it is needed (Voller, 1997).

4.3 Students’ Needs and Tutors’ Practices Concerning Motivation in Learning English through Online Courses

Students’ motivation is another significant factor that should be taken into account. From the informal talk with the students, two of them reported that they sometimes feel unmotivated to study the online English courses. Student B, whose educational level is upper secondary, revealed that personal conditions, i.e. laziness and tiredness, are the main reasons why he, sometimes, does not want to continue studying.

“Actually, the problem is that I am quite a lazy person. And I feel tired when I see that I have to study a video lesson for three hours. That even makes me do not want to continue studying the course”. (Student B)

For Student D, whose educational level is lower secondary, confusion in the lesson makes him do not want to study the online course. That is to say, he perceived that the lessons are too difficult, and therefore it demotivates him.

“Because I am confused with what I am studying and cannot ask the tutor, I feel fed up with that and just give it up”. (Student D)

The mismatch was found when asking the online tutors about how they usually encourage the students’ motivation to pursue their study through online courses. Tutor X, who teaches the lower secondary level, tended to focus on stimulating students’ interest and enthusiasm to learn by entertaining.

“Personally, I like to be friendly with the students. Therefore, I often tell jokes or funny slangs when teaching so that they will feel more relaxed and want to continue learning the lesson”. (Tutor X)

On the other hand, Tutor Y, who teaches the upper secondary level, accepted that he actually did not realize how to keep the students motivated in studying throughout the course, but he tries to make every lesson comprehensible and accessible for the students, as he revealed that,
“Actually... this question just reminds me that I did not realize to keep the students motivated to continue studying until they finish the whole course. However, I try to do the best for every lesson I teach by preparing contents that are interesting and can reinforce the students’ comprehension”. (Tutor Y)

These findings reflect that both tutors should balance between the role as an inspirator who creates friendly and positive learning atmosphere as well as an instructor who is able to impart knowledge that is comprehensible and accessible for students. This corroborates with the Affective Filter hypothesis by Krashen (1982), stating that the goals of teaching and learning should not only include supplying comprehensible input, but also creating a situation that can decrease students’ anxiety and at the same time increase their motivation to learn.

Apart from the inspirator and instructor roles, the students also indicated the needs for the online tutors as a facilitator and a supporter. The findings show that learning experiences shared by the tutors can be a guide for them to practice using English in real life, and moral support from the tutors can motivate them to learn English more actively.

“The tutors can be a role model for us. We can learn from their experiences if they share how they develop English communication skills”. (Student B)

“I can get inspired and motivated when the tutors share their experiences and give moral support to learn English”. (Student C)

Therefore, the tutor’s role as a facilitator and a supporter needs to be highlighted in the online learning context, as Benson (2003) suggested that the teacher should be actively involved in the students’ learning process and support them in order to foster the capacity for learner autonomy and encourage the students to take an active approach in their learning.

4.4 Students’ Needs and Tutors’ Practices Concerning Feedback in Online Learning

Concerning the learning feedback, the students indicated that this component is important for online courses, so as the tutors. Student B reported that learning feedback discussion with the tutor is necessary because it enables the tutor to assess the students’ learning outcomes and give further recommendations to them.

“It is necessary to ask how much the students have learned from the course and discuss whether the learning outcomes have met the students’ objectives so that the tutor will be able to give some recommendations about English language learning”. (Student B)
Remarkably, Student A and Student B had some concerns that certain students may not be comfortable to tell about their learning performance, and they might not be available making time to discuss with the tutor. Consequently, they agreed to give learning feedback via an online questionnaire.

“I do not think it is necessary to discuss with the tutor directly, because some (students) may not sure how to report about their learning experiences. But it would be better if the institution could provide an online questionnaire. I am certain that the students will have something to write in the comment section”. (Student A)

“I think discussing learning feedback with the tutor is useful, but I am afraid that some students, like me, may be not available when the tutor contacts to have the discussion... I think doing an online questionnaire right after finishing the course would be more convenient. The institution can get feedback and further improve their online courses”. (Student B)

In addition, Student C suggested using an online testing together with the online questionnaire to assess the student’s progress and give learning feedback as she asserted that the test will give more reliable results about the students’ learning outcomes than the questionnaire.

Although it was found that the institution did not get the feedback about online learning experiences from the students, the tutors maintained that the learning feedback is important since it will benefit the students, the tutors, and the institution. Tutor X’s perspective is in line with Student B’s response as he considered the learning feedback from students’ perspectives. He indicated that the process of getting feedback will enable the students to reflect on the outcomes or knowledge obtained from studying the online course, and therefore they will be able to find out ways to improve or develop their learning to be more effective.

“I think it (feedback) is important and necessary for online learning. The learning feedback discussion will provide the students a chance to reflect on their learning outcomes, and that they will be able to improve or develop their learning to be more effective”. (Tutor X)

Tutor Y also pointed out the benefits of the learning feedback to the institution that organizes the online English courses and the tutors themselves. He emphasized that the teaching process needs improvement, and therefore feedback from the students will direct potential ways for the institution and the tutors to improve their online courses. Interestingly, he regarded the process of getting feedback as a way to tell the students that they are important in the learning process.
“It (feedback) is important because the teaching process needs improvement. In addition to planning and preparing lessons, we need to check the results after teaching, and this can be done by getting feedback from the students. So, the institution and the tutors will know what we need to improve about the online courses... Or at least the students can feel that we value them, not just selling the courses and leave them on their own”. (Tutor Y)

As can be seen, the feedback benefits the whole cycle of teaching and learning English through online courses. Moreover, the process of getting feedback means the learning responsibility is transferred to students since they get to reflect on their performance and progress, which is in line with the role of autonomous learners proposed by Warwick and Booth (2017). According to Cotterall (2000), learner autonomy can be promoted by transferring responsibility for students to evaluate their own progress. This also agrees with Benson (2003) that the teacher should foster learner autonomy by encouraging students’ reflection. Therefore, the online tutors may need to assume the role as an evaluator who helps evaluate the students’ performance, strengths and weaknesses, as well as gives them some guidances.

5. Conclusion

The present study aimed to investigate the degree of autonomy of Thai secondary school students who study English through online courses as well as to identify the potential ways to encourage their learner autonomy. The questionnaire results showed that the online student participants, on average, had a high degree of learner autonomy. They had a very high degree of motivation to learn English. However, the characteristic of self-confidence to learn autonomously needs to be fostered in Thai secondary school students.

The interview findings revealed that the online students need to contact and ask for clarification from the tutors because they cannot comprehend certain points that the tutor is teaching in the video. Some students also noted keywords to search for additional explanation on the Internet. However, the tutors did not report that they suggest websites or Internet resources for the students to refer to. In the light of motivation in learning English through online courses, it was found that the students appreciate the tutor role as a facilitator and a supporter who can give guidances and moral support for practicing and learning the language more actively, while the tutors themselves are inclined to either the role of an inspirator or an instructor. Lastly, it is important to note that both students and tutors regard the learning feedback as the beneficial component for online courses, but the institution and the tutors have not elicited the feedback about online learning experiences from the students.
Thus, it can be concluded that support from the institution and proactivity on part of the tutors are needed to encourage online students to learn more autonomously. The students, tutors, and institution should also collaborate with each other in order to improve the process of teaching and learning English through online courses.

6. Pedagogical Implications

The findings of the present study have led to potential ways to encourage the learner autonomy among Thai secondary school students and to enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning English through online courses.

Firstly, teachers and tutors should promote learner autonomy through learner-centered approaches. Therefore, teachers or tutors can assume various roles in the autonomous learning context, such as a facilitator, a supporter, a resource supplier, and an evaluator. This means that the teacher is actively involve in the students’ learning, ranging from helping students to set goals, teaching learning strategies, gradually transferring learning responsibilities, providing some references and online resources, to eliciting feedback of the students’ performance, evaluating and giving recommendations to them.

Although the majority of the students prefer to share their learning feedback via an online questionnaire, the process of feedback implementation should not be one way. In order to develop teaching and learning English through online courses, the students should also be given a choice whether they need some recommendations from the tutors, and this question can be posted in the online questionnaire. If a student answers “Yes.”, then he/she will have to fill in an e-mail address so that the tutors can assess the students’ performance from the questionnaire and send the recommendations to them. In addition, the questionnaire should cover comprehensive aspects of learning and teaching i.e. the assessment of the students’ performance and the evaluation of the course contents, materials, and tutors.
References


A CORPUS-BASED STUDY OF ENGLISH ZOOLOGY ACADEMIC WORD LISTS

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Abstract

This study aimed to (1) generate the common vocabulary used in zoology research articles and identify their frequencies and (2) validate the word lists by zoology experts. The Zoology Research Articles Corpus (ZRAC) was compiled from 268 Zoology research articles published during January 2016 – February 2019 from the International Journals of Zoology by Zoological society of London. The ZRAC consists of 1,530,384 words. The AntWordProfiler (1.4.0) software was used to analyze the frequency of the words. The results revealed that there are 504 high frequency content words. Later, seven university lecturers teaching zoology were asked to clarify the specification of the words in the field of zoology. After the validation process, 218 words (43.25%) were removed from the list which was then categorized into word families. The word lists were generated using the Coxhead's range and word frequency criteria called the Zoology Academic Word Lists (ZAWL). The ZAWL aims to assist undergraduate and graduate students in their preparation for zoology related fields with essential words for the reading and writing of research papers. Additionally, ZAWL can be applied in vocabulary pedagogy for zoology lecturers in selecting appropriate vocabulary to teach undergraduate and graduate classes.

Keywords: corpus-based study, zoology research articles, academic word list
1. Introduction

Nowadays, the needs in mastering English as an International Language (EIL) has increased significantly. One of the most prominent requirements that students who are studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) is to read academic texts in English. The study of academic texts has become the focus of a number of recent corpus-based studies. This places a tremendous demand on teachers of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teachers to develop materials that are specifically beneficial for different learners in different academic fields. Researchers, therefore, have investigated academic articles which is used to find academic vocabulary lists that have specific and distinguishing features.

The acquisition of academic vocabulary is an important measure of learners’ academic competence (Kuehn, 1996). In addition, as stated by Corson (1997), knowledge of academic vocabulary is highly significant for both the success in reading academic texts and for the appropriate and effective writing in specific areas of study. Acquiring academic vocabulary, however, is highly difficult for EFL and ESL learners, since these words are less frequently used in comparison to high-frequency words which often found in general texts. Therefore, the emphasis that is used to study specialized vocabulary used in academic texts falls on academic corpora. More precisely, word analysis from these texts has revealed that some particular words appear with a much higher frequency in some academic texts in comparison to others (Coxhead, 2000). This makes studying and making word lists necessary. Regarding EAP, researchers have focused on academic vocabulary and developed several useful academic word lists. With the advances of computer science and accessibility of corpora and corpus analysis software programs, the task of creating a word list based on frequency lists of general and specialized corpora became feasible for individual researchers and teachers of ESP.

Nation (2001) suggested that one of the academic word lists’ benefits that is based on specific disciplines for teaching and learning is how they provide a useful guide for teachers to assist them in lesson planning and instructional material specifically related to vocabulary. Researchers have recently developed word lists containing high frequency words for students of specialized lexical needs. The word lists were also explored in terms of frequency and coverage with West’s General Service List (GSL) to seek the specificity. For instances, (Wang, Liang, & Ge, 2008), developed Medical Academic Word List (MAWL) included 623 non-GSL word families that occurred in research articles in the medical field. Students in different disciplines are required to learn different types of vocabulary, thus, word lists that
meet the specific needs of those students are in demand. In other words, to develop academic word lists for specialized area is beneficial to the overall learning outcome of that area (Ward, 2009).

The field of science has also been a growing interest on the part of university lecturers and students to read or write scientific articles in English. To consider more studies and research papers on science and technology published in English, English for Science and Technology (EST) has been developed and differentiated into a variety of modern English with unique characteristics contributing to materials in the style of science and technology (Li & Li, 2015). Researchers have also been collecting and analyzing some word lists for specific disciplines in the area of science. There are, for example, A Medical Word list (Hsu, 2013), An Agriculture Word List (Martinez et al., 2009), A Chemistry Academic Word List (Valipour & Nassaji, 2013), A Microbiology Academic Word list (Boonyos, 2014), An Environmental Academic Word list (Liu & Han, 2015), and A Food Science and Technology Academic Word List (Esfandiari & Moein, 2015).

One of the sub-branches in biological science that have received interest is Zoology. It is the study of animal life covering areas ranging from the structure of organisms to the cellular unit of life. The field of Zoology has become an important department and major for science students in higher education level. Like others, zoology students are also expected to be able to read and write their study and discovery in English in order to share with the world science communities. Because the vocabulary in this particular discipline involves a wide range of fields, acquiring a good command of specialized English is likely to prove challenging for zoology students and help them when reading and writing in English.

Even though numerous studies on word lists were carried out, there are only a few studies on word lists regarding the field of science extracted from English research articles in the field of Zoology. This study, therefore, fulfills this insufficiency, explores word-list establishing of field-specific academic word lists and establishes the first zoology academic word list for university students to understand research articles in their disciplines.

Research Questions
1. What words are commonly used in zoology research articles?
2. What are the zoology experts’ opinions toward Zoology Word Lists?
Research Objectives

1. To find the common vocabulary used in zoology research articles and their frequencies.
2. To explore the zoology experts’ opinions toward Zoology Word Lists

2. Literature Review

2.1 Lexical Study

Vocabulary Acquisition

The findings of several research studies in second language show that reading ability can be foreseen by vocabulary knowledge of the learners. The difficulty EFL learners usually encounter when they read is caused by too many unknown words in their reading materials. Therefore, vocabulary learning plays a significant role in language acquisition which is the active process for acquiring vocabulary of the target language (Moghadam, Zainal, & Ghaderpour, 2012). L2 learners must expand their reading skill to read texts more effectively (Nation, 2006).

Researchers have investigated the relationship between L2 vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension. They claimed that readers needed to know a certain percentage of the running words in a text for better comprehension. For instance, Laufer and Ravenhorst-Kalovski (2010) argued that running words (95%) are needed for reasonable comprehension of a text. This points out that if a reader’s lexical threshold is less than 95%, then the reader would not be able to read the text effectively without external assistance. Sheng and McGregor (2010) also argued that vocabulary acquisition is the foundation of language learning. As there is a strong relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension, building word list is a vital step to enhance reading abilities (Kumar, Varma, & Devi, 2013). A corpus is a practical source for the investigation of language depth when frequency and coverage are considered to be main criteria for selecting vocabulary (Coxhead, 2000).

Vocabulary Classification

Nation (2001) classified vocabulary into four groups: high-frequency words, academic words, technical words, and low-frequency words.

1. High-frequency Words refer to words that occur in printed texts. Such words include both content words and function words. A list of High-frequency Words that is the most utilized is General Service List (GSL) developed by Michael West's in 1953, which is comprised of approximately 2,000 word families. The first 1,000 highest frequency words cover up to 77% of general English texts.
(2) Academic words are extracted from different types of academic texts, e.g. linguistics, politics, business, etc. The most well-known academic word list is proposed by Averil Coxhead in 2000, named Academic Word List (AWL). The AWL includes 570 word families covering around 10 percent of academic texts. This grouping of words is appropriate for students who are in the academic setting.

(3) Technical words can be different in different subject areas. This group of words are developed by limiting the range of topics or language investigated systematically. It is highly likely that specialized vocabulary for speaking, reading academic texts, reading newspapers or children's stories of be developed. Both academic and technical words are known as specialized words.

(4) Low-frequency words refer to a large group of words that appear infrequently. Low-frequency words make up a small fraction of words in academic texts. They exclude high-frequency words, academic words, and technical words in a specific discipline. Proper names are also included in Low-frequency words.

Word Frequency Lists
A word frequency list or word list is a list usually sorted either in frequency order or in alphabetical order of all words in a specified corpus together with the frequency of word occurrence in the corpus (Hunston, 2006). A word list is useful in various linguistic studies, for example, stylistics, content analysis, language teaching, forensic linguistics, and information retrieval. They provide frequency information of the vocabulary in particular texts.

Word lists play an essential role in lexical studies, which aim to provide information on the frequency with which words occur in particular areas. The generated word frequency lists can facilitate teachers or course designers to determine whether these words are meaningful for their students or if they should be dismissed. Many word frequency lists have been created. Each of them has different advantages according to the objectives of the word list creator. The following are two examples of well-known word lists.

(1) The General Service List (GSL): The GSL was created by Michael West in 1953. It contains 2,000 high frequency English word families. It is useful especially for beginners since it is the source of the most frequently used words of the language.

(2) The Academic Word List (AWL): The AWL is a list of 570 word families based on a 3.5 million word corpus consisting of academic texts from journals,
textbooks, and course books, and covers 28 subjects under four major areas such as art, science, commerce and law developed and validated by Averil Coxhead in 2014 (University of Wellington, New Zealand). The list excludes words that are in the West's GSL most frequent 2000 words of English.

Many researchers have attempted to prepare word lists that are much more specific to the subject, meeting the needs of the learners in their academic area. Hyland and Tse (2007) argued that, in different academic fields, AWL’s word families are diverse in terms of meanings.

2.2 Corpus Linguistics

The Definition of Corpus Linguistics

A corpus is a collection of texts used for linguistic analysis, usually stored in an electronic database. The data can easily be accessed by computer. Müller and Waibel (2000) have defined corpus linguistics to be the study of language occurring naturally, usually carried out with specialized software programs on a computer.

Corpus linguistics has been influential in various fields, such as language and vocabulary pedagogy, discourse analysis, literary stylistics and translation studies, pragmatics, forensic linguistics, speech technology, sociolinguistics, and health communication (O'Keeffe & McCarthy, 2010). The study of specialized word list is a significant feature of corpus linguistics that contributes significantly to the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

Concordance Software, also known as a concordancer, is computer technology that can contribute to corpus linguistics. It can automatically generate word frequency lists, word lists, or key word lists. A concordancer can count and classify words rapidly in electronic text formats such as text files, databases, or the internet. Concordancer can be useful in investigation of the frequency, distribution, occurrence of particular words or combinations of words, or relationships between words the way language is authentically used. In this study the concordancer named “AntWordProfiler” was used in analysis process.

AntWordProfiler is freeware for corpus linguistic research and data-driven learning created by Laurence Anthony. AntWordProfiler is composed of a vocabulary profiling tool and File Viewer and Editor Tool. The profiling tool can generate statistics on vocabulary and information on frequency related to a corpus of texts complied into the program. Moreover, it can compare the corpus text files against
vocabulary level lists based on the research of Paul Nation. The latest version of AntWordProfiler is 1.4W (2013).

3. Methodology

There are eight stages of making a Zoology Research Article Corpus, hereafter ZRAC, the researcher follows;

3.1 Corpus compilation: In order to represent the word samples in the ZRAC, the researcher consulted two zoology professors who work at Chulalongkorn University. They provided the name of a high-quality zoology journal by Zoological Society of London which is normally assigned to students.

3.2 Data Elicitation: the research articles are downloaded from https://zspublications.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/ In total, 268 Zoology research articles from January 2016 – February 2019 were downloaded.

3.3 Data Processing: All the selected zoology research articles were in a pdf format, which were then converted into text files (*.txt.), in order to be processed by the computer software program, AntWordProfiler. In addition, figures, tables, bibliographies, footnotes, acknowledgments, references and appendices in the articles were removed from all articles.

3.4 Data Analysis: AntWord Profiler Version 1.4.0 was used to determine the number of occurrences of each word. The program, thus, was used to identify the frequency of each word in the whole ZRAC, also those that were not in the AWL and GSL word list. Function words are also removed during this procedure, since the focus is on content words for their core meaning and not grammar patterns.

3.5 Word Criteria: In order to create the Zoology Academic Word List that represents word frequently found in Zoology Research Articles, the same frequency of word family members as utilized by Coxhead’s Academic Word List (AWL) were employed. This was the same rate of occurrences as that employed by Coxhead. The comparison is shown in Table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>AWL (Coxhead, 2000)</th>
<th>ZAWL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corpus size</td>
<td>3.5 million tokens</td>
<td>1.5 million tokens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special occurrences</td>
<td>Excluding West’s (1953) GSL</td>
<td>Excluding West’s (1953) GSL, Coxhead’s (2000) AWL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>100 times on the whole corpus</td>
<td>50 times on the whole corpus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.6 Word Selection: Regarding the process of collecting the words after the ZRAC was compiled, only a headword, all its inflections and derivations were counted as a word family regarding the normalization of word forms. For instance, a word compete and other forms such as competes, competed, competitive, competition and competitions were counted as one word. If learners know a headword, they will highly likely master its family members much easier (Coxhead, 2000).

3.7 Experts Validation and Opinion: The Zoology Academic Word Lists is validated by seven zoology experts (The Name lists are in the appendix A), (Seven Zoology university lecturers) in order to prove the appropriateness and the practicality of the Zoology Academic Word Lists. Opinions and recommendations are also included in the validation form. The results from the experts are calculated using Item Objective Congruence (IOC) method. A word would be removed if its Mean score is lower than 0.67.

3.8 Word Family Generation: Word family as defined by Bauder and Nation (1993) is the base word plus its inflected forms and transparent derivations which includes all closely related affixed forms and the stem’s most frequent, productive and regular prefixes and suffixes. Therefore, through this process, word families were analysed and categorized.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 The common vocabulary used in zoology research articles and their frequencies. The Zoology Research Article Corpus (ZRAC) information is shown in Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corpus Size</th>
<th>1,530,384 running words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Texts</td>
<td>268 articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Written materials in PDF format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Zoology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text Types</td>
<td>Research articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Papers written in English (Monolingual Corpus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication date</td>
<td>During the period January 2016-2019 in order to avoid outdated words in the corpus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2 The zoology experts’ opinions toward Zoology Word Lists

The list from Table 3 has not been validated by the experts. However, after the research complied this ZAWL, the validation from together with this word lists were sent to the seven zoology experts for validation. The experts were asked to go through the words on the lists and decide whether or not each word should appear on the list using Item Objective Congruence (IOC) method. The percentage of words that has to be removed is 43.25%.

