

**INVESTIGATING VOCABULARY ACQUISITION
AND VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES
THROUGH SHORT NARRATIVE TEXTS
AMONG THAI EFL TERTIARY STUDENTS**

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by

SRIMANEE JARINYA

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**MENYIASAT PEMEROLEHAN PERBENDAHARAAN KATA DAN
STRATEGI PEMBENDAHARAAN KATA MALATUI KATA MELALUI
TEKS NARATIF PENDEK DALAM KALANGAN PELAJAR EFL
UNIVERSITI THAILAND**

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini menyiasat pemerolehan perbendaharaan kata (VA) dan strategi pembelajaran kosa kata (VLS) penggunaan lulusan EFL Thailand dari sebuah universiti kerajaan di selatan Thailand melalui pembacaan naratif bahasa Inggeris yang memasukkan lima belas kata sasaran ke dalam setiap teks bacaan. Tujuan utama rawatan membaca adalah kemahiran memahami bacaan. Kajian ini juga mengkaji implikasi terhadap pembelajaran dan pengajaran kosa kata EFL dalam konteks Thailand. Sampel empat puluh lulusan EFL Thailand dipilih dari satu kumpulan pelajar tahun satu yang mengambil jurusan Perakaunan dari sebuah universiti kerajaan selatan Thailand. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan kombinasi teknik elikasi maklumat: (1) ujian peningkatan perbendaharaan kata (2) soal selidik strategi pembelajaran kosa kata dan (3) temu bual separa berstruktur. Tinjauan soal selidik dan temu bual digunakan untuk mendapatkan maklumat mengenai penggunaan strategi pembelajaran kosa kata dan pengalaman pembelajaran kosa kata mereka. Analisis data adalah kuantitatif dan kualitatif untuk mencari penemuan mendalam. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa pertama-tama pengetahuan kata Inggeris-Thai dan Thai-English peserta yang diukur dengan ujian makna perkataan lebih memuaskan berbanding dengan pemahaman kata mereka dalam ujian konteks. Kedua, para peserta nampaknya tidak pandai menggunakan pelbagai perkataan atau

frasa untuk menyatakan makna dalam konteks lain selain daripada tugas membaca yang disediakan. Ketiga, pelajar EFL Thailand dalam kajian ini nampaknya menunjukkan preferensi yang lebih besar untuk strategi terjemahan, metakognitif, memori dan kognitif daripada strategi penentuan, metakognitif dan sosial. Hasil kajian menunjukkan pengaruh tidak langsung pembelajaran kosa kata bahasa Inggeris sebelumnya terhadap perkembangan kemahiran bahasa Inggeris mereka. Kajian ini juga menunjukkan hubungan erat antara pemilihan strategi pembelajaran perbendaharaan kata, pengetahuan perbendaharaan kata dan pengembangan kemahiran bahasa. Akhirnya, keutamaan mereka yang rendah untuk belajar lebih banyak mengenai perbendaharaan kata atau membaca buku bahasa Inggeris melebihi apa yang diberikan di kelas dapat menyumbang kepada julat perbendaharaan kata bahasa Inggeris mereka yang rendah dan pengetahuan perbendaharaan kata yang terhad. Mereka menunjukkan tahap penggunaan strategi sosial yang rendah. Walau bagaimanapun, mereka lebih suka belajar dengan / daripada rakan sebaya mereka daripada ibu bapa atau ahli keluarga, dan pilihan ini disahkan lebih lanjut dengan cadangan mereka untuk belajar perbendaharaan kata melalui aktiviti kumpulan dan pembelajaran rakan sebaya daripada belajar perbendaharaan kata sendiri. Berdasarkan penemuan dalam kajian ini, pedagogi EFL harus (1) memasukkan pengajaran strategi metakognitif untuk mengembangkan kemahiran pelajar dalam merancang, mengawal dan menilai pembelajaran kosa kata mereka, (2) mengembangkan bahan pelajaran dan aktiviti perbendaharaan kata yang memperkenalkan kosa kata yang relevan, penting dan menarik bagi pelajar, (3) mendorong pelajar untuk membaca lebih banyak buku Bahasa Inggeris selain buku teks mereka untuk meningkatkan pengetahuan perbendaharaan kata mereka dan (4) memanfaatkan potensi teknologi moden seperti komputer dan teknologi maklumat untuk meningkatkan pembelajaran