The validation form also contains open-ended questions concerning recommended words to add to the word lists on application. One of the experts suggested to add the following terms: embryo, primary germ layer, ectoderm, mesoderm, endoderm, zygote, fertilization, nerve, neuron, growth, cells, tissue, organ, organism, blood, macrophage, lymph, appendage, brain, cerebrum, gut, biome, teratogen. Some experts provided some opinions regarding their own practical usage of this ZAWL. Some of Their comments are as follows:

“I would recommend zoology students to study this list in order to enhance their understanding in zoological literature and to improve their academic writing.”

“Despite the fact that many words in the list are not specific to zoology as they are related to general biology, cell biology, ecology, I would recommend zoology students to learn these words because interdisciplinary topics are becoming more relevant.”

After the experts’ validation and word removal process, the researcher categorized the word lists into word families. The ZAWL is organized as such so that emergent readers can learn more effectively because word families provide predictable patterns within words.

The Zoology Academic Word Lists (ZAWL) are presented in the form of tables with their frequency of occurrence in table 3.
Table 3 The Zoology Academic Word Lists (ZAWL) (286 words)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>58</td>
<td>fecundity</td>
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<td>107</td>
<td>conservation</td>
<td>572</td>
<td>fertilization</td>
<td>78</td>
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<tr>
<td>adhesive</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>convergence</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>forelimb</td>
<td>104</td>
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<tr>
<td>adipose</td>
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<td>83</td>
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<td>cranial</td>
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5. Conclusion

5.1 Summary of the study

The purposes of this study were (1) to build Zoology Academic Word Lists and (2) to explore the zoology experts’ opinions on the Word lists. The study was conducted on the basis of the Zoology Research Article Corpus. The researcher built the Zoology Research Article Corpus (ZRAC) by collecting articles from 268 articles. The ZRAC contains a total of 1,530,384 running words. The Software AntWordProfiler was used to analyze data and determined word frequency. Excluding GSL, AWL and function words, the Zoology Academic Word List (ZAWL) is specific to the disciplines. The validation process of the ZAWL was done by seven zoology experts. Finally, ZAWL was categorized into word families.

5.2 Discussion

The findings of this study confirm a critical perspective from other studies (Valipouri & Nassaji, 2013), on the fact that developing technical word lists should consider more than just corpus-based approach. Relying only on the corpus-based approach, some drawbacks such as the inability to detach the collocate of words from the word lists. Thus, the validation process by experts was also included in this study. The experts were asked to perform the IOC of each word, as well as providing
suggestions on other words that should be acknowledged. The total of 218 words (43.25%) were removed after the validation process. Some experts have also suggested words that they think should belong on the lists such as *embryo, primary germ layer, ectoderm, mesoderm, endoderm, zygote, fertilization, nerve, neuron, growth, cells, tissue, organ, organism, macrophage, lymph, appendage, brain, cerebrum, gut, biome, teratogen*. However, the researcher did not include these words on the lists under the reason that words on the ZAWL should occur evidently in research articles. The perspectives of intuition and subjectivity were not considered. As a result, ZAWL contains 286 words.

### 5.3 Pedagogical Implications

These findings offered implications for language teacher and material designers to establish discipline-specific word lists. This will be beneficial to English language learners in order to acquire the words effectively and for their own field of study. Teachers and course designers should have reference word lists to decide which words in a certain register should be taught to students (Nation and Waring, 1997). Particularly, the Zoology Academic Word Lists aimed to be a ready-to-use word lists for instructors and course designers of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in zoology. Overall, this endeavour is another application of using corpus linguistics and the empirical evidence that will enhance students’ learning.

### 5.4 Recommendations

As mentioned in the significance of this study, the objective of the Zoology Academic Word List (ZAWL) generation was to facilitate teachers, instructors and course designers of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in terms of selecting appropriate vocabulary to introduce to students. Consequently, an examination of the pedagogical implications of the 286 essential content words of the Zoology Academic Word List (ZAWL) is the next phase that should be conducted in order to validate the benefit of using the ZAWL. Using this word lists implicatively in an actual classroom will be useful to test its practicality. This provides applicable information about the lexical needs for zoology students.

Moreover, to provide a perspective into the vocabulary that are used in zoology research articles, a larger amount of papers from other journals in the field of zoology should be examined. This compilation would contribute to enhancing both the diversity of the vocabulary in the corpus and the size of the corpus. A multitude of research papers from varied subject categories of zoology on the ScienceDirect website should be included so as to expand the scale of the Zoology Research Academic Corpus (ZRAC), thereby allowing for a thorough understanding of the vocabulary utilized in zoology research articles. For further study, a larger corpus of
more Zoology research articles and journals would be significant. Other kinds of biological science such as Botany, Evolution, Genetics etc. are also encouraged and in demanded.

References


West, M. P. (1953). *A general service list of English words: with semantic frequencies and a supplementary word-list for the writing of popular science and technology*: Longmans, Green.
INVESTIGATING THE TECHNICAL VOCABULARY IN CABIN CREW MANUALS: A CORPUS-BASED STUDY

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Abstract
The purposes of this study were to measure the vocabulary load in the Cabin Crew Manuals, and to investigate the technical vocabulary in the Cabin Crew Manuals by corpus-based approach. This study evaluated the vocabulary load in the CCM corpus to measure the number of word families needed by cabin crew to read Cabin Crew Manuals with 95% of the text coverage. By measuring the vocabulary load using a corpus-based approach based on BNC/COCA word family lists (Nation, 2012), an estimated vocabulary level for cabin crew is in the range of the most frequent 8,000 word families. 4,136 word families including proper nouns, marginal words, transparent compounds and acronyms are needed by cabin crew to cover 95.76% of the lexical coverage in the CCM Corpus, which is a minimal threshold vocabulary needed for reading comprehension (Laufer and Ravenhorst-Kolovski, 2010) with one unknown word in every 20 words. To develop a word list for cabin crew, 845 word families met the criteria for the rating scale approach by subject matter experts to rate the degree of technicality of the words. Three subject matter experts’ final rating, with the scale adapted from Coxhead’s (2018) study, agreed that 590 word families are technically appropriate and suitable to create the Crew-related English Word (CREW) List. With the CREW List, the coverage of text in the CCM Corpus is 12.02%.

Keywords: Technical vocabulary, Vocabulary load, Lexical coverage, Word list, Cabin Crew Manuals
1. Introduction

“Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed.” This classic quote of Wilkins (1972) shows that vocabulary is an immensely important component in language learning. When lacking in sufficient vocabulary items, one cannot comprehend the message or express what is in his/her mind. As stated by Schmitt (2000), learning vocabulary is central to communicative strands and to acquisition of mastering a second language. To be successful in reading comprehension, good knowledge of the vocabulary is primarily needed. As English is the universal language generally used in aviation industry, Cabin Crew Manuals, containing a number of technical English vocabulary words, might painfully overwhelm Thai cabin crew in reading over-thousand-page textbooks.

“The ability to read, speak, write, and understand a designated common language to ensure appropriate communication with both crew members and passengers” is one of the recommended minimum qualifications of cabin crew members suggested by the International Civil Aviation Organization or ICAO (2014). To apply for a cabin crew career in Thailand, the Test of English for International Communication (or TOEIC) score of 600 is the minimum requirement for airlines as one of the principle qualifications to determine the levels of English for communication in the workplace of the applicants. However, the test is focused on only general language use in business correspondences and conversation in offices (ETS, 2017). Moreover, the applicants graduated from any field of bachelor degrees are all welcome.

With different educational backgrounds and different English proficiency, all cabin crew members are anyhow expected to effectively read Cabin Crew Manuals written in English to reach the high standard of the language required in their profession. Furthermore, the Cabin Crew Manual plays as one of the most important roles in cabin crew safety training as the core textbook or reference. However, cabin crew safety trainings are all conducted in Thai. Without English courses focusing on reading comprehension strategies or learning vocabulary strategies, cabin crew members might find it difficult to understand the manuals autonomously.

Accordingly, this study aimed to answer two research questions:
1) How much vocabulary do cabin crew need to know in order to read Cabin Crew Manuals with 95% of text coverage?
2) What technical vocabulary occurring outside the General Service List (GSL) and the Academic Word List (AWL) do cabin crew need in order to read Cabin Crew Manuals?
2. Literature Review

2.1 Cabin Crew Safety Training and Cabin Crew Manuals

In 2017, the Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand or CAAT issued a ‘Guidance Material for Cabin Crew Training Programme Manual’ to be the standard of Cabin Crew Safety Training for air operators in Thailand to strictly follow. Cabin crew safety training must focus on cabin crew members’ duties and responsibilities in the event of an abnormal or emergency situation to ensure that cabin crew members retain their proficiency to execute the required tasks in the event. Furthermore, the training should address safety duties and responsibilities on normal day-to-day operations to maintain the safety of the flight.

Also, joint safety training between flight crew and cabin crew is recommended to enhance communication, coordination and understanding of the crew members. In addition, security, medical, and safety management systems of the operator are also required to be in the training. Accordingly, cabin crew safety training is a competency-based approach promoting proficiency in performing duties and aligning responsibilities of cabin crew with the goal of an international baseline. In every training session, Cabin Crew Manuals are the primary sources of reference.

Cabin Crew Manuals serve as one of the most important parts of cabin crew career not only for initial training, but also for annual recurrent training as main reference sources covering mandatory topics required by the International Civil Aviation Organization or ICAO. ICAO (2014) requires all cabin crew to be able to describe an overview of operations, define aviation terms common in operations, identify relevant terminology common in operations, and be able to apply them in the appropriate context in order to reach the required performance standard.

Cabin Crew Manuals are divided into two parts. In Cabin Crew Manual Part 1, it contains general information including, rules and regulations, operating procedures, first aid, emergency procedures, equipment and location, dangerous goods, and security. In Cabin Crew Manual Part 2, content is distributed into 6 manuals according to the specific aircraft types and technical system information from aircraft manufacturers, such as Airbus and Boeing.
2.2 Technical Vocabulary

The objective of identifying technical vocabulary is to distinguish a group of words from other types of words, for example, words in GSL or AWL, to identify specifically suitable words for ESP learners with specific goals in effective language use (Coxhead and Nation, 2018). With the intention of designing the vocabulary portion in a language course, Nation (2001) divided levels of vocabulary into four levels: high frequency words, academic vocabulary, technical vocabulary, and low frequency words.

Technical words are closely related to a specific discipline, in which they are common in a particular topic area but are not common elsewhere. Typically, technical words cover around 5% of running words. Technical words can be distinguished by counting the frequency in the specialized corpus or by decision of experts in the specific field.

Chung and Nation (2004) described technical vocabulary as subject related vocabulary and subject knowledge occurring in a specific domain. The meaning of technical vocabulary is related to a specific subject area. Coxhead (2013) also defines technical vocabulary as the vocabulary of a particular area of study or professional use, which has a narrow range of use within a specific subject area. Therefore, the people inside the specific areas of language use are expected to understand and use this language fluently.

However, technical vocabulary is not always long words or highly technical. Also, ordinary words can carry specific meaning in specific contexts. In addition, Coxhead (2013) proposed emphasizing the importance of technical vocabulary in ESP so that it will help both teachers and learners to directly meet the specific needs with key ideas and the language of their field in the situation of time limitation. Moreover, ability to understand and use technical vocabulary helps learners engage with a particular community and disciplinary knowledge in a particular field.

To classify words as being technical or non-technical, Chung and Nation (2003) introduced a four-point scale designed to rate the strength of the connection of a word to a specific domain. This approach depends on the ability of the experts to use their domain knowledge and intuition of the specific field in rating the individual meanings of the words. The scale ranges from the least related meaning of particular field to the most. Lexical items classified at Step 3 and Step 4 will be considered as technical words. On the contrary, Step 1 and Step 2 will be non-technical words.

To ensure that the rating scale is consistently reliable to classify the technical vocabulary, the inter-rater reliability check is used as a solution to estimate the degree
of agreement by different raters. Significantly, the raters are required to have good knowledge of the subject area. The raters’ task is to assess the degree of specification of the meaning of the words in specific fields. Before assessing the technical vocabulary, Chung and Nation (2003) suggested that the raters should be trained to understand the objective of the study, the aim of the reliability check, and how to assess the degree of the relationship in order to place the word in to the scale.

Furthermore, Chung and Nation (2004) compared three other different methods with a rating scale approach to find which method is the most effective to identify technical vocabulary in specific disciplines. The other three methods were using a technical dictionary, using clues provided in the text, and using a computer-based approach. From the researchers’ results, a rating scale approach is the most reliable and valid approach since it is given 100% success rate. However, this approach is time-consuming as every word has to be checked and put into the scale. Moreover, the computer-based approach is quite successful in term of practicality with 82.7% of correct technical vocabulary identification.

2.3 Text coverage and comprehension

According to Coxhead (2018), a vocabulary load analysis is used to determine how many word families are needed in order to read a text. As stated by Nation (2006), text coverage is the percentage of running words in the text known by the reader. It was found that a reasonable fit of text coverage is at 98% for most learners to gain adequate comprehension. Nonetheless, Laufer and Ravenhorst-Kolovski (2010) suggested two thresholds of lexical text coverage of 95% and 98%. With 4000-5000 word families, learners will reach 95% of adequate reading comprehension as a minimal threshold. And with the knowledge of 8000 word families, learners will reach 98% of comprehension as an optimum one.

Even though Hu and Nation (2000) emphasized that learners would need around 98% coverage to gain adequate unassisted comprehension, and vocabulary knowledge is a crucial element in reading, other skills and knowledge are also needed. Coxhead et al. (2016) argue that a vocabulary load of 8000 word families, including specific vocabulary, abbreviations, proper nouns and compound nouns are needed for reading carpentry text. Conversely, Hsu (2013) claimed that 95% of text coverage or around 5000 word families appears to be a more feasible goal for EFL learners in Engineering fields and the absence of knowledge of 5% is assumed to may be tolerable.
2.4 Specialized corpora

Since decontextualized and unmanageable data from large general-purpose corpora is less suitable in specific target domains, specialized corpora seem to be the answer to the original use of English for specific purposes (Widdowson, 2000). Specialized corpora are smaller corpora with a specific purpose of compilation focusing on specific genres and registers (Flowerdew, 2002). In a specialized corpus, a link between the corpus and the contexts can be examined closely. Also, pattern of language use in specific settings can be investigated intently.

Typically, the corpus compiler of a specialized corpus is the specialist who has a high degree of familiarity with the specific context. Therefore, the quantitative findings resulting from corpus analysis can be balanced and supplemented with the qualitative findings (O’Keeffe, 2007). As a specialized corpus is regularly set up to reflect information about a specific setting, participants and the purpose of communication, analysis of the corpus can usefully reveal connection between linguistic patterning and specific contexts of use. Consequently, this link is predominantly relevant in the fields of English for Specific Purposes or ESP (O’Keeffe, 2007).

To yield insights for teaching and learning ESP, a specialized corpus can be directly helpful as it meets the need of both teachers and learners (Tribble, 2002). Flowerdew (2004) suggested that the general agreement was that small corpora should contain up to 250,000 words. However, the most important features of a specialized corpus are not its actual size, but its design and representation. In addition, he lists parameters as a guideline to consider which corpora can be specialized, such as the specific purpose for compilation, contextualization, genre, type of text, subject matter, and variety of English.

2.5 Word Lists

As a body of texts of language, corpus studies have contributed advantageous data for researchers to identify and understand more about specialized vocabulary. As a result, word lists have been developed for specific purposes (Coxhead, 2013). Frequency information of lexical items in the corpus provides a clearer picture for setting vocabulary learning goals to meet learners’ vocabulary learning needs (Nation and Waring, 1997).
However, making a word list is not as easy as using only frequency information from the software. Nation and Waring (1997) suggested criteria to be considered in the development of creating a word list from high frequency words.

The General Service List or GSL (West, 1953) is one of the earliest major word list which is still influential in the present (Todd, 2016). GSL contained the 2,000 most frequent words in general English developed from a corpus of 5 million words covering up to 76% of the Academic Corpus (Coxhead, 2000).

The Academic Word List or AWL (Coxhead, 2000) was developed using 3.5 million tokens of written academic English, including academic journals and university textbooks from four academic disciplines: arts, commerce, law, and science (Coxhead and Hirsh, 2007). Three criteria were used to select word for AWL. Firstly, specialized occurrence of the word families occurring outside GSL (West, 1953) were selected. Secondly, range of the word families occurring at least 10 times in all four academic disciplines and 15 subject areas were considered. Lastly, frequency of the members of a word family occurring at least 100 times in the corpus was included in the list.

Coxhead (2000) examined the AWL with the Academic Corpus and found that the AWL covers 10.0%. Together with the GSL, it was found that the AWL and GSL covered approximately 86% of the Academic Corpus. Consequently, Wang, Liang, and Ge (2008) argued that more restricted discipline-based lexical repertoires across different disciplines are required to cover more in reading comprehension.

2.6 Previous Studies

Technical vocabulary has been investigated by many researchers in various specialized disciplines in the last decade in order to develop word lists spatially for ESP learners and teachers. To measure vocabulary load and create word lists, different methodologies and software programs have been used depending on researchers’ criteria. Hsu (2013) measured the technical vocabulary in engineering fields by compiling 100 engineering college textbooks across 20 engineering subject areas to build a 4.57-million-word corpus for analysis. Hsu (2013) found that adequate comprehension of 95% lexical coverage requires EFL engineering undergraduate students to know 5000 most frequent word families with proper nouns, compound nouns and abbreviations. Using RANGE program (Nation and Heatley, 2002) to analyze the corpus, Hsu (2013) compared the corpus with BNC/COLCA 25,000 word families and used the selection criteria applied from Coxhead (2000) to create a 729-word-family Engineering English Word List (EEWL), which covers 14.3% of the total tokens in the engineering textbooks.
To facilitate the English development of both L1 and L2 trainee plumbers with lack of the technical vocabulary of plumbing as well as their tutors, Coxhead (2018) investigated both written and spoken corpora collected from workbooks, unit standards, manuals, and records of practical and theoretical classes of three tutors. Again, the RANGE program (Nation, 2012) was used to analyze the written corpus to create the word list of plumbing using frequency principles by comparing with BNC/COCA 25,000 word families. Also, the spoken corpus was used to analyze vocabulary load. Together with lists of technical abbreviations and proper nouns, Coxhead and Demecheleer (2018) found that the plumbing word list consisting of 1465 individual types covers over 30% of the written corpus. To cover 98% of text coverage, Coxhead also found that 8,000 word families are needed for the written corpus and 5,000 word families are needed for spoken corpus.

Tangpoon-Patanasorn (2018) compiled the KKU-BE-Finance Corpus from textbooks, journals, websites, and newspapers containing over two million running words. In this study, WordSmith (Scott, 2012), AntConc (Anthony, 2014) and Technical Word Checklist (Chung and Nation, 2003) were used as tools to analyze the corpus comparing with GSL and AWL. It was found that the most 2000 frequent words of GSL covers approximately 75% and AWL covers approximately 10-11% of the corpus with 14% as others. Rated by two experts, 979 words were identified as technical words selected from 3002 potential words. To develop the word list, the selected 979 words were grouped into 569 as headwords and word families containing 16 abbreviations and acronyms.

3. Methodology

3.1 Data Collection

The corpora in this study were created from 7 manuals especially for Cabin Crew, used only by an air operator in Thailand. From these 7 manuals, three were from Airbus, another three were from Boeing, and the last one was from an air operator itself. These manuals are divided into three collections according to the companies of the manuals’ creators. Accordingly, these collections are also allocated into three sub-corpora: Airbus Sub-corpus, Boeing Sub-corpus, and CCM part 1 Sub-corpus.

The original files of the Cabin Crew Manuals are PDF files. To be analyzed with the corpus analysis programs, they needed to be converted to TXT files. To do so, the software called AntFileCoverter (Anthony, 2017) was used to convert the PDF
files to TXT files for the corpus analysis in this study. From this point, these corpora will be referred to as the “CCM Corpus”. This CCM Corpus contains a total of 1,060,520 running words from six corpora of specific aircraft manuals and the one corpus from a core manual for cabin crew.

3.2 The Instruments

In order to measure the vocabulary load and investigate the specialized occurrences in the corpus, computer software and files are to be used in this study. The instruments of this study consist of the CCM Corpus, AntWordProfiler, BNC/COCA word family lists, General Service List (GSL), and Academic Word List (AWL).

The most important feature in this study is the corpus. The corpus in this study was created from 7 Cabin Crew Manuals from an air operator in Thailand, and this corpus is called the “CCM Corpus”. The CCM Corpus consists of three sub-corpora: Airbus Sub-corpus, Boeing sub-corpus, and CCM Part 1 Sub-corpus. This CCM Corpus was built in order to measure the vocabulary load in the corpus and investigate the technical vocabulary by corpus-based and expert-judgement approaches.

AntWordProfiler (Anthony, 2014) is a vocabulary profile tool that can generate the statistical information of vocabulary load in corpus. Moreover, this software can compare the corpus against the word lists to analyze the specialized occurrences of the word families. As noted by Nation (2016), AntWordProfiler is easier to use and more updated than the RANGE program, which has stopped development. Therefore, the AntWordProfiler program was logical to be used both to measure the vocabulary load and to investigate the range of word families with specialized occurrences in the CCM Corpus in this study.

To measure the vocabulary load, the CCM corpus was compared against Nation’s BNC/COCA lists of 25,000 words families and supplemental lists (including proper nouns, transparent compounds, and acronyms) by using this software. To investigate the technical vocabulary, the CCM corpus together with GSL and AWL was run to analyze the information based on range, specialized occurrences and frequency to create the preliminary word list for the expert-judgement approach.

3.3 Methodologies

In this study, the CCM Corpus was analyzed to answer two research questions, which were the number of the word families in the CCM corpus, as well as the vocabulary level to reach the threshold of 95% of the text coverage, and to create the Crew-related English Word List. To do so, two methodologies involving corpus-based
analysis were employed.

3.3.1 Measuring the Vocabulary Load in CCM Corpus

To measure the vocabulary load and vocabulary level, the corpus-based approach was used by running the corpus in the corpus analysis computer software. As mentioned in 3.2.3, AntWordProfiler (Anthony, 2014) was used in this study to compare the CCM Corpus against BNC/COCA word family lists (Nation, 2012). The result from the program will show the total number of vocabulary items in the corpus as well as the percentage of the lexical coverage of each vocabulary level according to 25 BNC/COCA word family lists.

To answer the Research Question One, the cumulative number of the word families and the cumulative percentage of the text coverage were reported according to the threshold of 95% of the text coverage for reading comprehension (Laufer and Ravenhorst-Kolovski, 2010; Hsu, 2013). Consequently, this answered the question of how many words cabin crew should know and how large a vocabulary size of English cabin crew should have to read the Cabin Crew Manuals effectively.

3.3.2 Investigating the Technical Vocabulary in CCM Corpus and Creating the CREW List

To develop a preliminary Crew-related English Word (CREW) List for subject matter experts to rate the scale of the technicality of words, the three sub-corpora from the CCM Corpus, namely Airbus Sub-corpus, Boeing Sub-corpus and CCM Part 1 Sub-corpus were run in the AntWordProfiler adapted with GSL and AWL lists to analyze words with specialized occurrences outside GSL and AWL lists.

Range is one of the main criteria in this study to extract the technical words that will show in the lists outside GSL and AWL lists by the corpus-based approach. Since the technical vocabulary should occur in more than half of the sub-corpora, lexical items occurring at least in two ranges out of three sub-corpora were put into consideration. After getting the lists of vocabulary lists outside GSL and AWL, the word family list was investigated by subject matter experts.

Then the lemmas of words with specialized occurrences outside the GSL and AWL lists and occurring in two ranges of three sub-corpora were grouped into word families by using AntWordProfiler. The lemmas obtained from the corpus-based method were adapted with Nation’s (2012) 25 BNC/COCA word family lists, together with supplemental lists. This step was to categorize the head words of word families before providing the preliminary list to subject matter experts to rate each word according to the rating scale approach.
Three subject matter experts were assigned to rate the technicality of each head word of word families. The subject matter experts were deliberately selected from their profiles of education and work experience. Principally, they were currently working as cabin crew members working in an airline company, where the Cabin Crew Manuals were collected to build the corpus.

Before rating, each expert was personally introduced to Chung and Nation’s (2004) rating scale of technical words and a brief concept of the technical vocabulary by the researcher. The instructions for this study were developed and adapted according to Coxhead’s (2018) rating scale for plumbing tutors to identify the technical vocabulary. The head words from the list, which were rated as level 2 and level 1 by the subject matter experts were considered as technical vocabulary in this study.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 The Vocabulary Load of Cabin Crew Manuals

The CCM corpus contains a total of 1,053,941 running words inclusive of three sub-corpora, namely the Airbus Sub-corpus, Boeing Sub-corpus, and CCM Part 1 Sub-corpus. By comparing against the BNC/COCA word family lists in AntWordProfiler, 4,629 word families in the CCM Corpus including proper nouns, marginal words, transparent compounds and acronyms are shown with 96.73% of the cumulative text coverage.

However, the number of tokens of 34,366 tokens in “Not in the list” list or 3.26% of the text coverage is excluded as the majority of the tokens in “Not in the list” list are abbreviations and proper nouns, which are too specific to the particular airlines. Still, 17 content and transparent compounds are found with the criteria of specialized occurrence and range for developing the CREW List in “Not in the list”. Those words are “agonal, backrest, detent, doghouse, dropdown, fairing, footrest, headend, inbox, interphone, overpressure, overwing, overwrite, preflight, pushbutton, rearmost, and seatback” Accordingly, these words were added to the preliminary CREW List for subject matter experts to consider as to whether they are technical vocabulary.

Table 1 displays the overall tokens and lexical coverage of the CCM Corpus. The first BNC/COCA base word list accounted for 54.95% of the lexical coverage. This number shows that the coverage in CCM Corpus is much lower than the average coverage tested by Nation (2006), which illustrates that the first BNC/COCA base word list covers around 78%-81% in newspapers, novels, or in the planned corpora.
On the other hand, the second BNC/COCA base word list covers 14.79% of the lexical coverage, and it is above Nation’s average coverage, which is only 8%-9%.

Still, the cumulative coverage in the CCM Corpus accounted from both the first and the second BNC/COCA base word lists, which are the most frequent 2000 word families, was only 69.74% of the total text coverage. With the knowledge of only the 2000 most frequently word families, cabin crew will find it is difficult to read Cabin Crew Manuals since they lack more than 25% of the word families necessary to reach 95% of the text coverage.

Table 1 also shows the coverage of BNC/COCA word lists that reach the cumulative coverage point of 95.76% at the level of the eighth BNC/COCA word lists, including proper nouns, marginal words, transparent compounds and acronyms. In addition, the cumulative word families needed by cabin crew to reach 95.76% of the text coverage are 4,136 word families.

Therefore, Table 1 answers research question one “How much vocabulary do cabin crew need to know in order to read Cabin Crew Manuals with 95% of text coverage?”. Cabin crew would need to reach the vocabulary level of 8000 most frequently word families together with proper nouns, marginal words, transparent compounds and acronyms, or specifically 4,136 word families to reach 95.76% of the lexical coverage in CCM Corpus. With this threshold, it is the minimally acceptable reading comprehension for cabin crew as they might have to deal with 1 unknown word in 20 words (Nation, 2006).

Table 1 Tokens and lexical coverage at each of BNC/COCA word family lists of the CCM Corpus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BNC/COCA base word lists</th>
<th>Tokens</th>
<th>% coverage in tokens</th>
<th>Cumulative % coverage in tokens</th>
<th>Word families</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proper nouns</td>
<td>10,354</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>Thai; Bangkok; English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginal words</td>
<td>12,909</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>p; c; b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transparent compounds</td>
<td>12,033</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>download; airplane; layout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronyms</td>
<td>14,014</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>IFE; HS; CCM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st 1000</td>
<td>579,193</td>
<td>54.95</td>
<td>59.62</td>
<td>842</td>
<td>the; be; to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd 1000</td>
<td>155,929</td>
<td>14.79</td>
<td>74.41</td>
<td>706</td>
<td>operate; flight; select</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd 1000</td>
<td>112,146</td>
<td>10.64</td>
<td>85.05</td>
<td>656</td>
<td>crew; manual; passenger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th 1000</td>
<td>62,776</td>
<td>5.96</td>
<td>91.01</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>cabin; fleet; exit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th 1000</td>
<td>17,894</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>92.71</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>airways; compartment; valve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th 1000</td>
<td>14,488</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>94.08</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>cockpit; latch; raft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th 1000</td>
<td>8,317</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>94.87</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>galley; extinguish; abbreviate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th 1000</td>
<td>9,359</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td><strong>95.76</strong></td>
<td>139</td>
<td>lavatory; reset; stow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th 1000</td>
<td>1,566</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>95.91</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>incapacitate; flashlight; fuselage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th 1000</td>
<td>2,421</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>96.14</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>handset; placard; aural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th 1000</td>
<td>1,407</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>96.27</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>decompress; lithium; toggle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2 Crew-related English Word List (CREW List)

To identify technical vocabulary that cabin crew need in order to be competent to read Cabin Crew Manuals, both a corpus-based approach and an expert-judgement approach were used to develop the Crew-related English Word (CREW) List. According to the corpus-based approach, the selected technical vocabulary in the CCM Corpus was based on two criteria: the specialized occurrence and range. Therefore, the selected vocabulary needs to occur outside the GSL and AWL lists, and occur in two out of three of the sub-corpora of the CCM Corpus. The CCM Corpus was analyzed with AntWordProfiler Software, and the preliminary word list was created from the results of the software.

Consequently, 845 word families met the criteria for the next step of expert-judgement. Three subject matter experts rated the technicity of the word families using the rating scale adopted from Coxhead’s (2018) instructions and the rating scale. As a result, the subject matter experts approved 590 word families from the preliminary word list of 845 word families which are the technical vocabulary related to safety and security issues for cabin crew. A total of 255 word families were excluded since they were too general (e.g. website, pillow, necktie, etc.), too scientific (e.g. bacterium, zirconium, nitrogen, etc.), or not related to safety and security (e.g. espresso, menu, brew, etc.).

To prove the validity of the word families in the CREW List, the CREW List was compared in the AntWordProfiler to see the coverage of this word list. Table 4.5 displays the proportion of General Service Lists (GSL), Academic Word Lists (AWL)
and Crew-related English Word List (CREW List) as well as the number of word families in the CCM Corpus. The CREW List containing 590 word families covers up to 12.02% of the running tokens in the CCM Corpus. This number shows that the CREW List covers more tokens than AWL. Therefore, it implies that the CREW List is useful and important for cabin crew required to read Cabin Crew Manuals. Still, the cumulative coverage of the GSL, AWL and CREW List is only 87.96% of the running tokens in the CCM Corpus, and 12.04% of the running tokens in the CCM Corpus is not in the lists.

Nation and Hwang (1995) found that General Service Lists commonly cover around 75% of the running words in non-fiction texts and around 90% of the running words in fiction. However, GSL lists of the most frequent words covers only 66.43% of the running tokens with 1,464 word families (73.2% of word families in GSL) in the CCM Corpus. In other words, 536 word families or 26.8% in GSL lists are not in the CCM Corpus.

Furthermore, Table 2 shows that AWL covers only 9.51 of the running tokens in the CCM Corpus, which is below Coxhead’s (2000) study of 10% coverage of the academic corpus. Only 468 word families or 82.11% of AWL occurred in the CCM Corpus. Accordingly, GSL together with AWL cover only 75.94% of the CCM Corpus and it is almost 20% below the minimal threshold of 95% of the text coverage for reading comprehension.

### Table 2 The proportion of word lists coverage and word families in the CCM Corpus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word Lists</th>
<th>Tokens</th>
<th>% coverage in tokens</th>
<th>Cumulative coverage in tokens</th>
<th>% Word families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 GSL 1st 1000</td>
<td>603,826</td>
<td>57.29</td>
<td>57.29</td>
<td>855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 GSL 2nd 1000</td>
<td>96,313</td>
<td>9.14</td>
<td>66.43</td>
<td>609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 AWL</td>
<td>100,187</td>
<td>9.51</td>
<td>75.94</td>
<td>468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 CREW List</td>
<td>126,695</td>
<td>12.02</td>
<td>87.96</td>
<td>590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 Not in the lists</td>
<td>126,920</td>
<td>12.04</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,053,941</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The principle objectives of this study are divided into two points to answer the research questions: to measure the vocabulary load of the corpus that cabin crew need to read Cabin Crew Manuals with 95% of text coverage, and to identify technical vocabulary and create a Crew-related English Word List (CREW List) for cabin crew to read Cabin Crew Manuals more efficiently. Principally, this study compiled
vocabulary from seven Cabin Crew Manuals used by an air operator in Thailand to create three sub-corpora, e.g. Airbus Sub-corpus, Boeing Sub-corpus, and CCM Part 1 Sub-corpus. Subsequently, these three sub-corpora were assembled as the CCM Corpus to be used as one of the key instruments in this corpus-based study.

From this CCM Corpus, the study investigated the vocabulary load in the CCM corpus to measure the number of word families needed by cabin crew to read Cabin Crew Manuals with 95% of the text coverage. Measuring by the corpus-based approach based on BNC/COCA word family lists (Nation, 2012), an estimated vocabulary level for cabin crew is in the range of the most frequent 8,000 word families. In other words, 4,136 word families including proper nouns, marginal words, transparent compounds and acronyms are needed by cabin crew to cover 95.76% of the lexical coverage in the CCM Corpus, which is a minimal threshold vocabulary needed for reading comprehension with one unknown word in every 20 words.

Compared to other studies, cabin crew need more vocabulary load than other disciplines. The vocabulary load for novels and newspapers are only at the level of 4,000 word families (Nation, 2006). For business research articles and engineering textbooks, the vocabulary level needed is at 5,000 word families (Hsu, 2014). With the vocabulary level of 8,000 word families comparable to the 95.76% of the text coverage in Cabin Crew Manuals, 98% text coverage threshold of reading comprehension is reached in novels, newspapers (Nation, 2006), and business research articles (Hsu, 2014).

To develop a word list for cabin crew, the CCM Corpus was used according to the corpus-based approach to extract the necessary vocabulary with the criteria of specialized occurrence and range. As a result, 845 word families met the criteria for the rating scale approach by subject matter experts to rate the degree of technicality of the words, which is believed to be the most reliable method for considering the technical vocabulary. Three subject matter experts finally rated with a scale adapted from Coxhead (2018) and agreed that 590 word families are technical and suitable to create the Crew-related English Word (CREW) List. With the CREW List, the coverage of text in the CCM Corpus is 12.02%.

This number is higher than some of previous studies in other disciplines. For example, a pilot science-specific word list (Coxhead and Hirsh, 2007) containing 318 word families covers only 3.79% of a pilot science corpus, and the Medical Word List (Hsu, 2013) containing 595 word families, covers only 10.72% of the corpus of English-medium medical textbooks. However, the CREW List covers the running tokens in its corpus less than the Nursing Academic Word List (Yang, 2015) which covers 13.64% of the nursing research articles corpus with 676 word families, and the Engineering English Word Lists (Hsu, 2014) which covers 14.3% of its corpus with 729 word families.
5.2 Pedagogical Implications

The results of this study suggest several significant pedagogical implications for cabin crew, cabin safety instructors, cabin crew English instructors, material designers, and syllabus developers. Firstly, the CREW List is a useful resource as a reference for Thai cabin crew, both newly recruited crew and existing crew, who are in the context of English as a Foreign Language to read Cabin Crew Manuals more effectively. Secondly, the instructors of airlines whose work is related to safety courses can be aware of the vocabulary that cabin crew might have difficulties with, and can therefore emphasize the meaning of the words in context for mutual and better understanding in order to efficiently understand the manuals for the sake of the passengers’ and their own safety. Lastly, cabin crew English instructors should be able to develop this word list in the speaking classes where cabin crew can practice using the vocabulary in the real context interacting about the safety issues with passengers or orally answering the safety questions posed by the auditors from aviation authorities.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

The corpus used in this study was compiled from Cabin Crew Manuals used by only one air operator in Thailand. Hence, the number of the running tokens are only around one million tokens, which is small in the current standard of corpus-based studies. Owing to the confidentiality of the materials used to create a corpus, the access to other companies’ manuals and the necessary cooperation would be burdensome. In addition, the word lists used in this study to generate the specialized occurrences are aged. GSL (West, 1953) and AWL (Coxhead, 2000) are the classic word lists, but have been developed for decades. Even though these word lists might be outdated, they are still widely used in many corpus-based studies. Nonetheless, there are several word lists developed with the equivalent purposes according to GSL and AWL, which are more updated.

5.4 Recommendations for Further Studies

For further studies, more manuals from other airlines and aircraft types should be collected to create the corpus to investigate the range of the vocabulary and create more general word list to be generally used for cabin crew working in other airlines. Moreover, lists of collocations should be studied since collocations are common and many words in the CREW List always occur with another as chunks. Moreover, updated word lists, for example, the New General Service List (NGSL) by Browne, Culligan, and Phillips. (2013), and the New Academic Vocabulary List (AVL) by Gardner and Davies (2013) are suggested to use for comparison of validity against the classic word lists. In addition, this study did not examine the vocabulary size of the cabin crew to identify their vocabulary level. Thus, there are places for further studies
to bridge the gaps and validate the findings from this study.

References


FACTORS AFFECTING ENGLISH SPEAKING ABILITY OF THAI UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract
This study investigated problems that hinder Thai EFL students to speak English and contributing factors that support students’ speaking skills. The participants were 60 non-English major students who enrolled English for Communication class in 2018 at Nakhon Phanom University. The data were collected through a 22-item questionnaire related to the problems and supporting factors of English speaking. The questionnaires were distributed to the students and collected back within 1 day. The results of the analyses revealed that most students found it difficult to speak English because they were afraid of making mistakes and they felt anxious while speaking. However, the most significant factors that support English speaking skills found were the teachers’ support and frequent exposure to English environment. The findings can be valuable resources for pedagogical implications in which the teachers can develop proper English teaching methods and help students overcome their difficulties in oral performance so as to communicate effectively in their real life.

Keywords: Communication Strategies, Speaking Skills, EFL Teaching and Learning, Speaking Anxiety
1. Introduction

English has been accepted as an international language used throughout the world for different purposes. In the present days, English communication becomes the international connection between people and organizations. Thailand and many other countries in ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) have invested considerable resources in English based on the belief that views English as the language of development. The role of English in Thailand is quite important as it is in other developing countries.

Thailand has always been a country with one official language which is Thai. Therefore, most Thai students of English have little opportunities to use English on a daily basis. Thai students have few chances to speak English in their everyday life despite the fact that English is the first foreign language that Thai students must study in schools. Thais’ English proficiency has been significantly low comparing with those of Southeast Asian countries. According to the national survey conducted by the Education First (EF) English Proficiency Index, the results showed that Thailand ranked the 14th out of 16 countries in Asia and the 62nd out of 70 countries worldwide with a ranking of “very low proficiency” (Education First EPI, 2015.) The findings were based on English tests by 910,000 adults from 70 countries in 2014.

Evidence of inefficiency can also be found through scores on standardized tests such as the results of TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) examination worldwide in the year of 2015. The result showed that Thailand ranked 40th out of 46 participating countries (TOEIC, 2016)

2. Literature Review

2.1 English language teaching and learning in Thailand

As Nunan (1999) stated that English is universally accepted as a means of communication. From the past decades, English has been playing an important role for all people around the world in various aspects. English is essential for the development of all countries in terms of education, innovation, technology, politics and economy. In Thailand, English is considered a primary foreign language and is used for communication in many fields such as trade, tourism including academic and career advancement. Thus, examining English Language Teaching and learning in Thailand is a matter of necessity.
In order to focus on teaching approaches which promote students’ speaking skill and help them to achieve communicative competence, there are various methods for teaching such approaches. Some teaching theories will be introduced as following:

2.1.1 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)
In CLT, language learning emphasizes learning to communicate as opposed to learning a set of rules. The primary focus of CLT is to develop students with knowledge and skills needed to achieve communicative competence. Second language teachers have been encouraged to employ Communicative Language Teaching in their classroom because CLT emphasizes on the communication of meaning rather than extensive practice of grammatical forms (Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

2.1.2 Computer Assisted Language Learning
CALL has provided a powerful tool for language learning for several reasons. One example is to provide students with the authenticity of the input. Teachers can use CALL to provide students a variety of language learning resources of authentic input. Through authentic learning activities such as problem-solving, information gap, language games, animated graphics, students have to interact actively with authentic contexts and practice in the target language. As a result, students’ interest, motivation and confidence will be promoted (Skinner & Austin, 1999).

2.1.3 Content-Based Instruction (CBI)
Content based instruction (CBI) is a teaching method that emphasizes learning about something rather than learning about language. Krashen’s (1983) comprehensible input hypothesis explained a rationale for the CBI development in second language contexts. He proposed that language is best acquired through immense exposure to comprehensible second language input.

According to the typical English language teaching practices in Thai context, Saengboon, 2004 (as cited in Khamkhien, 2010) claimed that Thai teachers mostly adopt the Grammar-translation and audio-lingual methods which focus on grammar rules and rote memorization for many decades. Thus, speaking skill was not focused as equally important as other language skills. For many years most Thai teachers taught speaking by having students repeat sentences and recite memorized textbook dialogues. So, students supposedly learned to speak by focusing on grammatical structures rather than a real speaking practice.
2.2 Problems that hinder speaking abilities

In terms of teaching approaches, Foley (2005) pointed out that most teachers still attach to the use of the grammar-translation and audio-lingual methods in a typical English classroom in Thailand. Most English classes were taught by Thai teachers who emphasized on grammar and vocabulary in all lessons. He also commented that factors that caused limited success of English language teaching in Thailand are the grammar-translation teaching method, learning media, inappropriate learning materials including testing and evaluation.

The fact that Thai students have always been taught English language by Thai teachers through the Grammar-translation and the audiolingual method leads to the result that students did not have much experience in speaking English to native speakers and each other as it supposed to be. Several factors that impede students’ speaking abilities are as following:

2.2.1 Fear of Making Mistakes and Speaking Anxiety
Anxiety is considered to be a significant factor which affects speaking ability of a person. This idea was supported by a study from Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) which discussed that anxiety can create negative feelings to the speakers of other languages. For instance, anxiety can lead to poor speaking performance since it resulted from the fear of receiving negative feedback. Moreover, it can block people from speaking as the speakers can feel uncomfortable if they have to speak in front of the public.