perbendaharaan kata pelajar. Perlu diperhatikan bahawa ukuran perbendaharaan kata reseptif hampir dua kali lebih besar daripada ukuran perbendaharaan kata produktif. Faktor penting yang mempengaruhi pengetahuan perbendaharaan kata dan panduan untuk pengembangan bahasa Inggeris di Thailand dibincangkan.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated vocabulary acquisition (VA) and vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) use of Thai EFL graduates of a government university in southern Thailand through English narrative readings that inserted fifteen target words into each reading text. The main purpose of the reading treatment was reading comprehension skills. The study also examined implications for EFL vocabulary learning and teaching in Thai context. The sample of forty Thai EFL graduates was selected from one group of first year students majoring in Accountancy from a southern Thailand government university. Data were collected using a combination of information-elicitation techniques: (1) test of vocabulary gains (2) vocabulary learning strategy questionnaire and (3) semi-structured interview. The questionnaire survey and the interview were used to elicit information about their vocabulary learning strategy use and vocabulary learning experiences. The data analysis was both quantitative and qualitative to seek for in-depth findings. Research findings showed that firstly the participants' English-Thai and Thai-English word knowledge measured by the word meaning tests were more satisfactory in comparison to their word comprehension in context tests. Secondly, the participants seem not good at using various words or phrases to express meaning in other contexts apart from the provided reading tasks. Thirdly, the Thai EFL learners in this study apparently show a greater preference for the translation, metacognitive regulation, memory and

cognitive strategies than for the determination, metacognitive and social strategies. The findings demonstrate the indirect influence of learners' previous English vocabulary learning on their English language skill development. This study also suggests a close link between vocabulary learning strategy selection, vocabulary knowledge and language skill development. Finally, their low preference for learning more about vocabulary or reading English books beyond what were given in class could have contributed to their low English vocabulary range and limited vocabulary knowledge. They displayed a low level of social strategy use. However, they preferred to learn with/from their peers more than from parents or family members, and this preference is further confirmed with their recommendation for more vocabulary learning through group activities and peer-learning than for learning vocabulary on their own. Based on the findings in this study, EFL pedagogies should (1) incorporate metacognitive strategy instruction to develop the learners skills in planning, controlling and evaluating their vocabulary learning, (2) develop vocabulary lesson materials and activities that introduce vocabulary which is relevant, important and interesting to the learners, (3) encourage learners to read more English books besides their textbooks to increase their vocabulary knowledge and (4) utilize the potentials of modern technology such as the computer and information technology to enhance learners' vocabulary learning. It is notable that the size of the receptive vocabulary is almost two times greater than the productive vocabulary size. Important factors affecting vocabulary knowledge and guidance for English language development in Thailand are discussed.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study is about the effect of prevalence vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) in vocabulary acquisition (VA) by using five short narrative reading materials. The introduction consists of the study's background, the problem statement, its objectives, the research questions, the significance of the study, the limitations of the study, and the operational definitions in the study.

1.1 Background of the Problems

In recent years the English language has played an increasingly important role as the medium of communication among people from different countries; Thailand is no exception (Bancha, 2021). According to Bancha (2019), in Thailand, where English is used as a foreign language, the ability to use English has become essential for students as it is the global language for disseminating academic knowledge and it helps transform the educational experience of countless students.

Thai students spend twelve years studying English in primary and secondary schools, but the results are questionable. When compared to people in neighboring countries, Thais' English proficiency is relatively low. Many researchers have confirmed the critical role of vocabulary knowledge in students' reading comprehension, and in their school success (e.g. Bancha, 2021, 2019). However, one problem for Thai students that causes difficulty in using English is insufficient vocabulary (Ansarin & Khatibi, 2018; Jamtawee, 2000; Noom-ura, 2013; Supatranont, 2005). Non-English-majored students also have less exposure to English than do students majoring in English. Besides, Chawwang (2008) found

significant problems in the reading of the participants were inability to grasp main idea, inability to read quickly due to limited vocabulary, inability to summarise the text and the lack of appropriate reading strategies.