There are several related studies regarding anxiety, for example, a study of Phillips (1992) showed that there is some relation between language anxiety and oral performance; the more anxious the students were, the lower performance they showed in oral tests. In addition, anxious students tend to express negative attitudes toward oral tests. The results of the study suggest that language anxiety can affect greatly on the learner’s performance and attitudes toward language learning.

2.2.2. Fear of Negative Evaluation
According to Gregersen and Horwitz (2002), anxious students are likely to compare their speaking skills negatively with their peers. Therefore, these students do not like to participate in speaking activities because they believed that they were not good at speaking English and they are afraid that their classmates would evaluate them negatively.
2.2.3. Communication Apprehension
One of the most studied topics in the field of oral communication is the tendency on the part that some people avoid, and even fear to communicate orally. Horwitz et al. (1986: 128) define communication apprehension (CA) as “a type of shyness characterized by fear or anxiety about communicating with people”. Most of the study in this area is based on McCroskey’s (1997a, p. 78: cited in Apaibanditkul, 2006: 3) concept of communication apprehension as a person’s level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons.

2.2.4. Limited Exposure to the English Language
Thai students’ exposure to English language is somewhat limited. Most of them have three hours of English classes per week. So, they have only forty-five hours per semester or ninety hours per year to study English. According to Archibald et al. (2006, p.3), “Learning a second language for 95 hours per year for six years will not lead to functional bilingualism and fluency in the second language.”

In addition, lack of opportunities to practice speaking English outside the classroom resulted in embarrassment and stress when they are required to speak English in their real life situations. So, the limited exposure to speak English in the classroom and lack of opportunities to speak English outside the class will not lead to the fully development of the second language students’ communicative abilities.

2.2.5. Lack of Topical Knowledge
Many studies found that students often complain that they cannot think of anything to say and they are not motivated to express themselves through English speaking. Rivers (1968) believes that the students who have nothing to say is maybe because they do not have knowledge or information of a particular topic. In addition, if the teacher chose a topic which is not close to their interest or the one which they know so little, students would feel that it is difficult to respond as they might have little idea about what to say, which vocabulary to use, or how to use the grammar correctly (Baker & Westrup, 2003).

2.2.6. Uneven Participation
Another problem which was found to hinder students’ speaking ability in the speaking class is that participation is low or uneven. In a large group, each student will have very little talking time because only one participant can talk at a time so that the others can hear him or her. Therefore, it is highly possible that some students might dominate while other students speak very little or not at all.
2.2.7. L1 Interference
When all students share the same mother-tongue, they tend to use it because it is easier for them. Harmer (1991) suggests some reasons why students use mother-tongue in the class. First, when the students are asked to discuss about a topic that they are unable to talk and if they want to say something about the topic, they will use their own language instead. Another reason is that the use of mother-tongue is a natural thing to do. If there is no encouragement from teachers to speak only second language in the class, students tend to use their first language automatically to talk to each other. Finally, if teachers frequently use the students’ language, the students will feel comfortable to do it as well.

2.2.8. Linguistically-Related Constraints
Linguistic problems are also proven to be main factors that impede EFL students’ speaking skills. Regarding linguistic problems, Derwing and Rossiter (2002), for instance, found that EFL students were not satisfied with their own pronunciation so this resulted in communication breakdowns because of their mispronunciation and inaccuracy of suprasegmental features.

2.3 Factors that help improve speaking skills
In order to provide effective guidance to develop proficient speakers of English, it is necessary to examine some skills or strategies proved to help improve speaking proficiency. These aspects will be examined so that teachers can more effectively help students develop their abilities to communicate effectively in the second language.

2.3.1 In-Class Factors
In the English communication class, teachers should encourage students to use and practice different strategies that can aid them when they are required to speak English in various situations. There are several solutions and strategies that should be put into practice. For example, the one from Anne Lazaraton who offers a variety of exercises to be used in the classrooms such as poems, rhymes, dialogues, monologues, role plays, debates, interviews, simulations, drama scenes, discussions, conversations, etc. (Lazaraton, 2001) Creating classroom activities in order to enhance students’ interaction will definitely resulted in better language learning proficiency.

Tutyandari (2005) emphasized the importance of the teacher as a counsellor who provided support for students’ need for language learning. She also suggested that teachers should give students activities in small group in order to reduce their anxiety and to enhance their self-confidence as well.
2.3.2. Out-of-Class Factors

In order to improve speaking ability, it is important for EFL students to know which skills or features they need to develop. In this respect, there are several practices which stated different goals that students needed to achieve. For instance, listening skill is considered a crucial element that is needed to develop together with speaking skill in order to enhance students’ speaking abilities. Boonkit (2010) found that frequent listening to English materials, such as listening to music, watching movies, listening to the radio, watching television programs, and accessing multimedia websites are factors that enhance speaking skills. Likewise, EFL students should seek opportunities to practice listening along with speaking skills by practicing those previously mentioned strategies. There are also interactive online resources available for EFL students to practice listening, writing, reading, and speaking English at home such as the “BBC learning English” website, Duolingo website and mobile app, etc.

In addition, suggestions for EFL students’ speaking improvement covered a variety of course activities, encouragement for more exposure to listening through media, and seeking opportunities to speak English in real life situations with the native speakers of English. Moreover, practice and exposure to both listening and speaking activities in real world situations were found to be a practical method to promote speaking confidence (Songsiri, 2007 cited in Boonkit, 2010).

2.4 Related previous studies

In this part of the study, some previous studies relating to the factors influencing speaking skills were reviewed. These studies were carried out in order to identify the factors supporting students’ speaking performance or hinder students’ speaking ability.

Jindathai (2015) carried out a study using a self-compiled questionnaire to investigate problematic factors which affect English speaking abilities among engineering students at Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology (TNI). The findings revealed that the major causes of the students’ English speaking problems were management in teaching and learning English, limited opportunity to speak English, and being worried to make mistakes while speaking.

Khamkhien (2010) conducted a study to address serious problems found in English Language Teaching in Thailand especially in English speaking. He concluded with some suggestion that teachers may support students’ English speaking performance by not only focusing on speaking phrases or everyday expressions, but also focus on communicating in real life situation including increasing linguistic knowledge such as, phonetics, lexical items, pragmatic knowledge, etc.
Khamprated (2012) investigated speaking problems Thai students encountered when they speak English. The findings of the study indicated that students found it was difficult to speak English due to several reasons. They found it difficult to understand speakers who speak with regional accent and speak too fast. Moreover, students felt that they have trouble understanding jokes due to cultural differences. Limited knowledge of grammar and vocabularies also made it difficult for students to speak English as they would feel worried and nervous when speaking to foreigners. Furthermore, they were afraid that other people would laugh at them if they made any mistakes while speaking.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design
The questionnaires were distributed to the target group by convenience sampling method. There are two versions of the questionnaire in order to minimize problems of misinterpretation. The first version was written in English while the second was a Thai version. The Thai version will be distributed to the students. The questionnaire was piloted with five students from another major and some wording was revised.

3.2 Data Collection
The Thai-version questionnaires (Appendix B) were distributed to the respondents in March 2018. Sixty students were required to respond to the prepared questionnaires. Prior to distributing the questionnaire, the researcher visited the class and explained in detail about the purpose of the study and the way the participants were expected to respond to the questionnaire. The questionnaires were distributed in paper to make sure that all the respondents have access to the questionnaires and would be able to send back the questionnaires within that day.

3.3 Data Analysis
The data obtained from the distributed questionnaires was analyzed statistically using SPSS program. There are five levels of agreement in the questionnaires. The demographic data of respondents were analyzed by the percentage and frequency count.

The factors of English speaking problems and the factors that help students improve their speaking skills were calculated by using a Mean and Standard Deviation (S.D.). The interpretation of the responses was calculated by using the following formula:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Level of Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.51 – 5.00</td>
<td>very high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.51 – 4.50</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.51 – 3.50</td>
<td>moderate/undecided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.51 – 2.50</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00 – 1.50</td>
<td>very low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Personal Information

The result in this section presents the demographic data of respondents including gender, age, and duration that respondents have been learning English in formal education.

Table 4.1: Respondents’ Personal Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>58.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>41.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years that respondents have been learning English in formal education</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-10</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Background</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English Major</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-English Majors</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among the 60 respondents as shown in Table 4.1, majority were male (35 respondents, 58.33%), and 25 respondents were female (41.66%). All of them belong
to the age groups of 18-22 (100%). 75% of the respondents have been learning English in formal education for more than 7 years. Moreover, all of them were non-English major students.

4.2 Problems that hinder students’ English speaking ability
The information of Table 4.2 provides information on the factors that hinder students’ English-speaking ability and aims to answer the research question number 1. The answers from five-point Likert scale (5 very high, 4 high, 3 moderate/undecided, 2 low, 1 very low) give more details on how respondents think about each factor.

Table 4.2: Factors that Hinder Students’ English-Speaking Ability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I feel anxious when I have to speak English.</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I feel shy to speak a foreign language.</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>English teaching in my class is mainly explaining and practicing grammar rules.</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>My teacher often corrects my errors in the class when I communicate in English.</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I am worried about making mistakes when I speak English.</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I am afraid of being criticized or losing face.</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I cannot think of anything to say.</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I have no motivation to speak English.</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I speak English very little or not at all in my real life.</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I do not know how to pronounce some words, phrases, and sentences correctly.</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>My English class is overcrowded, so I do not have sufficient time to practice speaking.</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>Undecided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>The language used in the English class by my teacher is mostly Thai.</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total Average Score | 3.73 | 0.83 |     |

As shown in Table 4.2, respondents think that “fear of making mistakes” is the most problematic factor in English speaking with the mean of 4.06. “Feeling anxious when required to speak English” is chosen by respondents to be the second most problematic factor with the mean of 4.01. While “I cannot think of anything to say”
ranked the third most chosen by respondents with the mean of 4.00. On the other hand, “overcrowded English classrooms” is ranked lowest with the mean of 2.88.

4.3 Factors that help improve students’ English speaking ability

The information from Table 4.3 and Table 4.4 aim to answer the research question number 2 on what factors that help improve students’ speaking skills. The questionnaires are divided into 6 questions regarding in-class and out-of-class factors that support speaking skills. These factors are teachers’ support, frequent exposure to English resources through a variety of English media, speaking activities, seeking opportunities to speak in real situations, teacher’s support, and frequent practice of English speaking outside the classroom.

Table 4.3: In-Class Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I like my teacher to create an environment that encourages us to use English in the classroom.</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I enjoy doing activities in the class e.g. dialogues, role plays, debates, and simulations.</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I feel good with teacher’s encouragement through phrases like “You can do this” and “You have the potential and the ability”.</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Average Score 3.88 0.76 High

Table 4.4: Out-of-Class Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I believe that listening to music, watching movies, and listening to the news in English can help improve my listening and speaking skills.</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I always practice speaking English outside the classroom.</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>Undecided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>I always seek opportunities to speak English with foreigners.</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>Undecided</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Average Score 3.32 0.86 Undecided
The Table 4.3 and 4.4 showed that the mean scores of the in-class factors that help improve students’ speaking skills were higher than that of out-of-class factors. In other words, the in-class factors which can help improve students’ speaking ability were at high level (Mean = 3.88) While, the mean scores of out-of-class factors were 3.32 which was at undecided level.

5. Conclusion
This study aimed to investigate the problems that affect students’ ability to speak English and to find factors that help them improve their speaking skills.

The findings obtained from the questionnaires revealed that most respondents shared the same thought and attitudes towards problematic factors that hinder their speaking ability and also factors that help support their speaking skills.

With regard to the problematic factors, there are a number of factors that inhibit students from speaking English effectively. The most highly rated factor is the affective fear of making mistakes, anxiety, and having nothing to say. Students’ anxiety level had a negative relationship to their oral performance and they had difficulties to speak English because they were afraid of making mistakes. Similarly, the findings of this study showed that most Thai EFL students encountered the same problem when speaking English. Most respondents agreed that they were afraid to say something incorrectly or they would make grammatical mistakes when speaking.

For supporting factors, the most significant factor that help improve students’ speaking skills is teachers’ support. Most respondents agreed that substantial support from teachers will definitely help students overcome those difficulties in oral performance. For in-class setting, teachers should provide students with friendly and fun environment so as to make students feel comfortable to speak English in the class. Teachers’ support not only happen in the classroom, but also outside the classroom as well. Teachers may increase students’ exposure to English by encouraging them to engage in activities outside the classroom at their own time. For example, listening to music, watching movies and news in English, etc. By accumulating these practices, the researcher believes that it will help respondents speak more fluently and confidently to the extent that they applied what they have learnt both in and outside the classroom to the real conversation in their real life.
5.1 Recommendations for further study and limitation

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, there are some issues that need to be addressed for further researches.

5.5.1 For future research: the participants in this research is 60 non-English major students. Thus, the further research should be conducted with more variety of the sample groups. For example, sample groups should be non-English and English-major university students, in order to gain broader and more diverse information. The expected results might be different from conducted a research with only one sample group since it might be too limited to draw general conclusions.

5.5.2 A set of questions used in the questionnaire is too fixed. Use of open-ended questions or the interview are suggested for future research as it can enhance the quality of the study qualitatively.

5.5.3 With regards to the pedagogical implications: Teachers may consider and adopt CLT approach to teach students English speaking. In addition, teachers may employ a wide selection of in-class activities which focus on communicative tasks such as, dialogues, role plays, debates, impromptu speech activity and simulations.

References


SCIENCE TEACHERS’ AND LEARNERS’ ATTITUDES TOWARD CONTENT-BASED INSTRUCTION: A CASE STUDY OF A BILINGUAL PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Abstract
This study attempted to explore Thai Primary students and science teachers’ attitudes toward Content-Based Instruction (CBI) which is applied in Science classrooms in a bilingual school case study. The participants were two foreign science teachers and two Thai science teachers who taught in Primary 3-5 level, together with 17 Thai Primary 3-5 level of students. The case study technique allowed the semi-structured interviews to elicit detailed information about science teachers’ and students’ attitudes toward CBI science classroom, which were separated into 6 categories: attitude toward content and language learning, attitude toward materials, attitude toward activities/tasks, attitude toward the teacher/students, attitude toward evaluation, and difficulties experienced, followed with suggestions. The data was analyzed qualitatively through the content analysis, while the instructional materials and relevant documents were also collected and analyzed in order to confirm the interview findings obtained. The results indicated that these primary science teachers and students had good attitudes toward the CBI in science classroom, with the reasons that students can acquire both subject content and the language skills, and apparently the CBI approach increased students’ confidence in speaking and gaining academic vocabulary. Moreover, the significant aspect of scaffolding by L1 instruction was perceived as useful and important from both the teacher and student attitudes. The
teachers and students point out difficulties and make suggestions for the CBI science subject.

**Keywords:** Content-Based Instruction, Science subject, Attitude, Thai EFL Primary students

1. Introduction

   English is a lingual Franca which is widely used for international communication language. Many methods and approaches have been implemented for foreign language teaching. The history of development of English language teaching has evolved and integrated with many other disciplines. The pedagogical approaches which integrate subject content and language teaching are named differently from many parts of the world, such as Content-based instruction (CBI), Content and Language integrated learning (CLIL), English as a medium of instruction (EMI) and so on. Numerous research studies advocate the effectiveness of CBI in second language learning (Grabe & Stoller, 1997; Snow & Brinton, 1997; Stryker & Leaver, 1997). Stryker and Leaver (1997) highlighted that the content is the key to learn the language. Learning the academic content leads to the development of the language skills. They will gain both content and language knowledge simultaneously. Although the trend of teaching the language integrated with the content to younger learners is rising around the world, critics have noted that language teachers might be insufficient to teach subject matter. Also, there is a lack of attention to language teaching rather than the delivery of subject content (Pica, 2002).

   Interests in CBI is gradually increasing in Thailand. The Thai educational system has been launching a curriculum and national policy in schools and higher education institutions. Consequently, there are increasing English medium programs in Thai context. However, a previous study of Warrington (2008) which explored Asian EFL learners in the content-based instruction class. There were some concerns about students’ lacking sufficient knowledge of English to understand the content. Also, the learners may feel confused, and demotivated. Although there were many studies examining teachers’ attitudes in Thai context, their scope was restricted mainly to English classrooms, rather than other subjects. Besides, the research settings in Thai research were highlighted in higher levels of education and university level rather than Primary levels or younger learners. Hence, the absence studies in the particular population revealed a gap in the literature.

   Regarding the issues mentioned above, the purpose of this case study is to discover science teachers’ attitudes and Thai primary students’ attitudes toward Content-based instruction in science classrooms at a bilingual program of a private school in
Thailand. The findings will provide a useful resource for relevant practitioners, curriculum designing and planning further.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

1. To explore primary science teachers’ attitudes toward the application of Content-Based Instruction in a science classroom.

2. To explore students’ attitudes toward content-based instruction in science subject.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What are teachers’ attitudes toward content-based instruction in a science classroom?

2. What are students’ attitudes toward content-based instruction in a science classroom?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Content-Based Instruction

According to Stoller and Grabe (1997), Content-Based Instruction (CBI) is the integration of language teaching with the content instruction for a second language (L2) context. However, the approaches differ depending on contexts and settings, different aspects of integration of content and language and degree of selection and sequencing the content. Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) stated that CBI gets students exposed to meaningful contextualized language in the authentic materials, texts and tasks. As instructional approaches, “CBI and CLIL share fundamental philosophical and theoretical underpinnings and can be considered to be synonymous in that regard” (Tedick & Cammarata, 2012, p.29). In this paper, the terms CBI and CLIL are used synonymously.

Models of Content-Based Instruction (CBI)

The models of CBI have come from various famous researchers, namely, Brinton, Snow, and Wesche (1989), Richards and Rodgers (2012), Stoller and Grabe (1997) and Stryker and Leaver (1997). For the early models, the approach was formed by Brinton, Snow, and Wesche (1989). They presented three models of CBI developed in second language teaching contexts. These included the sheltered model, the adjunct model, and the theme-based model.

1) Sheltered Model - In a sheltered class, a content is main focused and taught in a second language by a content expertise (Brinton et al., 1989).

2) Adjunct Model - Adjunct instruction allows students simultaneously study in a language course and a content course which are linked between the two teachers – language teacher and content teacher (Snow, 2001).
3) Theme-Based Model – The theme-based course can be taught by an English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher. Learners are exposed rich comprehensible input (Brinton et al, 1989).

In conclusion, Content-Based Instruction is a method that provides learners both language competency and subject knowledge with authentic, meaningful academic materials. Since the teacher teaches the content through the language, students will have an opportunity to get both the content and language which differs from other approaches.

2.2 Bilingual Education and English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI)
English as medium of instruction (EMI) refers to the use of the English language to teach academic subjects in countries where the first language is not English. Dearden (2014) mentioned that the term EMI is used as synonymous with CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) since the educational concepts of CLIL, CBI and learning through EMI share the same pedagogical objective aiming to improve students’ second language proficiency (Wannagat, 2007). However, CLIL is built on a dual educational objective, namely, content and language, whereas EMI is not.

2.3 Attitudes
Attitude refers to the feeling of a person toward surrounding people, objects, their environment or events. In this sense, attitudes help us define how we perceive situations and behave toward phenomenon or objects. “Attitudes are a complex combination of things regarding personality, beliefs, values, behaviors, and motivations” (Pickens, 2005, p.44). In terms of science education, van Aalderen-Smeet and Walma van der Molen’s (2015) article presented a new approach to primary teachers’ professional development. The theoretical framework of primary teachers’ attitudes towards science was developed from van Aalderen-Smeets, Walma van der Molen and Asma (2012), and consists of three elements, including Cognition, Affect, and Perceived control, providing seven subcategories that illustrate different thoughts, and feelings toward teaching science.

2.4 Related Studies
In Thai context, Phonlabutra (2007) conducted a case study using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The qualitative data were on-site observations (field notes, audio and video recordings, lesson plans, students’ work and instructional materials), interviews, and questionnaires. The aim of the study was to investigate teachers’ and students’ difficulties in an English content-based program in a junior high school in Thailand. The participants included two English-speaking teachers, the program coordinator, an English math teacher, an English science teacher, 7 Thai teachers. For the students, there were 192 students asking for completing questionnaires, followed
by 10 students were interviewed. In addition, six parents were interviewed regarding their expectation, their children’s academic achievement and so on. The Thai science teacher addressed the lack of content depth covered in the science subjects taught in English. The science teacher also could not cover topics in the same amount of detail compared with the Thai curriculum. Some of the teachers claimed that students should learn science more in Thai in order to understand the concepts. An English science teacher admitted that the Thai course was important due to students’ lack of comprehension, typically in the hard concepts in English language.

Similarly, Croyle (2014) conducted a study to investigate the difficulties and strategies which teachers and students had in science instruction using English as a medium. The study employed a mix-method approach by using survey questionnaires and interviews. The participant were 74 upper secondary science and math students and two English language science teachers examined at a late partial immersion program in Northeastern Thailand. For teacher difficulties, the findings showed several problems, including the lack of depth instruction, the inability to cover all material, mixed proficiency classes, coordination difficulties, gender differences, cultural sensitivities, lack of English in the environment, academic habits of the students and teaches’ lack of proficiency in students’ first language. From the student point of view, the difficulties mentioned were difficulties in science as a subject, vocabulary, teacher language, low-level questioning and asking for help, along with processing and memorizing facts.