In the Thai educational system, English curriculum under the Nation Education Act of 2008, Thai students are required to study English from grades 1 to 12 (Ministry of Education, 2008). At the tertiary level, university students require to take at least four English courses, i.e., two fundamental courses and two English for academic (EAP) or specific purposes (ESP) courses (Ministry of Education, 2008). Despite the regular use of the English language both inside and outside the classroom settings, the students still encounter problems in their learning, and they generally see unknown words as the first problem to overcome. This may be because vocabulary has been recognised as crucial to language use in which insufficient vocabulary knowledge of the learners led to difficulties in second language learning (Wiriyakarun, 2018).

One of the most challenging problems of unsuccessful English vocabulary acquisition in the reading process in Thailand is that students lack particular vocabulary knowledge, which can influence students' reading comprehension (Wiriyakarun, 2018). The instructors need to examine students' vocabulary learning strategies in their reading in order to select and design the most appropriate learning materials to assist their autonomy learning, especially in the reading tasks. Inadequate core vocabulary may result in serious comprehension problems for learners who could face difficulties in applying reading strategies, such as focusing on the text message and guessing unknown lexical items (Terfa, 2017).

This may be because vocabulary has been recognized as crucial to language use in which insufficient vocabulary knowledge of the learners led to difficulties in second language learning (Asgari & Mustapha, 2011). Additionally, mastering vocabulary is one of the most challenging tasks that any learner faces while acquiring another language (Nyikos & Fan, 2007). Srisawat and Poonpon (2014) revealed that Thai students did not reach any word level and did not meet the language requirements (2,000 - 3,000 words). They found that having a large word size was necessary for understanding a text.

In order to acquire vocabulary, reading is a crucial language tool for students studying English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) because of most textbooks and the sources of scientific knowledge and information on higher technology published in English. As a consequence, reading is the foundation of advanced studies which requires reading abilities to access both textbooks and other reading materials outside the classroom (Ellis, 2017).

Research on Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS) has shown that learners' vocabulary learning strategy use can affect vocabulary learning to a certain extent (Schmitt, 1997; Folse, 2004). It is considered that vocabulary acquisition (VA) and reading occur at the same time. In the reading process, beginning readers may encounter several unfamiliar words. Intending to comprehend the texts, learners need to apply lexical processing strategies when exposed to unfamiliar words (Fraser, 1999). EFL learners can also acquire vocabulary through reading and that exposing learners to comprehensible input that is slightly beyond their current level can result in successful language acquisition (Krashen, 1989, 2004). However, problems with students' comprehension can originate from a lack of background knowledge, inability to connect to the text, limited vocabulary knowledge, or lack of fluency

(Wiriyakarun, 2018). Therefore, supplementing a large number of narrative texts to EFL/ ESL learners exposes them to a vast quantity of material within their linguistic competence (Nouri & Zerhouni, 2016), which is, at the same time, pleasurable.

Exposure to target language inputs, particularly in the form of reading texts, is another way a learner's vocabulary develops (Kezhen, 2015; Nation, 2020). Research has indicated that during the reading process, the language learning skill most frequently employed by students is the acquisition of new vocabulary (Kezhen, 2015). Thus, vocabulary learning is presumably a part of a student's responsibility in their reading process, and as such exposure to reading is the primary driver of VA (Gabriel et al., 2020).

Particularly, when learners undertake a reading task, these strategies dictate how they acquire new words after processing a text. The use of dictionary look-up behaviour and translation, as well as strategies concerned with anticipating content, guessing word meanings from contextual clues, integrating information, using relevant background knowledge, and understanding overall reading content, are involved when a reader tries to make sense of a reading text. If word meanings do not directly appear in the text, the reader must use these strategies to infer or search for their meanings (Ellis, 2017; Gabriel et al., 2020).

Learning new vocabulary is a challenge to L2/FL students, but it can overcome by having access to various vocabulary learning strategies. Learners should receive formal training in the strategies they lack. To this end, teachers should consider learners' willingness and readiness to receive training and should think of the most appropriate way to present strategies. Thus, teachers may first need to make

an appraisal of learners' current vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) and then work to help them realise the value of other types of strategies.

1.2 Problem Statement

Thai EFL learners inevitably struggle to memorise English grammatical rules and the main focus with regard to lexical items was on the requirement to repeat a long list of irregular verbs (Wiriyakarun, 2018). In terms of knowing a word and its functions, the learners were asked to memorise the parts of speech of word - such as possessive pronouns, possessive adjectives and so forth. Apart from that, vocabulary teaching in the classroom was simply restricted to giving learners a long list of English words together with Thai translations (Banchara, 2021).

Therefore, the learners basically learned two things: the English or L2 word form and the Thai or L1 translation. Extra information about new words (e.g. English definitions, synonyms antonyms, etc.) was optional, depending on whether or not each individual teacher provided the extra information. The learners were normally asked to learn/memorise words on their own (Wiriyakarun, 2018). The only method of memorising words traditionally recommended to learners was word repetition, saying the L2 word form aloud with the L1 translation.

According to the English curriculum of College of Industrial Technology and Management (CITM) All CITM students from every faculty have to pass prerequisite English courses: Foundation English I, II, and III. Nine credits are awarded for Foundation English I – III courses (FE). After the students pass the courses they are required to choose one of the English elective courses, e.g. Technical English, Reading Skills in English, English for Business Communication, Communicative English for Careers, and so forth. An elective course carries 3 credits, similar to each

of the Foundation English courses. Overall students need to obtain at least 12 credits for English subjects throughout four years in the University. The students basically choose an elective course they favour or which they think will be beneficial for their future career. They are also free to choose to attend the course when they wish. Thus, there can be students from different years (particularly the 2nd , 3rd , and 4th years) and from various fields, i.e. Engineering, Accountancy, Hotel and Tourism Management, Information Technology, and so on, attending the English elective course. Since the students who are freshmen need to pass the prerequisite courses, there is little rare chance that first year students attend the elective course. However, it is possible that first year students attend the elective course if their English score from the entrance examination was high, approximately from 75 percent upwards. Such students are exempted from the prerequisite courses.

Vocabulary, in every unit, is not presented fully in class because the amount of the subject matter of each unit far exceeds the teaching time available (Banca, 2021). By ‘subject matter’ that mean the instructional topics, i.e. newspaper terms, headline language/vocabulary, the content of newspaper clips, all of which must be explained/taught in class. The lecturer therefore normally provide the L2 word form with the L1 translation of each word to the learners; requiring them to find more information about the words from dictionaries. Without vocabulary learning strategies being suggested and introduced, they are asked to memorise the words in order to increase their vocabulary and to pass both the mid-term and the final examinations. Hence, the learners struggle with memorising large numbers of new words throughout the entire course (Banca, 2019).

It is noticeable that what most teachers, including myself, have been recently doing is just simply trying more or less to adopt or adapt some direct and indirect vocabulary teaching techniques suggested in various vocabulary teaching books, and using suggested ready-made exercises, internet ready-made exercises from the BBC World service, (learning English), the Bangkok Post, and so on, in an attempt to help enhance the learners' English newspaper vocabulary repertoire. Since some of the news articles presented in the course book were rather out-of-date, I had to present extra exercises to expose learners to up-to-date events or other authentic news articles.

However, the weaknesses of using such materials are the lack of follow-up activities to reinforce the learners' vocabulary practice and the lack of any suggestion of strategies to help the learners memorise new words (Wiriyakarun, 2018). Without knowledge of how to memorise words effectively, the extra words simply add to the burden of memorising words by rote repetition. One further point still to be focused on is when to investigate VLS employed by the learners and how to appropriately train learners to use it in the classroom, so that they will be able to use the techniques to help them deal with vocabulary learning more effectively while learning vocabulary independently.

At the present, the EFL teachers still struggle with the vast amount of subject matter to be taught in each course book and the enormous task of checking the learners' homework. Grammar still receives a lot more emphasis over vocabulary (Banacha, 2019, 2021; Wiriyakarun, 2018). Vocabulary is not directly taught properly in class. No VLS are explicitly introduced in class. The learners are asked to memorise the vocabulary in isolation. Hence, the question is when we will see a

change in the balance between teaching English grammar and vocabulary and the development in vocabulary teaching and learning at CITM.