From above reviewed literature, there are many studies both advocating the effectiveness and mentioning the challenges and difficulties in an implementation of content-based instruction in any levels of education. Few in-depth research studies have been conducted in the primary level of students, especially in science classrooms in the Thai context. Most of research was conducted with a quantitative approach from large participant samples to find the generalized results. However, there are many factors and other conditions among school, teachers, and student factors which are not able to be controlled. Therefore, it is important to investigate the attitudes of teachers concerning language and content learning as happens in Thai science classrooms, especially in primary school, in a qualitative case study. The reason is that a case study uses a naturalistic inquiry research methodology focusing on the real-life settings. In addition, interviews with open-ended questions can gain in-depth information concerning participants’ opinions, experiences, and attitudes in their own voices.
3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design
The research design that I chose for this study is a case study. Yin (2003) defined a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon in its real-life context.” (p.13). Comparing to a nature of quantitative study, the single result is required. In contrast, there would be many more variables of interest than data statistical results. As this sense, the characteristics of the case study will provide the in-depth description of what and how they experienced through multiple sources of evidence.

3.2 Participants and Research Context
The case study occurred in a private bilingual school setting in Bangkok. Two foreign teachers and two Thai science teachers were responsible in primary levels of this school study. The student participants were selected by a purposeful sampling. Seventeen Primary 3-5 students were selected.

3.3 Research Instruments
This research study applied qualitative case study methods to examine the teachers’ and students’ attitudes toward CBI. Data from interviews, instructional materials and relevant documents were collected to confirm the findings obtained.

The semi-structured interviews in this study were adapted from research studies of Phonlabuta (2007) and Croyle (2014). The questions were organized into 6 categories (Wongnarut, 2016): (1) attitude toward content and language learning, (2) attitude toward materials, (3) attitude toward activities/tasks, (4) attitude toward the teacher/students, (5) attitude toward evaluation, and (6) difficulties experienced. (See Appendix A and B)

The student interviews employed a focus group approach to obtain the attitudes of the students. Focus groups “capitalize on the interaction among the group members to enhance the collection of deep, strongly held beliefs and perspectives” (Carey & Asbury, 2012, p.17). In this sense, the students could help one another to discuss interactively and generate new aspects of attitudes. The focus group interviews in this study were divided into 3 groups depending their levels (Primary 3, 4 and 5). The interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed verbatim as soon as possible. Every participant was protected in confidentiality.

The instructional materials collected in this study were mainly collected from Primary 3 and 5, since the researcher asked the participants to provide information voluntarily. Therefore, some instructional materials from Primary 4 level might not appear in the document analysis in the part of relevant document reviewing. Relevant documents such as teaching materials, textbook and workbook, PowerPoint slides, worksheets,
and other relevant documents, were collected and used to confirm the interview data. Patterns and characteristics found in each material were coded, and then compared across interview transcripts.

3.4 Data collection
Firstly, the interview questions were verified using the evaluation form of “Item-Objective Congruence Index” (IOC) so as to assure the content and construct validity of the instrument. The interview questions were revised according to the advisors’ comments and piloted with a Primary 5 student and Thai science teachers who shared similar characteristics. After the pilot study had been completed, the researcher had the opportunity to rearrange the order of the questions and noted more probing questions for further interviews.

Secondly, the semi-structured interviews were employed to elicit detailed information about science teachers’ and students’ attitudes toward CBI science classroom. The researcher interviewed the foreign science teachers by English language, while using Thai language with the Thai science teachers. The interviews were recorded via digital recorder. Each interview was approximately 30-50 minutes in duration. Consequently, the interview recordings were transcribed verbatim as soon as possible. For the student participants, the students’ parents were given the consent form before the interviews. Next, the researcher interviewed each focus group with the listed questions in Thai language. The interviews lasted approximately 45-60 minutes for each group and were audio-recorded.

Finally, the relevant documents, such as instructional materials, course outlines and the course information, were collected to explore the materials and practices of the course which will reflect the teachers’ attitudes and to confirm the interview information. Moreover, during the time of investigation, there was a summer course between mid-March until mid-April. Therefore, the related summer course handouts were collected as well. Some of the documents were able to be kept for later analysis, but some were not. So, teachers allowed the researcher to take photos instead. For gaining the reasons behind the use of materials and attitude towards them, the researcher asked some questions to the teachers during the review of provided documents.

3.5 Data Analysis
The content analysis was used for organizing information into meaningful themes related to the research questions. The data from the transcribing were coded into essential aspects and then they were interpreted to answer the research questions in
different categories. After that, the document analysis was used to review and evaluate the relevant documents and materials.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Research Question 1: What are teachers’ attitudes toward content-based instruction in a science classroom?

According to the first research question, the findings from the semi-structured interviews revealed several aspects according to the various attitude categories shown in Appendix A. The following section presents the significant themes mentioned among the informants frequently for data findings, followed by the discussion.

(1) Students Mastering both Language and Content Knowledge

The foreign teachers viewed the CBI science subject as beneficial to the students with the reason that students master both language and content knowledge, especially on science vocabulary and listening and speaking skills, as T1 revealed: “CBI is the best in the way that students can learn English when they learn subject content. So, we have to prepare the interesting topic to them.”

(2) Increasing Listening and Speaking Skills

The CBI science subject increased English listening and speaking skills, in the sense of gaining more confidence in foreign teacher interaction. CBI approach also encouraged students with interesting topics, leading them to express more. Their excerpts are as follows.

T2: “It helps students improve language skill, mostly on vocabulary. It is useful for them.”

T3: “And I think they do well in the listening test because they get listening skill from this.”

The findings of the current study are consistent with those of other studies, which claimed that CBI learning is a combination method between academic learning and content knowledge. Learning the specific content encourages the development of the language skills (Brinton, Snow & Wesche, 1986; Richard & Rodgers, 2001; Stoller, 2004; Grace Chin-Wen Chien, 2011; Fernández-Costales, (2017); and Lai & Aksornjarung, 2018).

(3) The Use of Thai Language in the Class

Interestingly, all the science teachers agreed with the use of Thai language helping students understand the content. As a result of bilingual programming, the curriculum should be parallel to the Thai Science Curriculum. Their reasons were as follows.
T1: “I still think that Thai language is still important. Thai language is helpful. It helps them to understand Science in English.”
T2: “In class, Thai partner will help to handle class, and sometimes translate some difficult science words in Thai.”
T3: “I still believe that it’s essential to learn Science in Thai and English in a parallel way. …If they realized the content from Thai science before, then it’s not hard for them to study science in English. However, they need to memorize vocabulary regularly.”

Referring to Neil & Richard (2011), learners who had low proficiency needed translation into their L1 so that they were able to learn effectively. It could cause students to have a low self-concept about science (Yip et al., 2003). The findings are in line with previous research evidence (Reyes, 2008; Evans and Morrison, 2011; Ryan, 2012; Mezek, 2013) who found that students in L2-medium instruction struggled with comprehension, and technical terms in the lessons. The reasons were to assist weak students, clarify and explain topics, discipline students, and lecture the instruction (Maasum, Maaruf, Yamat, and Zakaria, 2012). However, Tan and Lan (2011) revealed that, it limited the development of their speaking and writing abilities.

(4) Authentic Materials Motivate Students, A Lack of Appropriate Textbook
For one hand, the teachers affirmed the benefit of authentic materials and texts in meaningful contexts leading to a rise in students’ attention, motivation and interest. According to Hope Christina (2015), students receive great exposure to the content and language simultaneously. On the other hand, the main concerns were about a lack of suitable textbook for the students in terms of appropriate texts, integrated content and language skills; also, the exercises required too much writing with long explanation. Therefore, the foreign teachers had to simplify the content for easier understanding, or rewrite it in the revision sheets. Also, the teachers always have to help students as a role model of writing the answers and allow students to copy. The following quotes provide a clarification.

T4: “Actually, he [foreign teacher] didn’t want this workbook contained lots of long writing answer, since he knew that Thai students were not able to write in a long explanation. Because students knew only short words and concept, answering only short keyword. Then, he solved the problem by allowing students copy the answer. Actually, he really would like to change textbook and workbook into just some pieces of worksheet instead.”
(5) A Few Chances to Conduct Experiments as a Time Limit
Although teachers realized the important of conducting experiments and using real objects, the main problems were time constraint and inability to control young learners in a laboratory class. Even so, a Thai science teacher pointed out that the science experiments were the best activity encouraging students to achieve the vocabulary memorization. The following expressions of respondents are as below.

T3: “The good materials must allow students to do experiment, and perform in the real situation…that’s the best way they can memorize. No matter what Thai or English Science subject, learning by doing will get students remembered, rather than teachers standing in front of the class give an explanation. But in the reality, we can’t do experiment in every single chapter such as ‘genetic topic’. It’s impossible to do experiment, but the topic like ‘cloud or rain formation’, yes it does.”

(6) Scaffoldings on Language
There were common attitudes among teachers, which had the following characteristics: the repetitive and slower speech, the simpler explanation, visual aids and multimedia materials, and a form-focused instruction on vocabulary. The teachers revealed in the interviews as follows.

T1: “I speak slowly, repeat again. I get them participate, encourage to speak. I will talk to them. Go and sit near them.”
T4: “Teachers gave simple examples, and used pictures. They sometimes asked students to notice vocabulary such as ‘Intrusive’, you know, ‘in’, ‘Extrusive’, ‘ex’ is exit.”

(7) Thai Science Teachers’ Supports
Both the foreign and Thai science teachers worked collaboratively. The foreign science teachers pointed out the importance of Thai science teachers’ support, such as controlling the class, giving Thai meaning translation, a co-teaching in laboratory room and providing the English science vocabulary in Thai science subjects. Their comments are presented as follows.

T3: “I [Thai science teacher] normally control the class, sometimes translate in Thai and give students a summary at the end of the class. I might ask them to summarize what they have learned (answer in Thai).”
T4: “In Thai science class, I sometimes give the English science vocabulary which they might see in English science class. I taught only words not all the content.”
(8) Test Items Focused on Content Vocabulary, Avoiding Long Essay Writing Test
Since the teachers focused on the science content, the evaluation was mostly on concept understanding in science subject matters rather than language abilities. Therefore, the test types were multiple choices, true/false, and matching with the emphasis on the concepts of each topic.

T1: “Test types are mostly on multiple choices, matching, and true/false. Mainly focused on vocabulary and concept understanding. For writing test, it’s just only filling in the blank with choices given in the box. They have pictures almost every question.”

The reasons they avoided writing tests were to put more emphasis on speaking ability and because the students were still insufficient in writing skills, as T1 claimed that: “It would be better if they are encouraged to speak more.” The results are consistent with Tan and Lan (2011), who pointed out that students were rather more comfortable with multiple-choice test types. In contrast to the study of Wongnarat (2016), there were various types of assessment, such as oral presentation, doing role plays, working in groups, and drawing mind mapping.

Teachers’ Challenges and Suggestions
On the attitudes about challenges and suggestions, there were similarities among foreign science teachers and Thai science teachers. I categorized the interviews into frequently mentioned aspects as follows.

(1) Time Constraint
Clearly, the time constraint was the most mentioned aspect, since the time limits and school activities led to many difficulties in completing teaching content according the curriculum. Consequently, there were some cases where foreign science teachers could not cover all topics in the science curriculum. T2 commented that “Too many school activities. They have a lot of holiday in Thailand. Sometimes I have to teach two chapters in two weeks!” While, a Thai science teacher (T3) pointed out that: “The curriculum forces us to teach all of topics in time. Besides, there were a lot of school’s activities. Only two periods a week were not possible.”

Leading to the suggestion on the demand of increasing course duration and rearranging teaching responsibilities. T1 suggested that “Actually, two periods are OK, but maybe like this, if they will give one teacher for one level, three times a week is OK….I think it’s good if I have one level and meet them three times a week. They will get revised and will not forget.”

(2) Insufficient English Proficiency of the Students
Foreign science teachers addressed the students’ speaking and writing ability to learn science in English; these were the main problem, since they were not able to participate in the class well. T1 expressed that; “The main problem here is speaking. Students sometimes cannot express in English. They rarely interact with teachers, or participate in class.” While T2 claimed that: “The language limits how they can discuss in the class. There a lot of students who know the content in Thai, but don’t know how to say in English.” While Thai science teachers mentioned writing ability of students as T4 said: “The problem in this course might be the students’ writing ability.”

(3) Load of Content
Thai students pointed out that both Thai and CBI science subjects had to follow the Thai National Curriculum of the Ministry of Education. However, the content and objectives in the science subject was very dense. Therefore, the teachers had to teach the lessons in brief. T3 commented that: “The science curriculum of Thai National Curriculum was dense. There was a full of topic in science subject. We are forced to follow it, follow all objectives, which are so much content beyond students could receive.” T4 pointed out that: “At the early Primary levels, they shouldn’t get a lot of content like this. They should focus on activities related to the science content, get students learning vocabulary by playing.”

This issue brought to the demand of developing the English Science curriculum. The following quote stresses the points:

T3: “[English science] should reduce the science content. Not need to study all of topics. In English science, the teachers must select the topics which are not too much difficult, but make them great. We have to put all science curriculum from Grade 1 to Grade 6 and plan again, take some unnecessary topics out. After that we rearrange the content into each grade level again.”

This is similar to the findings of MacKenzie (2008), which mentioned that the administration was the root of problems in CBI or CLIL practices in the Thai context. Since policy has not been communicated appropriately to schools, teachers are in an uncomfortable situation. the inability to cover the curriculum, such as the Thai science curriculum, (Croyle, 2014 and Phonlabutra, 2007), limited language proficiency (Yip, 2003), and lack of materials (Croyle, 2014 and Phonlabutra, 2007).
(4) **Lack of Appropriate Materials and Class Practices**
The Thai science teachers needed foreign science teachers to create teaching practices
differed from the Thai science subject, such as science activities, conducting experiments, group project with presentation. T4 recommended that: “English science should be different from Thai science… students have chances practicing various skills. The best materials should allow students to conduct experiments, participate activities, let them learning by doing.”

(5) **The Use of Thai Language as a Medium of Instruction in a Bilingual-Program**
According to the students’ low level of English proficiency and the emphasis on content-based instruction, all the teachers insisted on using Thai language as a medium in translation and content explanation parallel to English language as a medium. T1 claimed that “I think that Thai language is still important. I think Thai language helps them to learn Science in English understandably.”

Despite many advocates of using L1 in the classroom, researchers also underscore possible disadvantage in use of L1 as it might substitute L2 learning (Swain and Lapkin, 2000; Lasagabaster, 2013; Gierlinger, 2015). It is necessary to carefully adjust the balance of using L1 and L2 instructional language since there might be undesirable effects of an overuse of L1.

### 4.2 Research Question 2: What are students’ attitudes toward content-based instruction in a science classroom?
The findings revealed all aspects emerged during the student interviews, and categorized to the different categories shown in Table 4.2. The following section presents the significant themes mentioned among the informants frequently for data findings, followed by the discussion.

(1) **The Ability to Learn Science Vocabulary in English**
The advantages of the content-based instruction in the science subject were the ability to learn science in English, especially learning technical vocabulary in English. The students illustrated the issues as follows:

S2 (Grade 3) “We also knew English vocabulary that we haven’t known before. It’s really a useful subject. I know a lot of vocabulary.”

S4 (Grade 4) “I got new English science vocabulary. The teacher likes to present videos to get additional knowledge.”

(2) **Increasing Listening and Speaking Skills and Self-Confidence**
The students perceived the CBI science subject improved their listening and speaking skills, as well as their confidence in English communication. The findings support the study of Lai and Aksornjarung (2018). The study found that the course based on CBI
approach increased learners’ English speaking and listening. The learners gained more understanding in the teacher’s talk in the class. Their expressions are as follows.

S9 (Grade 4) “It helps me increase self-esteem to speak with foreign teachers.”
S13 (Grade 5) “I understand the teacher’s order and instructional expression well.”
S16 (Grade 5) “It practiced our listening and speaking skills.”

(3) Load of Vocabulary to Memorize
The higher Primary level students as in Grade 4 or 5 tend to have negative attitudes toward load of vocabulary to memorize in the CBI science subject.

S5 (Grade 4) “It’s the same as an English dictation as we have to memorize vocabulary.”
S8 (Grade 4) “I think it’s difficult in its content and vocabulary, but if we understand Thai science content before, it will not hard right that. It’s just difficult on memorizing vocabulary.”

This issue was related to the course evaluation, which focused on content vocabulary. The students were satisfied with their current test types. S12 (Grade 5) highlighted that: “There was a multiple-choices in a test. There were not long sentence questions. If we can remember the vocabulary meanings, we can do the test.”

(4) Emphasis on Workbook
The students commented on the frequent use of workbooks in a class. After the content explanation with the multimedia materials, the workbook was used for practice exercise. Even though the teachers helped students in answering the questions, they felt dissatisfied to the large amount of practices during the class. S14 (Grade 5) said that: “The textbook and workbook are used every lesson, but he let us look at the PowerPoint slides instead. Sometimes we watch videos. The teacher wrote on the board and let us copy into the workbook.”

(5) Parallel Thai-English Science and Inconsistency of Content Details
In general, the students were satisfied with the CBI science learning. They all agreed to the essential of learning Thai-English science subject parallelly. With the reason that both subjects promoted content understanding each other. S12 (Grade 5) stated that: “The students should learn a Thai science subject before studying in English science subject. If we have understood the Thai science first, in English science content, we will gain understanding.”

However, a Grade 5 student stated to the issue of the inconsistency between Thai and English science content details in textbooks. He said ‘Thai science content is deeper
details than the English science subject. The students might get confused since some might say 8 types but the other say 7 types. We’re confused whether it should the answer.”

(6) A Few Chances of Experiments
Concerning to the students’ attitudes, there were inconsistent attitudes toward learning practices and activities among students’ levels. For one hand, the Primary 3 students had positive attitudes to their teachers, as a result of playing games in the classroom and getting rewards, lesser load of exercises than Thai science subject. Additionally, the students got various chances to watch multimedia materials, videos rather than the Thai science class. While, the higher Primary level (Grade 4-5) students had neutral to negative attitudes due to the load of vocabulary to memorize, and the lack of enjoyable activities in class. S9 (Grade stated that “We had few chances to go to the laboratory room. We seldom conducted experiments.”

Referring to various research (Grape & Stoller, 1997; Carter & Thomas, 1986), students from CBI class were highly motivated because the activities, texts, and tasks presented in CBI are authentic and provide authentic experience and language learning as well. Another possible explanation for this might be the fact that each level had different foreign teachers, so they were taught from different teaching styles. Moreover, they had to deal with more complex content comparing to the content found in the earlier Primary level.

(7) L1 Translation by Thai Science Teachers
Students conformed that a Thai science teacher help the foreign science teacher as a class controller, translator, substitute teacher, and providing a lesson summary. S8 (Grade 4) described that “Thai teacher helps translating. In Thai science classroom, the teacher sometimes provides science vocabulary in English as well.” Interestingly, foreign teachers sometimes use Thai language, as S1 addressed that “The teacher can speak Thai because she has been staying in Thailand for a long time.” also as in S2 said “She asked students to say meanings of the words in Thai because she knew some Thai meaning of the words.”

(8) Peer-Scaffolding
The theme on peer-scaffolding notion was emerged during the questions whether strategies which the students used in CBI science learning, apart from their reading and memorizing by themselves. There samples are as follows.

S3 (Grade 3) “The lower proficient students would ask the higher proficient students for helps.”
S7 (Grade 4) “The teacher sometimes asks the higher proficient student to help the lower ones.”

(9) The Kindness Personality and Asian-like Teacher Appearance
Typically, students claimed that the foreign teachers were kind and friendly.
S1(Grade 3) “The foreign teacher is friendly and always smile.”
S11(Grade 4) “The Thai science teacher did get aggressive toward only when we were naughty. But he has a game for us to gain extra points, and rewards.”
In addition, Asian-like teacher appearance made some students brave enough to communicate with teachers, as S7 (Grade 4) said: “The teacher is Filipino, even we say it wrong, she won’t blame anything, making me brave enough to speak with Asian people like us.” Similar to the students in Primary 3 and 4, they tended to be fairly confident of communicating with the foreign teachers when they were not sure about something.

(10) Avoided Long Essay Writing Test, Preferred Oral Test
A student perceived that since the long explanatory essay test was too difficult to student being able to do, the teachers tried to avoid to use that kind of test in the summative tests, as S2 (Grade 3) addressed that “It might be hard for the students, so the teacher didn’t test us a long essay.” Interestingly, all the students were agreed to take the oral test, rather than the written test due to the less amount of explanation to answer. S5 stated that “It would be better if there were an oral test to ask individual students, it’s excited.”

Students’ Challenges and Suggestions

(1) Time Constraint
All the student participants addressed the problem of short time in learning the CBI science subject. They demanded an increase with more class periods to study. S1 and S2 together suggested that: “Two periods a week was not enough. It should be taught every day.” Also, S9 recommended that: “It should be 3 periods a week.” Consequently, all Primary 3 students suggested learning the subject every day. In the condition that two periods might be attached in order to have enough time conducting science experiments. S1 suggested “I would like to learn English science two-attached periods, so we could perform the experiment.” While, all students agreed to not arrange Thai science subject next to the English science subject. They gave a reason that there would be burnt out, as S5 mentioned “It should be more time to study this
subject and don’t put Thai and English science subjects, with the same topic, adhere next to each other.”

(2) Load of Memorized Vocabularies
Several students brought up the issue of science vocabulary terms when asked about their difficulties in learning science through English as a medium or a CBI science subject. S8 (Grade 4) said that “I don’t understand English vocabulary words. I can’t translate them, and there were a lot of words to memorize.”

(3) Lack of Experimental Activities
Students commented on the low variety in class activities. They seldom got a chance to perform experiments in a laboratory. Therefore, they felt bored with lack of diverse teaching activities. Consequently, all students suggested diverse instructional practices in the CBI science subject, including playing games, conducting science experiments, presenting real objects, and going sightseeing if possible. The following quotes illustrate their suggestions as follows.

S1 (Grade 3) “I would like English science having more experiments. Since in English subject has had writing assignments already, the English science should do experimental activities instead.”
S9 (Grade 4) “I would like to have more activities to participate in the class, or question and orally answer games [rather than write down in the work book], or even go sightseeing. And the content should be reduced.”

Kewara and Prabjandee (2018) suggested new teaching practices and learning approaches in the CLIL classroom compared with a regular classroom. Content teachers needed to prepare in various ways, such as content subjects, language, practices, and the integration of CLIL (Marsh, Mehisto, Wolff, & Frigols Martin, 2010).

(4) A Selection Test and a Trial Class During the School Enrollment
There were proposals on a selection test, at the school enrollment period, in order to measure the students’ ability. They claimed that it would be useful to determine whether students could be able to learn in such a program, as S13 suggested: “It would be a problem if students did not have enough basic knowledge. Moreover, S17 proposed: “The school might have a trial studying class, if the students could study in such a program, let them continue studying.”
4.3 Findings from the Document Analysis

In this section, the relevant documents collected during the data collection were analyzed in order to confirm the interview data and to be the evidence of materials used in the CBI science subject. The main themes found in the relevant document analysis included (1) Authentic texts, (2) Text simplification and text enhancement, (3) Visual-aid materials, (4) Graphic Organizers, (5) Thai meaning translation, and (6) Vocabulary learning.

Since the textbooks and handouts are focused on the content for the science subjects, the text was authentic and relevant to students’ experiences and environments, focusing on such as plants, animals, objects, natural resources, our body, substances, the Earth and space and so on. There were many examples and pictures attached with the science concepts and explanations so that the content drew students’ attention and also gave comprehensible input to students. However, there were relatively wordy sentences with the same font sizes without enhancing or making it easier for students to read. Similarly, the interviews with students mentioned the long-wordy texts in their textbooks.

In terms of text simplification and enhancement, many PowerPoint slides and revision handouts used in the science CBI class were extracted from textbooks and simplified into short, important concepts. Mostly a few sentences were placed nearby with large pictures in each slide. Every core meaning of words or content words were enhanced by large text sizes, highlighting, underlining, or coloring. Moreover, there were some test required students to fill to draw pictures correctly match the sentences, or vice versa.

In the vocabulary list handouts, the science vocabulary, especially technical terms and some function words, were extracted and arranged one by one in columns. On the next column, the meanings in Thai words were printed attached to those English science vocabulary items. However, learners were not given the parts of speech of words. Most of the exercises aimed to boost vocabulary learning. Such as filling in the blank, identifying words in the diagram, word search puzzle, drawing pictures following the expression or direction, and giving examples. It related to the teachers’ and students’ interviews regarding to the primarily emphasis on vocabulary. As a result of time limits and the low level of writing skills of students, most of the time, teachers would help students to write a long explanation and give answers for students to copy down. So, the writing in an essay in the test was excluded to help students and this avoided the inability of students to take this kind of test, replacing with a particular type of test which required only keywords to fill in,
5. Conclusion
This present study has provided a detailed description of teachers’ and students’ attitudes in learning science in CBI science-based classes of a bilingual school in a Thai Primary EFL setting. The semi-structured interviews were conducted to elicit detailed information, which was categorized into 6 areas: attitude toward content and language learning, attitude toward materials, attitude toward activities/tasks, attitude toward the teacher/students, attitude toward evaluation, and difficulties experienced, followed with respondents’ suggestions. The results indicated that the teachers and students held positive attitudes towards learning science through the CBI approach where English was used as a medium of instruction. Apparently, the CBI approach increased students’ confidence in speaking and they gained more academic vocabulary. Interestingly, the native language was used as a mean of scaffolding with the help of Thai science teachers. The students tended to be dominantly Thai bilinguals. The CBI science subject interrelated to their Thai science subject in terms of content. The students thought that learning science in Thai led to the content understanding in the CBI classes, where science knowledge was taught in English. In addition, the materials provided in the CBI science course are usually authentic and relevant to students’ experiences, which helps students gain content comprehension. Most of the students had positive attitudes to their teachers as a result of teachers’ kindness and friendly personalities.

Despite the effectiveness of CBI, there were problems in the CBI science classes in various aspects, including the low level of students’ English proficiency level, time constraints, number of levels and class responsibility, the lack of appropriate materials and the dense content in the science curriculum at the early levels of students which could demotivate them in learning. For the students’ point of view, they reported they had difficulties in vocabulary, and content acquisition learned in English. The difficulty of memorizing the science vocabulary in English was frequently addressed by the students, followed by the lack of interesting activities in class. Moreover, they stated that sometimes learning was interrupted by noisy classmates, and time constraints were mentioned as difficulties as well.

6. Pedagogical Implications and Recommendation for Further Research

6.1 Pedagogical Implications
Based on the findings, there should be room to develop the curriculum that encourages the CBI curriculum which differs from the traditional classroom. A well-designed bilingual course is needed. Moreover, there is a strong implication that CLIL or CBI teachers need further professional development such as in-house training,
seminars, workshops, and courses to participate in professional development programs to become more competent teachers in content-based instruction. Furthermore, for those whose work is relevant to the educational institutes, for example, school administrators and curriculum designers, it might be worth considering how to improve and develop the curriculum suited to the bilingual program or English program. In the current study the bilingual program it showed a strong benefit of using both L1 and L2 to help lower English proficiency students gain content comprehension. Obviously, several EFL contexts have heavily concentrated on vocabulary instruction and concept comprehension in the target subject knowledge. However, CBI teachers should integrate the language instruction more and encourage the use of the target language in the classroom through activities. Importantly, students should be given more opportunities to perform science experiments, and other language skills such as an oral presentation, a group work project, inquiry-based learning, and developing writing scientific project components (hypotheses, research questions, experimental design, observations and results). Finally, there should be other types of alternative assessment such as a student portfolio, group project, pair work, observation assignment, etc., rather than summative assessment as in mid-term and final examination in order to reduce the load of memorizing content and vocabulary, but students could apply the knowledge to their own experiences.

6.2 Recommendations for Further Research
It is possible that data collection and interpretation could be biased as a result of the researcher being central to the primary data collection. The time to conduct the study was also very short. For further research, other qualitative methods, such as classroom observation or teachers’ reflection, can be collected in order to gain more in-depth information. Moreover, mixed-method research can be conducted so that findings may be triangulated accurately. As the participants were limited only to Primary 3-5 students and teachers, further study can be done in other levels. Moreover, in terms of credibility, further research can be done with a larger number of participants.

References


THAI EFL STUDENTS’ ATTITUDES TOWARDS ENGLISH TEACHERS’ ACCENTS AMIDST THE EMERGENCE OF WORLD ENGLISHES

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Abstract
The prominent role of English language serving as a lingua franca has influenced the way English is taught and learned in Thailand where English is considered a foreign language. Apart from Thai English teachers, the number of native and non-native English-speaking teachers is increasing in proportion to the emergence of World Englishes. Consequently, Thai EFL students are exposed to different English accents in school. The current study aimed to investigate 1) how well are Thai EFL students able to identify English accents and 2) Thai EFL students’ attitudes towards English accents. The study recruited 60 participants with different English proficiency ranging from CEFR A1 to C1. These participants were taking an English course at a language school in Bangkok. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative research approach. Research instruments included a listening task, a questionnaire, and a semi-structure interview. The results revealed that 43.3% of the participants were able to accurately identify native (American, Australian, and British) and non-native (Pilipino and Thai) English accents. Thai English accent was correctly identified with the accuracy rate of 85%. In terms of attitudes towards English accents, native English accents were rated with relatively higher mean scores for their status when compared to Pilipino and Thai accent. For solidarity, Thai English accent was rated with similar mean scores of the native English accents. The results from the questionnaire revealed that most participants favoured native English accents for being “standard” and
“correct” accents and wished to acquire a native-like accent. The results from the semi-structured interviewed revealed that several the participants believed that acquiring a native-like accent was possible if they were provided with adequate exposure to the native accent in and outside of class. In summary, even though most participants were aware of the emergence of World Englishes, their ability to identify English accents was still low due to limited exposure to different English accents. For non-native EFL teachers, fluency is relatively essential in ELT. Even though several EFL students perceived native accents as more desirable, non-native teachers with high fluency could also be decent English teachers as well as their experience and success that could benefit the learners.

**Keywords:** accent status and solidarity, EFL students, English accents, language attitudes, World Englishes

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Overview of ELT situation in Thailand

The important role of English, serving its users as a lingua franca, is well recognized by the Ministry of Education of Thailand as it describes English as an importance tool for communication, access to knowledge, understanding foreign cultures and the diversity of viewpoints in the world community (Basic Education Core Curriculum, 2008 p.266). Despite being taught in schools as a compulsory subject from Grade 1 to grade 12, Thai students’ English proficiency ranked the 64th among the 88 countries worldwide in EF EPI Rankings 2018, and was categorized into the Low Proficiency band with the score of 48.54 following its ASEAN neighbors, e.g. Singapore (3rd) the Philippines (14th), Malaysia (22nd), Vietnam (41th) and Indonesia (51th) (EF English Proficiency Index, 2018). English teachers (both native and non-native) are playing an important role in the development of Thai students’ English proficiency. The demand for English teachers (especially native English speaker teachers or NEST) has increased dramatically with an aim to develop learners’ communicative skills in particular.

The increasing number of foreign teachers has raised a large-scale debate about what the ideal model of English should be due to different English varieties. In addition, comparison between NESTs and NNESTs is regularly made by the learners. The current study, therefore, aims to explore Thai EFL students’ ability to identify different English accents and their attitudes towards English teachers’ accents. The results from the current study are expected to provide an insight into how English accents are perceived by Thai EFL students and to explain the effects of English
teachers’ accents has on Thai EFL students’ language learning and proficiency as a whole.

1.2 The emergence and influence of World Englishes

The rising awareness of World Englishes brought about the National Curriculum reform in 1999. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and student-centered ideology consequently were adopted in tertiary education nationwide (Darasawang, 2007). With an emphasis on developing learners’ communicative skills rather than memorizing grammar and structures, CLT requires teachers with decent communicative skills, speaking in particular, to be able to implement CLT and student-centered in classroom. This teaching approach has foster schools, on one hand, to facilitate their existing teachers with necessary pedagogical trainings, and on the other hand, welcome both native and non-native English teachers (of outer circle) on board in response to the increasing demand of ELT and CLT methodology.

Despite the expanding ideology of World Englishes, a number of research have reported degrees of discrimination against NNESTs’ accents of English (Mahboob, 2013; Moussu & Llurda, 2008). Since many learners set their learning objective to achieve native or native-like proficiency level, some are convinced that the best way to achieve it is by studying with NESTs, and they highly value native English accent as Phillipson's (1992) described this opinion as “Native Speaker Fallacy”.

Now that more Thai students (especially those studying in the city, bilingual programs or international programs) have exposure to different English accents spoken by their ESL teachers in their regular basis, the current study aims to first, investigate the extent to which they are able to identify different accents and their attitudes towards the accents. The current study also intends to draw on the findings emerged in order to better understand the impacts of English accents on students’ attitude and their language learning.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Myth of Nativity

The effect of accents on ESL learners’ attitudes and language proficiency development is essential as a study by Butler (2007) suggested. Many ESL students regard NES accents as authentic and ideal and wish to obtain near or native-like level of proficiency including their preferred native accent. A study conducted by Wu & Ke (2009) revealed that most students in the study favored NESTs due to the belief that
only native accents are authentic and that they could learn more from NESTs. However, there are also findings from few studies suggesting that some ESL students showed positive attitudes towards NNESTs’ accent as Ballard (2013) asserted in a study of 132 students’ attitudes towards teachers’ English accents. The finding also suggested that the familiarity with accented speech and comprehensibility are interrelated. The result from another Thai students’ attitudes towards English accents conducted by Jindapitak & Teo (2013) coincided with the previously mentioned result. Even though some the participants perceived the necessity of exposure to non-native English for the similar reasons stated above, the majority of the participants favored native English as a model for language learning. Furthermore, not only ESL students but also ESL teachers have different perspectives on ideal English accents on ELT as the result from a study of Kaur (2013) investigating trainee teachers in higher education in Malaysia suggested. The study revealed that the majority of the trainee teachers regarded the inner-circle’s English accents as “proper” despite their awareness of the emergence of World Englishes ideology.

2.2 World Englishes

English has now become a global language with the number of speakers all together over 1.5 billion (Cristal, 2003). A language serving its use as a bridging language facilitating the communication between two people with different L1 background is called “Lingua franca” (Kirkpatrick, 2007). There is a gap between incorporating the concepts of World Englishes (WE) and English as a lingua franca into actual classroom teaching due to the norms of nativeness. Native English varieties especially American and British English are the most preferred medals of English. However, the emergence of World Englishes and globalized world community have brought about the use of English varieties when the speakers share different L1 background. In response to the fact that there are more NNESs than NES, scholars suggest that exposure to English varieties is beneficial to learners in terms of language attitudes and understanding. As suggested by Reid (2003) not only do attitudes towards English accents have impacts on students’ language learning and development, they also affect the success of teaching.

2.3 Accents and Identities

There has been a debate over the years regarding the status of accents despite the awareness of English as a lingua franca and World Englishes as discussed in the previous sections Lippy-Green (1997). The current study’s aim to explore Thai ESL students’ attitudes towards different accents of ESL teachers is set to scrutinize factors dedicating the success and failure in ELT domain. Among many scholars, Jenkins (2007) and Walker (2010) asserted that ESL speakers should place an emphasis on
adjusting their speech in order to be more intelligible and comprehensible when communicate with people from different L1 background rather than trying to master native-like accent. This suggestion was supported by the findings of a study’s interview session implemented by Sung (2016) in which some respondents stated that to some extent, they wanted to sound native-like, for they thought that it is more intelligible speech should help communicate more successfully than when they speak with their local accent. However, some other respondents from this study stated that they preferred to speak English with native-like accent since it is considered privileged and respectable. In addition, Timmis (2012) suggested that one quality representing high level of proficiency is native-like pronunciation.

### 2.4 Attitudes towards Accent: status and solidarity

A number of studies on attitudes towards English accents have been conducted extensively utilizing direct and indirect method. The direct method involves inquiring the participants about their attitudes towards accents directly in through the means of interviews or questionnaires Cavallaro & Chin, (2009). Generally, direct approach tends to be more popular in the area of linguistics in order for the researchers to investigate attitudes (Dornyei, 2007). The other method to study language attitudes is the use of indirect approach. A classic example of such approach is the use of matched-guise technique (Lambert et al., 1960). In the study, the participants listened to the stimuli, in this case, speech samples for different English varieties or accents. The participants then were required to rate the speech samples they heard on the scales related to language or accent status and solidarity. The study by Lambert on the language and accent attitudes of the participants in Canada received extensive attention. As far as the methodology of matched-guise technique or MGT is concerned, one speaker who is a fluent speaker of 2 or more accents provides the speech samples used in the listening task to investigate the listeners' attitudes. In general, the listeners rate on a series of bi-polar adjectives or traits on Likert scales. The traits normally are categorized into 1. Status e.g. educated and intelligent, solidarity e.g. friendly and kind, and dynamism e.g. active and confident.

### 2.5 EFL teachers in Thailand

In regard to foreign teachers in Thailand, according to February 2019 statistic report from the Foreign Workers Administration Office, the number of documented foreign individuals working in the field of education in the country was 30,533. The majority of the documented foreign teachers came from the Philippines (11,040), the United Kingdom (4,095), and The United States of America (3,653).
Table 2.5.2 The number of documented foreign teachers nationwide by nationalities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Nationalities (Ranking and percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Pilipino (11,040) 36.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Pilipino (8,537) 31.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Pilipino (7,235) 28.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Pilipino (5,604) 27.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*2011</td>
<td>Pilipino (4,388) 25.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Pilipino (4,826) 23.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Pilipino (3,920) 22.66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Thailand had encountered extensive political unrest since 2005 and it was concluded in 2010.

As can be seen from table 2.5.2, the number of foreign teachers in Thailand in general, has gradually increased over the past decade. The number of Pilipino teachers has been higher than that of native English speaker teachers. This emphasizes the importance given to the development of students’ English proficiency by educators, schools and Thailand’s Minister of Education since the schools were financially supported to recruit foreign English teachers. In this regard, the increase in the number of schools providing English programs has increased the demand for foreign teachers and it will continue to grow.

2.6 Relevant research on attitudes towards English accents
Accents and credibility are interrelated in the EFL teaching and learning domain. Anderson (1995) investigated the attitudes towards foreign accents of 702 university level students enrolling at a university in the United States employing Verbal guise technique. The research was intended to explore how foreign accents and genders of the speakers affect the attitudes towards the accents in term of credibility and judgement. The majority of the participants aged between 17 and 22. The findings suggested that the accent per se does not affect the credibility of the speaker but the raters’ prior experience with the accented speech. The findings also concluded that American and British accents were rated higher than the other non-native English accents and perceived as holding high prestige coinciding with the study conducted by Wilkinson, (1965). It was also concluded that the higher degree of accentedness had an impact on the participants’ attitudes towards the accent. That is, the lower accentedness one has, the more authoritative one sounds.

The results drawn from Anderson’s study is in line with the findings concluded by the study of Anisfeld et al., (1962) on reactions to accented English speech. The participants were asked to listen to speech samples of gentle and Jewish English accents. The technique used in the creation of speech samples was matched-guised technique. The participants then asked to rate the accents’ characteristics on semantic differential scales. The results revealed that the participants rated the accented speech samples with lower scores for looks, height, leadership. However, accented Jewish speeches were considered as more entertaining, humorous, and kind sounding accents.

To better understand the effects of English accents on the learners’ language English proficiency development, language attitude studies in Thailand should be conducted more as Snodin & Young (2015) stated in their mixed method study of 251 English learners. 94 university students and 165 individuals. The participants’ ability to identify English accents were investigated as well as their perception of the English accent they thought they were using. In addition, the study aimed to ask what English accent the participants perceived as suitable for being used as a model for learning, and their attitudes towards native and non-native English accents. A questionnaire with open-ended questions was administered to obtain the data for interpretation. According to the study’s findings, only five respondents (out of 159) thought they were using Thai English, while the majority of the respondents (77.92%) believed they were using American English. Regarding a suitable accent model, slightly over half the partisans reported that American English should be used as a model for learning English, whereas British English accent was rated the second most suitable by 47.47 per cent of the participants. Furthermore, the results also suggested that Thai
students’ attitude towards British English were rather positive. They regarded British English as a prestigious accent by describing it: standard, sophisticated, beautiful, original, and etc. For other native English accents, the participants rated them in the similar manner.

The results coincided with a study conducted by Skibdahl & Svensäter, (2012) involving 156 high school students in Sweden. The result was nothing surprising since the majority of the students favored English accents belonging to in inner-circle. The participants regarded the native English accents as their accent models despite their awareness of the existence of different English accents. The participants also reported that media and entertainments were major sources allowing them to get exposed to native English accents, while English teachers’ influence on their accent preference or choice of use as a model accent was not at the same level.

A qualitative research conducted by Sung, (2014) investigated 25 Hong Kong secondary students’ preference for NESTs or NNESTs. The study employed semi-structured interviews to obtain the data for interpretations and it was intended to explore the students’ preference and their attitudes towards the teachers’ accents and teaching methodologies used. The results from the study were concluded that Hong Kong secondary level students in the study perceived, in terms of pedagogical aspect, NESTs’ use of interactive teaching style and accurate pronunciation as strengths, while grammar teaching and exam preparation techniques as weaknesses. The participants reported that NESTs tended to incorporate varieties if activities in class making the students motivated. Interactive activities such as role plays, games, and utilizing of movies and songs in the class provided the students with the opportunity to practice speaking greatly. The participants also reported that a relaxing and fun learning environment in the classroom with NESTs helped encourage their confidence when speaking English, too. The NESTs’ inability to speak the students L1 language was reported by the participants that could be beneficial for demanding to use of the target language, in the case English, as a medium for communication in class which increased the opportunity to speak English substantially. In addition to in-class teaching, the participants also reported that another major advantage of learning English with NESTs was that they could acquire a native-like accent if frequently spoke with their teachers. Most participants in the study wished to obtain a native-like accent.

Several weaknesses of NESTs were reported in the study as well. The participants pointed out that NESTs seemed to have difficulties when asked to explain complicated grammar rules, and this affected their rating on leaning with NESTs.
Moreover, a few participants reported that they could feel the difference in cultural aspects between them and their teachers and stated that sometimes they felt that their teachers did not care much about their studies. In summary, it was also found that even native English teacher or non-native speakers with high proficiency could still receive negative feedback from the learners, i.e. negative consequences deriving from their foreign accents which conceded with a language attitude study by (Lippi-Green, 1997; Matsuda, 1991).