Thus, there are three significant issues to be highlighted and reinforced in this research. Mostly, in the area of vocabulary study, the framework for examining VLS in reading for vocabulary acquisition was still vague and inconclusive. The vocabulary test scales and vocabulary detection process would become well-defined in this research. Finally, the primary purpose of this research is to investigate the roles of VLS in vocabulary acquisition through reading. The specific statements of the research problem would be explained and identified.

Firstly, it is widely known that EFL learner acquires new vocabulary and the conditions that facilitate vocabulary growth. The complexity of pedagogical decisions occurs when skilled lecturers conduct reading activities. This study sheds light on the process by examining the strategies that learners use to develop vocabulary as they access the reading treatment to their regular classes. Adequate exposure to vocabulary considers one of essential feature in acquiring lexical knowledge. Thus, reading lessons should be supplemented with exposure to new words within the readers' level of English proficiency.

Secondly, in terms of vocabulary, the problem is involved with word difficulties such as technical vocabulary, superordinates, synonyms, antonyms, and words with several meanings (Bancha, 2021; Chawwang, 2008; Jamtawee, 2000; Noom-ura, 2013; Sukying, 2020; Wiriyakarun, 2018). These groups of words can obstruct students' reading comprehension. Besides, words with several possible meanings can be problems in reading. In designing the reading materials, length of texts, background knowledge, text difficulty, and a variety of contents should be

considered. These factors affect readers' reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition. The readers may lose their effort in reading if the text is beyond their EFL proficiency. This would cause unsuccessful vocabulary acquisition and ineffective use of VLS of the readers.

Finally, in the context of English teaching in Thailand, some Thai EFL students are taught to repeat the English words spoken and memorise the words' spelling and meanings in a teaching method which seems to be passive (Wiriyakarun, 2018). According to Bancha (2021), vocabulary learning strategies are significant because the acquisition of vocabulary is a never-ending process and can solve insurmountable difficulties for language learners. This may account for the inadequacy of vocabulary knowledge among some Thai secondary school students, which is then passed on through their tertiary-level education. However, there are other students who can tackle the vocabulary problems on their own. They seem to have sufficient vocabulary knowledge and are considered better English language learners. For these students, vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) may help facilitate their vocabulary learning; as has been asserted by Nation (2020), a large and rich vocabulary can be acquired with the help of VLSs.

There are three main reasons which have prompted this research study:

- i. There are not many research studies that examine vocabulary learning through reading and the VLS use of young adult Thai ESL learners at a technical college in Thailand. The current study could fill this gap in vocabulary acquisition through reading and vocabulary learning strategy use research.

- ii. To give a voice to a group of Thai EFL learners, who were from other major fields rather than English major to express their English vocabulary learning problems, and to demonstrate their essential vocabulary learning use in a reading task. Research studies (Banchara 2021; Nation, 2020; Schmitt, 2014) have demonstrated that learners differ in their VLS range and application; therefore it is vital to inform educators about the vocabulary learning needs and VLS use of this target group.
- iii. To draw the attention of language educators to the need for explicit vocabulary teaching and VLS instruction not only in Thailand but also in EFL language institutes in countries where EFL students intend to study in a university environment.

On this basis, it is crucial to be aware of these significant problems and the basics of vocabulary learning strategies as well as how students from different English proficiency levels adopt the strategies effectively. That is to say, it is vital to gain more insights into how Thai learners perceive the use of vocabulary learning strategies to help them learn new vocabulary through their reading exposure.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

This study draws on a theoretical framework, Nation's (2020) vocabulary knowledge framework and Schmitt's (1997) vocabulary learning strategy taxonomy. Nation (2006, 2020) specified the dimensions of vocabulary knowledge and proposed three main categories: form, meaning, and use in both receptive and productive aspects. Form embraces spoken form, written form, and word parts; meaning incorporates form and meaning, concept and referents, and associations;

and use encompasses grammatical function, collocations, and constraints on use. The present study designed two tests to assess the participants' receptive breadth and depth of VK, while it also examines their productive VK from their English narrative reading. In addition, the VLS interview questions used in this study are also mainly built on Nation's vocabulary knowledge framework. Vocabulary knowledge is multi-dimensional as proposed by Nation (2020). For this reason, a comprehensive questionnaire of VLSs is expected to cover the strategies for learning the form, meaning and use of words in receptive and productive processes. Therefore, the VLS semi-structured interview questions are constructed based on two sections: strategies for learning the meaning of new words and strategies for learning the use of new words.