For NNETs, the participants reported that the major strengths of NNESTs were that they were able to clearly explain grammar rules and prepare the students for the exams, while the major weaknesses were that their teacher-centered teaching and inaccurate pronunciation. The majority of the participants reported that they preferred NNESTs in the aspect of pedagogical competency. NNESTs ability to explain complicated and troublesome grammar points that the students frequently encountered was highly recognized and since the teachers had been through similar struggles, they could guide and emphasize any points in English grammar and writing to which the students should pay a close attention. The ability to speak the students’ L1 was also considered very useful in the learning grammar and vocabulary. In terms of the weaknesses, NNESTs was reported to be rather traditional when teaching and this caused boredom among the students in class. The participants reported that their NNESTs dominated the talking leaving them little opportunity to involve in classroom interactions and using English in actual speaking. The inaccuracy of pronunciation was also another major weakness of NNESTs. The participants were aware of the inaccurate pronunciation uttered by their teachers and reported that they could not improve pronunciation by learning with a NNEST since it was not “standard”.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The current study employed both qualitative and quantitative research design with the aims to investigate Thai EFL students’ ability to identify different English accents and their attitudes towards English teachers’ accents. A listening task comprising five speech samples of both native and non-native speakers were used in the investigation. The participants then were required to complete a questionnaire regarding their attitudes towards English accents in terms of status and solidarity. Qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews where the participants provided their opinions about their accent preference and the effects of English accents on their language learning.
3.2 Data Collection

The listening task was administered to four groups of 15 participants (one group at a time) \(n=60\) due to the limitation of physical classroom size. The participants then listened to five speech samples recorded by five different speakers (three native English speakers from Australia, Britain, the United States and two non-native English speakers from the Philippines and Thailand) played at random order (one after another) and identified each English accent variety by circling the given choices. After listening to each speech sample, a two-minute interval was given before moving on to the next speech sample to allow the participants to give critical comments and reason without having to hurry. During the intervals, the researcher replayed the records of speech samples as requested by the participants. In the second part of the listening task, the participants listened to the five speech samples and then rated their attitudes towards each accent in terms of “status” and “solidarity” on bi-polar semantic differential scales. Finally, the participants who provided useful feedback were invited to attend an in-depth semi-structured interview on another day due to time constraint and the fear of fatigue effect that could pose a threat to the study’s findings.

3.3 Data Analysis

3.3.1 Quantitative data analysis

The data collected from the implementation of the listening task and the questionnaire were inserted into Statistical Package for Social Sciences 25 or SPSS 25 for statistical testing. Descriptive statistics values of mean (M), standard deviation (SD) and frequency were calculated to interpret the obtained data.

3.5.2 Qualitative data analysis

The participants’ answers were digitally recorded from the semi-structured interviews. The interviews featured 10 open-ended questions to facilitate better understanding of the reasons behind particular answers given in the listening task and the questionnaire. As researchers suggest, employing an interview after the participants have completed a survey or questionnaire help fulfills the findings of a study. That is, only employing quantitative approach may overlook some prominent details that have impacts on the study’s findings.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Participants’ biographical data

In this section, the participants’ biographical data: gender, age, English proficiency level (CEFR) and education background as well as their experience learning English
with native or non-native teacher are presented. Descriptive statistics data such as frequency, mean, and percentage are applied.

Table 4.1.1 Participants’ gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency (n=60)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1.1 reveals the number of participants taking part in the current study by gender. As can be seen from the table, the majority of participants (40) were female or 66.6%, while there were 20 male participants (33.3%) recruited in the current study.

Table 4.1.2 Participants’ age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Frequency (n=60)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 - 18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 - 22</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 23</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1.2 illustrates the age rage of the participants. It is shown that the majority of the participants (n = 51) are over 23 years of age accounting for 85% of the entire participants. Next, the participants aged between 19 - 22 ranks second in the current study (n = 6) accounting for 10% of all participants. While participants who are between 15 - 18 years of age (n = 3) accounting for 5%. The average age of the entire participants is 28.57 years old.
Table 4.1.3 Participants’ English proficiency level (CEFR)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CEFR Levels</th>
<th>Frequency (n=60)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1 (Beginner)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2 (Elementary)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1 (Intermediate)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2 (Upper-intermediate)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1 (Advanced)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2 (Proficient)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1.3 illustrates the participants’ English proficiency by CEFR level. As can be observed from the table, the majority of the participants (n=18) accounting for 30% of the entire group possesses the CEFR English proficiency level of B1 (Intermediate). It was closely followed by A2 (Elementary) level participants (n=16) accounting for 26.7%. Participants with A1 level proficiency (Beginner) ranked third on the list having 13 people. The number of participants belonging to Upper-intermediate (B1) and Advanced (C1) are 9 and 4 accounting for 15% and 6.7% of the entire participants respectively.

4.2 Accent Identification Ability

This section presents and discusses the participants’ ability to identify different English accents. The aim is also to answer the current study’s research question 1 which is: *To what extent are Thai EFL students able to identify different English accents.* Descriptive statistics data: frequency, mean, and percentage are used for data interpretation.

Table 4.2.1 Accents identified correctly by the participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accents</th>
<th>Frequency (n=60)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AmEA</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>48.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AuEA</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23.33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2.1 summarizes the participants’ ability to identify different English accents. According to the figures shown, 51 out of 60 participants (85%) were able to identify ThEA correctly. The second accent that about half of the participants were able to identify most correctly was AmEA (n=29 or 48.33%). While BrEA, AuEA, and PhEA, were correctly identified by merely 24 (40%), 14 (23.33%), and 12 (20%) participants respectively. In summary, the mean score for the participants’ ability to identify English accents accurately was 26 or 43.33%.

### 4.3 Attitudes towards Accents: Status and Solidarity

Table 4.3.1 presents the summary of the participants’ distribution of mean scores of the five English accents in terms of their status aspect. The figures on the table indicates the rankings of each accent’s status trait on a mean score distribution basis. As the table reveals, AuEA was rated by the participants as the most intelligent-sounding with the mean score of 4.58. The second and the third most intelligent-sounding accents perceived by the participants were BrEA receiving the mean score of 4.55 and AmEA receiving slightly lower mean score of 4.53. ThEA and PhEA
were rated the fourth and the fifth with the mean scores of 4.52 and 3.78. ThEA’s mean score is merely 0.01 lower than AuEA. In terms of confidence, BrEA was rated with the highest mean score of 4.97 for being the most confident-sounding accent of all. AuEA and AmEA came second and third with the mean scores of 4.77 and 4.67. ThEA was rated with a higher mean score of 3.93 compared to PhEA whose mean score is 3.43. For trustworthiness and fluency traits, the rankings are in the same order. BrEA was chosen the be the most trustworthy and fluent sounding (M=5.02 and 5.17) accent followed by AmEA with the mean scores of 4.55 for its trustworthiness and 4.88 for its fluency. ThEA, the fourth place, received the mean scores of 3.93 for its trustworthiness and 3.92 for its fluency. PhEA was given the lowest mean scores for both trustworthiness and fluency (M=3.13 and 2.95). For professionalism, BrE was perceived as the most professional-sounding accent with the mean score of 5.03 and followed by AuEA receiving 4.57. The third was AmEA with a slightly lower mean score of 4.55. ThEA was rated a the fourth professional-sounding among the five accents with the mean score of 3.73, while PhEA was given a substantial lower mean score of 2.90 resulting in being the least professional-sounding accent in the current study. In conclusion, the participants tended to rate native English accents’ solidarity traits higher than that of non-native English accents. As can be seen on the table, all native English accents, i.e. BrEA, AmEA and AuEA ranked first, second and third in the five traits, while non-native English accents, i.e. PhEA and ThEA ranked either fourth or fifth.
According to Figure 4.3.2, it can be observed that the three native English accents (BrEA, AmEA and AuEA) were rated with substantially higher mean scores when compared to the non-native English accents (PhEA and ThEA) in all status traits. BrEA ranked second once for its intelligence and ranked first four times in the remaining four status traits. The participants’ attitudes towards AmEA and AuEA in terms of their status were rather similar, while the average mean scores that PhEA and ThEA received were significantly lower than the native accents’. However, the differential between PhEA and ThEA mean scores received per se were rather great.
Table 4.3.2 Accent’s solidarity mean score distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Solidarity</th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
<th>4th</th>
<th>5th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accent</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Accent</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Accent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendliness</td>
<td>AmEA</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>AuEA</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>ThEA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindness</td>
<td>AmEA</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>ThEA</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>AuEA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty</td>
<td>ThEA</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>BrEA</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>AmEA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sincerity</td>
<td>AmEA</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>ThEA</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>BrEA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likability</td>
<td>BrEA</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>AmEA</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>AuEA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3.2 reveals the summary of the participants attitudes towards the five English accents in terms of their solidarity aspect. The figures on Table 4.3.2 depicts the rankings of each accent’s solidarity trait on a mean score distribution basis. According to the table, for friendliness trait, AmEA was rated highest among the five English accents with the mean score of 4.73. AuEA was rated the second most friendly sounding accent with the mean score of 4.57 followed by ThEA with the mean score of 4.45. PhEA was rated the least friendly with the mean score of 3.67. For kindness, the highest mean score of 4.65 was given to AmEA by the participants and followed by ThEA receiving 4.52. Whereas AuEA and BrEA were rated the third and the fourth with the mean scores of 4.42 and 4.07 respectively. PhEA was given the mean score of 3.92 resulting in being the least kind-sounding accent. Next is honesty, ThEA was rated as the most honest sounding accent receiving 4.37 of mean score. The second most honest sounding accent was BrEA with the mean score of 4.33. The third and the fourth place were AuEA and PhEA with the mean scores of 4.28 and 3.72 respectively. In terms of sincerity, AmEA came first with the mean score of 4.47 followed by ThEA (4.37). BrEA and AuEA received the mean scores of 4.33 and 4.30 rated as the third and the fourth. PhEA’s sincerity was given the mean score of 3.83 and came last. For likability, BrEA was rated slightly higher than AmEA with the mean scores of 4.57 and 4.55. AuEA was the third liked accent (4.13) followed by ThEA (3.50). The participants rated PhEA as the least likable accent reconvening the mean score of 2.72. In summary, native English accents were rated with significantly higher mean scores especially AmEA that was rated with the highest mean scores for its friendliness, kindness, and sincerity. On the contrary, non-native English accents were rated lower in most traits except for ThEA that was considered the most honest-
sounding accent of all. PhEA was rated with the lowest mean scores in all solidarity traits.

Figure 4.3.3 Solidarity traits’ mean score distribution

According to Figure 4.3.3, it can be concluded that native English accents (AmEA, AuEA and BrEA) in the current study were rated with higher mean scores ranging from 4.07 to 4.73 than the counterparts (non-native English accents: PhEA and ThEA). Interestingly, ThEA’s mean scores were rated in a rather similar trend compared to the native English accents. In addition, ThEA was rated with the highest mean score for its honest-sounding trait. BrEA’s kindness; however, this occasion, was rated fourth after AmEA, ThEA and AuEA. From all solidarity traits, likability was the trait with the greatest differential. BrEA was on top of the ranking receiving the mean score of 4.57 followed by the second most likable accent, AmEA with a slightly lower mean score of 4.55. AuEA, in the view of the participants, was the least likable native English accent and was given 4.33. As for non-native English accents,
ThEA received the mean score of 3.50 which is substantially higher than PhEA in terms of likability.

4.4 Accent Preference and Teachers’ Accent Acceptability

A questionnaire featuring a series of 5-point Likert scales was used in order to obtain information regarding English accents and their acceptability. The questionnaire aimed at answering the current research question number 2: What are Thai EFL students’ attitudes towards different English teachers’ accents? Descriptive statistics, i.e. frequency, mean, and standard deviation were used to interpret the data.

Table 4.4.1 Attitudes towards English language learning and teachers’ accent acceptability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Frequency (n=60)</th>
<th>M (Rank)</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A good English teacher is a native English speaker teacher.</td>
<td>1 2 11 25 21</td>
<td>4.05 (3)</td>
<td>.910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I can improve my English faster if I study with a native English teacher.</td>
<td>1 5 20 25 9</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>.906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. All English teachers should have native English accents.</td>
<td>1 3 17 22 17</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>.954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I want to sound like my native English teacher(s).</td>
<td>1 1 7 23 28</td>
<td>4.27 (1)</td>
<td>.861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Native teachers can teach grammar well.</td>
<td>2 4 30 20 4</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>.837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Native teachers can teach speaking very well.</td>
<td>0 1 14 24 21</td>
<td>4.08 (2)</td>
<td>.809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. It is fun to study English with a native teacher.</td>
<td>1 5 29 17 8</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>.890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I would like to study English more if my non-native English</td>
<td>6 18 25 7 4</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

M.A. in English Language Teaching
the teachers have native or near native-like accent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. I want to study English with a non-native teacher who has native or</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>near-native like accent.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Native English teachers should teach conversations only.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I can tell what accent a person has.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Successful English learners are those who can speak like a native</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>speaker.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Only native speaker teachers are suitable for being a role model for</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students in speaking.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I think it is impossible for a learner to have a native-like accent.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I want to learn English with a native English teacher only.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. A student has strong L1 accent because he/she does not study with a</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>native teacher.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(15)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the table 4.4.1, the participants’ attitudes towards English language learning and teachers’ accent acceptability are presented. It can be observed that the questionnaire statement 4 (I want to sound like my native English teachers.), 6 (Native teachers can teach speaking very well.) and 1 (A good English teacher is a native English speaker teacher.) were rated with the highest agreement mean scores of 4.27, 4.08, and 4.05 respectively. Whereas questionnaire statement 14 (I think it is impossible for a learner to have a native-like accent), 15 (I want to learn English with a native teacher only.), and 13 (Only native speaker teachers are suitable for being a role model for students in speaking.) were the least agreed statements rated by the participants with the mean scores as low as 2.33, 2.28, and 1.97 respectively.
4.5 Semi-structured Interviews

The interviewees were asked with 10 open-ended questions to examine their attitudes towards native and non-native English accents.

4.5.1 Advantages of studying English with a NEST

The interviewees were asked to discuss the advantages of studying English with native English speaker teachers (NESTs). Most interviewees perceived native English accents as “standard” and non-native English accent as “non-standard”. The interviewees, therefore, expressed rather positive attitude towards studying English with the teachers who have native English accents.

4.5.2 Advantages of studying English with a NNEST

The interviewees were asked to share their opinions on the advantages of English language learning with non-native English speaker teachers (NNESTs). The researcher observed that it took the interviewees more time to respond when compared to when they were asked to provide feedback on studying with native English speaker teachers. According to the interviewees’ responses, it was found that the interviewees tended to favor Thai English teachers when it comes to listening comprehension. They stated that the familiarity with Thai accent helps them understand more easily when Thai English teachers speak English. In addition, Thai English teachers’ ability to explain in Thai helps the students learn English with ease.

4.5.3 Native or non-native English teachers

The interviewees now were asked whether they prefer to study English with a native English teacher or a non-native English teacher. According to the answers given by the interviewees, it can be observed that they have different opinions about who English language students should study English with. A number of the interviewees showed their preference for studying with native English teachers because they believed that native accents are “standard” and they can imitate the native accents of their teachers. Meanwhile, some other interviewees thought that they were better off studying with non-native English teachers especially Thai English teachers. The interviewees also presented their wish to obtain a native or near native-like accent; therefore, they believed that studying with a native teacher was a better choice. However, there were a few interviewees stated that they wanted to study with native and non-native English teachers in order to be exposed to various accents which will benefit them in the future. Several participants reported that
they wanted to have a native-like accent since they perceived it as standard. They also believed that learning English with native English teachers would help them acquire the accent.

4.6.4 Native-like accents

The interviewees were asked if they wish to acquire a native-like accent, and if they do, what they think the key factors contributing to this achievement are. Most of the interviewees stated that they wish to obtain a native-like accent since it was regarded as prestige. They also perceived that a person who has native-like accent also has higher credibility. However, there were interviewees who said it was fine to speak English with a non-native accent provided that they speak fluently and with good pronunciation.

4.6.5 Effects of English teachers’ accents on English learning

The interviewees were asked how their English teachers’ accents affect their English language learning. According to the responses from the interviewees, it was found that many interviewees favoured native English teachers when it comes to conversation skills. They believed that studying with native English speaker teachers would help them familiarized with the accents and would be useful in the future. However, the other interviewees stated that learning with non-native English teachers has some benefits, too. The interviewees explained that Thai English teachers could explain any difficult points in Thai in the class when the students need which makes learning even easier. Still, a drawback is that the students might catch up with the strong L1 accents of non-native English teachers.

4.6.6 English teachers’ role in the classroom

The interviewees were asked to discuss how their English teachers teach in the class. Following the responses from the interviewees, it was found that most interviewees favoured studying with native English speaker teachers for a more relaxing learning environment and they were allowed to make mistakes when speaking English. For Thai English teachers, in the view of the interviewees, are rather strict but they can teach grammar well due to the fact that they are bilingual. For other non-native English speaker teachers, the interviewees felt that they are fluent English speakers but sometimes they find their accents difficult to comprehend.
4.6.7 Ideal English teacher

The interviewees were asked to describe their ideal English teacher. According to the interviewees’ responses, it was found that the ideal English teachers must be able to demonstrate the ability to teach effectively. The interviewees valued the teachers who encourage in class participation and facilitate the communication among the students in class. In addition, the interviewees also reported that even though non-native English teachers speak English with their L1 accent, if they were fluent speakers and have clear pronunciation, then they were qualified to be a teacher.

4.6.8 Possibility of getting a native-like accent

The interviewees were asked if they think a person can acquire a native-like accent. And if they believe so, what are the key factors contributing to this achievement. According to the response from the interviewees, it can be concluded that most interviewees believed that obtaining a native or near native-like accent is possible for learners as long as they study hard enough, study with native English speaker teachers, or live in the place where English is commonly used.

4.6.9 English accent preference

There interviewees were asked to discuss their favorite English accent. In summary, most of the interviewees stated in a similar way that they prefer to have a native English accent. Any accents from the inner circle are acceptable as they are considered “standard, correct, or genuine” accents. They also stated that native English accents are better choices because people are familiar with the accents and this helps improve the effectiveness of communication among people with different L1 backgrounds.

4.6.10 English language learning goals

The interviewees were asked to discuss their English language learning objectives. In summary, the interviewees had different goals for studying English. Some of them wanted to be able to communicate successfully with foreigners, while some others wanted to prepare themselves for exams. Also, some interviewees reported that they wish to obtain a native-like accent which is the highest goal of studying English.
5. Conclusion

The results for the listening task revealed that the participants’ ability to accurately identify native and non-native English accents was relatively low with the accuracy rate of 43.33 per cent only except for Thai English accent that 85 per cent of the participants could identify accurately.

As for their attitudes towards the five English accents, native English accents were rated with marginally higher mean scores for status traits: intelligence, confidence, trustworthiness, fluency con professionalism. British English, among the three native accents, was rated the most confident, trustworthy, fluent, and professional sounding accent. In respect of solidarity, Thai English accents was rated high in the four traits: friendliness, kindness, honest, sincerity alongside the native English accents. The only solidarity trait that Thai English accent was rated relatively low was likeability, but the received was still higher than Pilipino accent.

The results from the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews revealed that the participants regarded native English accents as prestigious and suitable model accents for English language learning. It was believed that native-like accent was nothing of impossibility as long as they were motivated and exposed to their preferred native English accents. However, the participants reported that even though they preferred native English accents to non-native English accent in the context of language learning, non-native teachers’ acceptability and credibility were not affected provided that their fluency and competency as a teacher was high. In addition, the sharing of the teacher’s and the student’s L1 could increase their language learning pace in terms of comprehension in the classroom.

5.1 Recommendations and Future Considerations

5.1.1 The further research may include a larger sample size to increase the credibility of the study. In addition, since the participants recruited in the current study were those who lived in the city, further research may include the participants who live in the country or other areas to broaden the scope of the study.

5.1.2 Since the current study employed bi-polar semantic differential scales to investigate Thai EFL students’ attitudes towards English accents in terms of status including traits such as, intelligence, trustworthy, fluent, etc., and solidarity including traits such as, friendliness, kindness, likability, etc., the further research may include more or different status and solidarity traits to investigate the attitudes towards English accents and obtain more in-depth data.
5.1.3 Further research may include more English accents other than the accents used in the current study’s listening task to gain more in-depth information about Thai EFL students’ ability to identify different English accents. In addition, for the speech samples of English accents, more prominent features of each accent should be included in the further research in order to investigate whether or not, or how well the participants are able to identify each accent and tell apart different English accents by using the prominent features of English accents.

References
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EFFECTS OF PHONICS INSTRUCTION ON READING ABILITY OF YOUNG THAI LEARNERS

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Abstract
The study aimed to investigate effects of phonics instruction on reading ability of young Thai learners and identify the challenges that they encounter during their reading process. Six participants in this study were selected with convenience sampling technique. They took a pretest to measure their phoneme identification and phoneme segmentation, prior to a 9 hour intervention through phonics instruction. They did a posttest on both measures immediately after the intervention. In addition, they were observed by the researcher to document their development and performance during reading instruction and classroom practice to discover challenges in their reading process. Results showed that phonics instruction positively affects young learners’ reading ability. The findings also revealed challenges that emerged as part of the study influenced the process of reading such as alphabetic knowledge, motivation and strategies including the students’ behaviours.

Keywords: Phonics Instruction, Reading Ability, Reading Difficulty, Challenges in Reading, Learning Factors, Young Learners
1. Introduction
Reading is one of the important language skills that people use for acquiring knowledge and it also gives us an opportunity to learn new words and phrases to increase vocabulary size considerably. Being able to read other languages is advantageous to academic and professional achievement in a global context. At the beginning of learning to read, Hall (2009) pointed out that children will pronounce the words very slowly and probably have difficulties making connections between letters and sounds that can cause trouble with their reading.

Wei (2005) contended that Grade 3 students from primary schools in the Lower Northern part of Thailand had a low ability in the English Word and Pseudoword (nonwords) Reading subtests. This result illustrated that they had less or no opportunity to practice English words and pseudowords. When they did not understand the letter-sound correspondences, they were not able to sound out new words or nonwords. Moreover, Intathep (2013) reported that the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) conducted a reading test for all Grade 3 and Grade 6 Thai students nationwide. The results indicated that almost a quarter of them had poor reading skills. The reading problems were divided into 4 levels; inability to read, ability to read but need development, ability to read but fail to understand and ability to read but understand only a little. These can be difficult for them to achieve their potential because reading is a foundational skill for other subjects.