Moreover, Schmitt, one of the first researchers to investigate vocabulary learning strategies, developed his own VLS taxonomy, Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (SILL). Schmitt's (1997) VLS taxonomy consists of fifty-nine items 17 grouped into five main categories (Determination, Social, Memory, Cognitive & Metacognitive strategies). Schmitt's (1997) study, using his VLS taxonomy, revealed that that the most frequently used discovery strategies are using a bilingual dictionary, guessing from context, and asking classmates for help, while the most frequently used consolidation strategies were verbal repetition, written repetition, and. studying the spelling of the word.

Schmitt's inclusion of the Determination strategies, and the distinction he made between Discovery and Consolidation Strategies would be very useful in categorizing the various types of vocabulary learning strategies learners used, hence, the VLS Questionnaire used in this current study to explore forty Thai EFL learners' VLS use is based mainly on Schmitt's vocabulary Learning Strategy (VLS)

Taxonomy. The different categories of vocabulary learning strategies will be further elaborated in Chapter 2.

1.4 Research Objectives

- (1) To examine the participants' vocabulary acquisition after undergoing the reading treatment.
- (2) To explore the prevalence of VLS used by the participants in the reading tasks.
- (3) To determine the most frequently used categories of VLS by the participants through reading.
- (4) To find out the high, middle and low achievers in-depth feedbacks and comments on vocabulary acquisition and VLS through the reading treatment.

1.5 Research Questions

- (1) To what extent the participants acquire the target words after undergoing the reading treatment?
- (2) What is the prevalence of VLS employed by the participants through the reading treatment?
- (3) What are the most frequently used categories of VLS by the participants through the reading treatment?
- (4) How do the high, middle and low achieving groups give feedbacks and comments on VLS and VA after undergoing the reading treatment?

1.6 Research Hypothesis

The purpose of this study is to find out whether providing in five adapted narrative reading would have any effect on the learners' ability to acquire the vocabulary during their reading activities. Furthermore, it is interesting to find out how the reading treatment affects learners' vocabulary learning strategies and their attitudes. The main study will therefore endeavour to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: To what extent the participants acquire the target words after undergoing the reading treatment?

H₀ Participants do not show any improvement in their word gains after undergoing the reading treatment (i.e. between pre-test and post-test).

H₁ Participants show significant improvement in their word gains after undergoing the reading treatment (i.e. between pre-test and post-test).

RQ2: What is the prevalence of VLS employed by the participants through the reading treatment?

H₀ Participants employed less than five VLSs during the reading treatment.

H₁ Participants employed more than five VLSs during the reading treatment.

RQ3: What are the most frequently used categories of VLS by the participants through the reading treatment?

H₀ Participants employed determination strategies most of the time during the reading treatment.

H₁ Participants employed translation strategies most of the time during the reading treatment.

RQ4: How do the high, middle and low achievers give feedbacks and comments on VLS and VA after undergoing the reading treatment?

H₀ Participants in high, middle and low achieving groups show negative feedbacks and comments on VLS and VA after undergoing the reading treatment.

H₁ Participants in high, middle and low achieving groups show positive feedbacks and comments on VLS and VA after undergoing the reading treatment.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The present study's outcomes would make empirical and pedagogical contributions to EFL language research and would also present English vocabulary teaching and learning in Thailand.

Firstly, it provides a more detailed exploration of vocabulary acquisition through controlled-word exposures in narrative reading of Thai non-English major university students by examining their breadth and depth of vocabulary gains and explores the differences of vocabulary knowledge in terms of English proficiency levels.

Secondly, a more comprehensive and tailored VLS instrument is constructed based on Nation's (2020) vocabulary knowledge framework and Schmitt's (1997) vocabulary learning strategy framework. Accordingly, some items for learning how to use a word are incorporated in the present VLS questionnaire and in the semi-structured interview.

Thirdly, it sheds light on those VLSs that participants frequently used and preferred to employ in their English narrative reading, together with the differences therein in relation to the participants' English proficiency levels. Therefore, the study outcomes will provide English educators in Thailand useful insights and a better understanding of the pattern of VLSs used by Thai EFL non-English major university students.