Furthermore, the B.E. 2551 Basic Core Education Curriculum (A.D.2008) requires Grade 1-3 students to reach the standards of learning English, which incorporate the knowledge of letters and sounds, pronouncing and spelling words and reading simple sentences accurately. It should be noted that students have learned English language as a compulsory subject in schools. However, their performance is developed lower than the required standards. The learning outcomes are found that they are not able to apply their English skills to study the new knowledge and are not confident to use English as well. This can have an impact on their reading abilities.

Many research studies revealed the instructional approaches to prevent reading difficulties in young children and to support them acquiring adequate reading skills. National Reading Panel (2000) reported that learning the alphabetic system is an important part of the process for beginning readers. It is concerned with the letter-sounds associations and the patterns of spelling and the application of this knowledge to their reading. In addition, Lloyd (1992) confirmed that when children learn the sounds of the letters through phonics instruction, they are able to decode words independently. The benefits of this instruction can help them understand the
alphabetic principle which are used for reading and writing. There are several studies in Thailand (Thaen-nga & Leenam, 2016; Ngamkiatkajorn & Kanoksilapatham, 2018) and other countries (Gray et al., 2007; Noltemeyer, Joseph & Kunesh, 2013) found that phonics instruction can increase children's reading abilities. This consequence indicated the advantages of teaching reading using a phonics instruction in young children. Consequently, it is very useful to investigate the effect of phonics instruction on reading ability among young Thai learners including challenges that may affect their reading process.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Reading Ability
Reading is a process of readers combining information from the text to get meaning. It is a necessary skill for learners of English as a second language. Reading development is able to start when they are infants or toddlers. Children begin learning to read are required to employ reading to know meaning of words, to have a chance to read frequently and intensively, to explore the relationships of regular spellings and sounds, to gain knowledge of the alphabetic system and to understand the structure of spoken words in order to acquire adequate reading instruction of the initial level (Snow et al., 1998). Bottom-up approaches are comprised of lower level reading processes, which begin with the fundamental basics of letters and sounds recognition (Nunan, 2003). They start learning with letters, words, phrases, sentences, structures, longer text, and meaning to achieve reading comprehension.

2.2 Phonics Instruction
Phonics instruction is a method that supports bottom-up approaches and is used for teaching reading among educators and researchers. Shanahan (2005) stated that phonics instruction teaches students to use letter-sound relations in order to interpret the printed words into pronunciation. It involves the teaching of letter sounds, spelling patterns and how to apply this alphabetic knowledge to sound out words. Learning alphabetic principles is important for the learners beginning to read. There are several instructional approaches to teach phonics explicitly and systematically. However, the aim in all phonics programs is to enable learners to acquire and use the alphabetic knowledge in order to make progress in reading and understand written language.

2.2.1 Types of phonics instructional approaches
According to National Reading Panel (2000), there are different instructional approaches to teach phonics that varies in how letter-sounds are taught. They are phonics through spelling, analogy phonics, embedded phonics, analytic phonics, and synthetic phonics.
1. Phonics through spelling instruction teaches children to segment words into sounds and match each sound in the word to its letter or letter combinations. For example, the teacher writes the word “bean” that is composed of four letters but has only three sounds b/ea/n. These three sounds can be represented by different letter combinations as in the word “been”. Both have the same pronunciation, but they have a different spelling.

2. In analogy phonics instruction, children are taught unfamiliar words by using parts of the words they already knew. For instance, the teacher shows and pronounces the words “can” and then blends the known rime “an” with the new single consonants (f, m, p, r, t, and v) to form related word families as in fan, man, pan, ran, tan, and van.

3. Embedded phonics instruction teaches children to identify letter-sound relations through the text. The teacher points out the relationship between letters and sounds when children engage in reading. For example, the teacher might start with the sound /m/ corresponding with Meg and Mog, which is the name of the story.

4. For analytic phonics instruction, children are taught to analyze letter-sound correspondences through words. This encourages children to compare words to investigate the spelling patterns and use this knowledge to new words. For instance, the teacher asks them to look at and pronounce the words and analyze letter-sound relations as in “bat, cat, hat, and rat” to identify why they have the same aspects (International Literacy Association, 2018).

5. In synthetic phonics instruction, children learn to transform letters into sounds and blend them to construct recognizable words. For example, after students sound out the individual letters in “cat”, they have to blend each sound together as /k/, /a/ and /t/ to pronounce a word /kat/.

### 2.2.2 Teaching phonics

Primary National Strategy (2007) provides materials for instructing phonics with teaching techniques that are suitable for the beginner level. The sequence of teaching in a discrete phonics session contains introduction, revisit and review, teach, practice, apply and assess. The purposes of this approach are to be able to recognize letter sounds and blend them to make up words (consonant-vowel-consonant or CVC) and to decode new or nonwords. Teaching sequences can be demonstrated to the entire class or individual in using and applying their phonics knowledge to achieve the learning objectives.

1. Introduction is the first step of teaching which informs the leaning objectives. This helps students know what they will learn in order to meet the criteria.
2. Revisit and review are for practicing the previous lesson they have already learned. It is essential that children have an opportunity to practice what they have learned last lesson to connect with the new content.

3. Teach stage is for introducing the new sounds and words for students. The teacher should model them clearly and link to the previous lesson appropriately.

4. Practice stage is crucial for students. It can provide a chance for them to engage in reading and develop their confidence in using the target sounds and words.

5. Apply stage helps students use what they have just learned, what they know and memorize from previous sessions to read new words or nonwords independently.

6. Assess is the last step of teaching to collect additional information by observing children doing their worksheet and reading independently. This informs the teacher about the next lesson that should guide and support students in teaching and learning.

2.3 Challenges in Reading

In order to read, the students must decode letter symbols into sounds, combine sounds to make up words and translate words into meaning. Therefore, learning to read is a complicated task for beginning or poor readers. QED Foundation (2019) stated that mapping sounds to letter symbols is the first step of the reading process which can help children read single words in isolation. Many students can develop their reading ability rapidly with their understanding of alphabetic knowledge. However, some might encounter reading difficulties. The common obstacles are that the students do not know the relationships between letters and sounds. Furthermore, they have difficulties blending sounds together to construct a word or segmenting words into separate sounds (QED Foundation, 2019).

2.4 Factors Affecting Success in Reading

In a language classroom, when young children learn to read, we do not know that they can absorb all what they have learned. This makes teachers aware of variables that may have an impact on their reading process. Strickland & Morrow (2000) revealed factors that can militate against success in learning to read which were comprised of impairment, limited English proficiency, family with learning difficulties, attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder, motivation, poor neighbourhoods and lack of practice. Moreover, Harmer (2001) highlights that motivation can affect students’ feeling and participation in the learning process. When they feel comfortable with what they are being taught, they might have much success in learning.
2.5 Young Learners
The students are one of vital components in teaching that help the teacher make plans for what and how to teach in order to achieve their learning goals. Harmer (2001) pointed out the characteristics of young children as follows;

1. They do not understand single words but they react to meaning.
2. They frequently gain their knowledge indirectly rather than directly. They take notice of information around them rather than merely concentrating on the exact topic they are being taught.
3. They understand not only from explanation but also seeing and hearing, especially touch and interaction.
4. They commonly show their excitement and interest in their learning and desire to know everything around them.
5. They require individual attention and acceptance from the teacher.
6. They are eager to talk about themselves. When their information is involved in the lessons, they react well to learning.
7. They have a limited attention span. Although classroom activities are very interesting, they can quickly get bored and lose focus after ten minutes.

As to the characteristics provided above, young children might not sit still in their seats in silence all the time. They also might not talk only to the teacher. They should learn how to work with others in different area of the classroom and activities should be changed every ten minutes to encourage them to learn and participate.

3. Methodology
3.1 Research Design
This research study adopted the one group pre-test post-test design to do an experiment. The researcher applied a pretest and a posttest as the research instruments to compare the results of the tests before and after receiving the treatments. The researcher wanted to explore not only the effects on reading skills in the young learner classroom but also challenges in their reading process during the experiment; as a result, the researcher used teacher logs to collect additional information from her observations of children learning to help plan the lessons appropriately for them. The researcher believed that this design can help explain all the research questions clearly and provide reliability and validity in the result of this research study; therefore, the researcher conducted research with this method.

3.2 Data Collection
The participants in this research study were 6 Thai students who have studied in different private schools in Bangkok. The researcher used the convenience sampling technique to select the participants. They were between 5-8 years of age. The majority...
of participants had similar background and proficiency levels in English. In this experiment, all the participants studied 6 lessons including a pretest and a posttest which were taught through Phonics instruction (Blending letter sounds to construct words) by the researcher for 90 minutes in each lesson. The total number of teaching hours was 9. The research study used three different sources to collect data which was comprised of pretest and posttest, teacher logs and phonics teaching plans.

3.2.1 The pretest and posttest
The pretest and posttest were selected and adapted from Primary National Strategy (2007). There were two tests of phonemes awareness (Phoneme Identification and Phoneme Segmentation). The aim of the tests was to measure the students’ alphabetic knowledge before and after phonics instruction. In the phoneme identification test, each student had to decode them into sounds individually. For the phoneme segmentation test, they were asked to read 10 nonwords aloud by blending individual letter sounds to construct words. The pretest was given to the students before the first lesson. The students were asked to do a posttest which was the same as the pretest after they have studied phonics instruction for 9 hours.

3.2.2 Teacher logs
Teacher logs were adapted from studying reading instruction with teacher logs (Rowan & Correnti, 2009). The researcher used teacher logs to record observations of the students’ development and performance during reading instruction and classroom practice and to identify challenges in their reading such as what materials and which types of activities can encourage students and what sounds they usually struggled with in order to reflect upon particular lessons. Teacher logs should be recorded regularly by the researcher during and after the class to obtain fresh and direct information.

3.3.3 Phonics teaching plans
In phonics teaching plans, the researcher adapted the sequence of teaching which was comprised of introduction, revisit and review, teach, practice, apply and assess from Primary National Strategy (2007) as follows. First, the teacher told all students what they were going to learn today as objectives. Second, the teacher reviewed the previous lesson to recall and practice what the students have learnt. Third, the teacher introduced a new vowel (a, e, i, o, and u) which was taught one sound in a lesson and reviewed other letter sounds that were related to the target vocabulary. In this stage, the students learned how to combine each individual letter sound to construct a word. Fourth, the students practiced reading with the target sound and vocabulary chorally and then individually. Fifth, the teacher asked the students to sound out what they
have learned in nonwords in order to check their prior knowledge. Sixth, the teacher gave each student a worksheet showing all the words with pictures to assess letter sound recognition and blending. The teacher summarized the points of the lesson to help them have better understanding what they have learned in each lesson.

3.3 Data Analysis
The collected data is acquired in this research study.

3.3.1 Quantitative analysis: Pretest and posttest
The pretest and posttest scores were analyzed by using Microsoft Excel 2013 to see the differences of Mean and Standard Deviation of both tests.

3.3.2 Qualitative analysis: Teacher logs
All the participants were observed by the researcher to discover challenges that they encounter during the reading process using teacher logs. The researcher focused on reading instruction and classroom practice. The researcher took short notes during teaching and wrote a full detail of the entire class in the form after teaching. Descriptive analysis technique was used to analyze and report the students’ alphabetic knowledge, motivation and strategies.

4. Findings and Discussion
4.1 Findings
The findings are discussed within this section in which they are analyzed to reveal the outcomes of using phonics instruction with young Thai learners and challenges contributing and hindering their reading achievement.

4.1.1 Pretest result of young Thai learners’ reading ability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
<th>̅X</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9.33</td>
<td>4.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 presents the result of the pretest in terms of young learners’ reading ability. It also provides the number of participants, total score, mean scores and standard deviations to analyze and reveal the interpretation of the pretest score. Six participants were enrolled in the phonics program and took this pretest. The total score was 20 which measured students’ phoneme identification and phoneme segmentation. There
was only one student who obtained the highest score, which was 17 out of 20. She achieved a significantly greater score before receiving the treatment. The rest of the participants had low scores in the range of 5 to 10. There were no significant differences between them on any measure. The mean score ($\bar{x}$) of the pretest was 9.33 and the standard deviation (S.D.) was 4.13.

**4.1.2 Posttest result of young Thai learners’ reading ability**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
<th>$\bar{x}$</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13.83</td>
<td>5.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 states the result of the posttest on young learners’ reading ability. This consists of the number of participants, total score, mean scores and standard deviations. There were 6 participants taking this posttest after receiving the treatment. According to the test results, there was only one student getting the full mark. She was the student who obtained the highest score in the pretest. The majority of the participants had scores in the range of 11 to 17. Interestingly, one of the participants got the same score as the pretest. She had the lowest scores of both pretest and posttest. The mean ($\bar{x}$) of the posttest score was 13.83 and the standard deviation (S.D.) was 5.27.

**4.1.3 A comparison of pretest and posttest results of young Thai learners’ reading ability**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
<th>$\bar{x}$</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9.33</td>
<td>4.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13.83</td>
<td>5.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 indicates the comparison of pretest and posttest results of reading ability perceived by young learners. It shows the differences between the mean scores ($\bar{x}$) and standard deviations (S.D.) of both tests. After the participants were taught through phonics instruction for 9 hours, the mean score of the posttest was 13.83. It was
higher than the average score of the pretest, which was 9.33. However, the standard deviation of the pretest was 4.14, which was slightly different from the posttest.

4.1.4 Challenges in the reading process of young Thai learners with teacher logs
The observation of the students during the experiment study presents how they approach the reading tasks, where they struggle and how they deal with these struggles and what strategies they use in order to learn. This can be concerned with challenges that they might confront and affect in their reading process. It covers alphabetic knowledge, sound blending, materials, participation, error correction and other emergence. This qualitative data provides a more comprehensive picture of the number and the nature of challenges in the classroom.

The alphabetic knowledge includes the letter names recognition and letter-sound correspondence knowledge. It can be pointed out that the majority of the participants could recognize almost all of the letter names and sounds. There was however, some confusion between letters of alphabet “b” and “d”. For example, some pronounced the word “dig” as in “big”. In addition, most participants struggled with some consonant and vowel sounds such as r, v, z, g, e and i, as a result; they said the similar sounds instead.

The sound blending referred to how to blend individual sounds into real words (target words) and nonwords. Most of the students were able to blend sounds together to read the target words correctly. At the beginning, they knew individual sounds but they could not blend them to form nonwords noticed during the apply stage. There was only one student who got the highest scores in the tests breaking sounds into nonwords. After 3-4 lessons, they could blend each individual sound to construct the nonwords. Even though they could combine sounds to make up the words, some read them incorrectly. For instance, they said /kob/ and /bot/ as in the words “kod” and “dot” respectively.

For materials, the picture cards were frequently utilized to read the words and identify the letter sounds. These facilitated the students’ reading and motivated them to pay attention to the lessons. Moreover, they were employed to provide the students with the meaning of the words without translating into their first language. The pictures on the A-Z board also used to help them discover the sounds when they struggled with them.
Participation referred to how well they were involved in the songs and classroom activities. All of the students could sing along with almost all of the songs. When they did not know the lyrics, they followed the teacher’s actions. Also, they enjoyed taking part in all activities. They were willing to practice and paid more attention to the lessons when using games. They had a lot of fun, smiled, laughed loudly and obeyed the rules of the games. During the activities, some might lose concentration on reading while they were taking part.

Error correction presents the ways in which the teacher usually corrects the students’ mistakes in the classroom. When they made mistakes, the teacher waited for them to self-correct and did not inform them of the right answers. Although, they pronounced the sounds inaccurately, they were not interrupted immediately by the teacher. The teacher let them read on their own and asked them to say it again. In addition, when they could not recognize some sounds, they were given some clues saying the words starting with those sounds by the teacher.

There were other issues that occurred during the study. A few of the students needed help while they were doing their worksheets. They could not complete them without the teacher’s support. It was noticeable that some were too active and kept still for short periods. They were absent-minded and easily distracted by others. They did not look at the board when reading. Therefore, they were often called on their names to read the words individually.

4.2 Discussion
This section discusses the findings of the present study based on the research questions.

Question 1: How does phonics instruction effect young Thai learners’ reading ability? The participants were asked to do a pretest and a posttest to determine the differences of test scores. The test consisted of two parts (phoneme identification and phoneme segmentation) with 20 items to measure the learners’ reading ability. For the pretest results, most of the participants (83%) had low scores in the range of 5 to 10. This meant they could recognize some letter sounds but they were not able to blend them together and read them as a whole word. They had difficulties in pronouncing some letter sounds, particularly “r” and “v” and they substituted with other likely sounds like /l/ and /w/ respectively. One student (17%) got 17 out of 20. This meant she had less opportunity to increase her scores because she was already approaching the total score. It was noticeable that she could recognize the letter sounds and break them into
nonwords. She made mistakes pronouncing some letter sounds since she did not display the awareness of sounding them out.

After the participants were taught phonics instruction in 6 lessons for 9 hours, the posttest scores revealed that the majority of the participants obtained higher scores than the pretest. They displayed an increase in their blending skills and letter sound correspondences knowledge that have beneficial effects on their reading skills. They made great progress in reading nonwords. One of them got the full mark which meant she was able to recognize all the letter sounds and develop an awareness of pronouncing each individual sound and blending them to make up the words. She had a great understanding of letter sound correspondences. Some of them (67%) who had better scores in the posttest made common mistakes because they confused some letters having the similar shapes like “b” and “d”. Therefore, they read some nonwords spelling with those letters inaccurately. On the other hand, there was only one student who received the same scores as her pretest. She made the same mistakes as the pretest. She could blend sounds to construct the words but she could not recognize some letter sounds; as a result, she read the words incorrectly. For example, the word were “ket” and “hin” and she read as /kef/ and /hen/ respectively. It could be concluded that phonics instruction shows more growth in word reading ability of young learners.

The phonics instruction adopted in this study has shown better progress in reading development of the students who have initially low scores of letter-sound relationship knowledge. These findings are strongly supported by the study of the effect of the phonics units on early English literacy by Ngamkiatkhajorn & Kanoksilapatham (2018). Their results reported that children taught with phonics method had positive effects on the development of their literacy skills. Furthermore, the study of the impact of the linguistic phonics approach (LPA) on young children’s reading by Gray et al. (2007) pointed out the same findings in that the students made great progress in reading and also retained them over time.

**Question 2: What are the students’ challenges in their reading process?**

During the study, the participants were observed by the teacher to identify challenges that might affect their reading process. According to the observation, all of the participants had already learned the letter names and sounds. Therefore, when the teacher presented the letter cards to the students, they could decode their sounds clearly. However, a few of them could not recognize some sounds and names. Although they could pronounce individual sounds of the words, they could not blend them together to read as the whole word during the first two lessons. They could
break single sounds into words until they were familiar with blending. They tried to connect what they knew with the new instruction. However, learning to read in English required the students to be aware of the sounds of language. Most participants had difficulties producing some sounds e, i, g, and especially r, v, and z. They could not distinguish them in their reading. It was noticeable that almost all of them confused the letters “b” and “d” because they have similar shapes and this often made them pronouncing the words incorrectly. A few of them had little understanding of alphabetic knowledge; therefore, they were not able to apply it to blend individual sounds together to construct the words. All of them were encouraged to participate fully in the songs and activities. When they were interested in what the teacher presented in the classroom, they were highly motivated and tried to produce language. These activities drew the students’ attention and helped them improve their reading performance. Motivation is a necessary factor that have an influence on the students’ feeling and participation in the process of learning (Harmer, 2001). When the students were motivated by the enjoyment of the games, their reading ability would be greatly enhanced. This can help them overcome their challenges that they had encountered during the study. Furthermore, a variety of teaching strategies in the reading process could build the students’ confidence, capture their interests, make them concentrate on what they were going to read and support their learning. During reading practice, the students were given many opportunities to self-correct and were offered picture or word clues in order to say them again when making mistakes. When their errors were corrected immediately, they might lost their confidence and seemed to have an emotional reaction. On the other hand, when they were supported by the teacher, they seemed to put more effort into their reading. This could make them aware of their mistakes and read the words carefully. Moreover, the findings revealed the students could sit still and focus on the lesson for short periods. They were frequently called on their names to sit nicely and read the words individually. These behaviours made some of them copy or follow the way their friends behaved. This is supportive by the characteristics of young learners that have a limited attention span (Harmer, 2001). They are able to pay attention to what they want in short periods. Finally, the teacher should design the lessons and modify teaching materials to be suitable for the level of the students and to meet their needs in order to reduce the challenges and the impact of other factors that militate against reading success.
5. Conclusion
In the light of these findings, three important issues emerged from the data. First, the results reported that the participants had improved their reading ability after studying through phonics instruction into their lessons. Second, the participants had a better understanding of alphabetic knowledge and had much opportunities to practice reading through a variety of activities. Finally, the evidence indicated challenges that influenced the process of reading. The researcher should take these challenges, namely alphabetic knowledge, motivation and strategies including the students’ behaviours into account to investigate the nature of techniques use and development. This might reduce the causes of challenges that hinder their reading success.

5.1 Recommendations and Future Considerations
The findings of this study are based on the initial, during and final evaluation of this approach to determine effectiveness further research using the same approach or others as follows;

1. As the number and the level of the participants were limited, further study can be conducted in a large group and different levels of the students.

2. Further research should have an extension of using this approach to determine whether the results reported here will be sustained over time.

3. These results revealed challenges that the students’ face which might impact their reading process. New research should compare the students in different contexts to identify other significant variables for predicting success in their learning related to the development of reading ability.

References


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