Fourthly, it presents a holistic view on the contribution of VLSs, English proficiency levels as a whole to participants' vocabulary knowledge, which may offer Thai EFL teachers and learners a better understanding of what factors could account for and facilitate English vocabulary learning.

Finally, the present study adopts the mixed methods approach which combines a quantitative study with an in-depth qualitative interview study so as to achieve a possible convergence of the results from the two strands to better explain the quantitative results in light of the qualitative results. The present study demonstrates the strength of using the mixed methods approach and therefore it will make methodological contribution to EFL/ ESL research.

1.8 Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

1.8.1 Delimitations of the Study

(1) The research data of this study was taken from 40 Thai EFL first-year students in a government university in southern Thailand, where the situation and context might differ from those in different age groups, proficiency levels and locations. They have participated in the reading treatment, pre- and post-tests as well as in the VSL questionnaire session.

(2) There were only selected 15 participants who participated in the semi-structured interview session (five high, five middle and five low achievers from the pre- and post- test results).

(3) This study investigated only 15 target words from five adapted short narrative reading activities and examined the participants' VLS used during their reading treatment.

(4) There were only five major VLS involved in this study, including determination strategies, social strategies, memory strategies, cognitive strategies and metacognitive strategies.

1.8.2 Limitation of the Study

(1) The participants in this study consist of 38 females and 2 males and their age ranged from 18-20 years old from one class of Reading Skills in English from semester 1/2018 only.

(2) Time constrains were considered in designing the reading treatment and collecting research data. During this course, there was 50-minute period per week. Therefore, the study was allowed to collect the data only seven weeks. Thus, the retention of vocabulary knowledge might not adequate to examine.

(3) Lack of previous research on VLSs use in word-controlled reading in Thailand so the results of this study might represent certain contribution related to VA and VLS in the word-controlled reading in Thailand or relevant EFL circumstances.

(4) Other word knowledge and VLS use outside classroom could not investigate regarding different vocabulary exposures of the participants.

1.9 Operational Definitions

(1) Vocabulary Acquisition (VA)

In this study, vocabulary acquisition concerns the process in which learners are engaged in short narrative reading activities which focus on understanding a text rather than on vocabulary alone.

(2) Vocabulary Learning Strategy (VLS)

In this study, it focuses on the process that the learners employ to comprehend, obtain, restore and use vocabulary information in the reading treatment. The current study focuses on five types of VLS including, determination strategies, social strategies, cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies and memory strategies.

(2.1) Determination Strategies (DET)

Determination Strategies (DET) refers to an individual strategy that is used when learners discover the meaning of a new word by themselves. This can be done through analysing parts of speech, analysing suffixes and roots, checking for L1 cognates, guessing word meaning from contexts and using reference materials.

(2.2) Social Strategies (SOC)

Social Strategies (SOC) refers to strategies when learners ask other people to help or improve their vocabulary learning in their reading tasks.

(2.3) Cognitive Strategies (COG)

Cognitive Strategies (COG) refers to strategies that include verbal and written repetition, making word lists, putting English labels on real objects and writing vocabulary notebooks when students access the reading tasks.

(2.4) Metacognitive Strategies (MET)

Metacognitive Strategies (MET) refers to strategies that learners use to control and evaluate their learning in order to have efficient learning in their reading tasks i.e. choosing which word to learn or skip, testing themselves with word tests, etc.

(2.5) Memory Strategies (MEM)

Memory Strategies (MEM) refers to mental processing that facilitates long term retention. The activities for these VLS are connecting words to previous personal experience, associating the word with its coordinates, connecting words to its synonyms and antonyms, using semantic maps, creating word forms, using the imagination of the meanings of the word, grouping words together to learn them, studying the spelling of the word and using keyword method.

(3) Level of Proficiency of the Participants

In this study, it refers to the actual performance of the 15 participants selected from the results of the pre- and post-tests in the word meaning tests and comprehension in context tests (total scores are 76). Level of proficiency comprises three levels of vocabulary achievements namely, High Achiever, Middle Achiever and Low Achiever. Each level indicates the students' vocabulary performance as

well as informs what the students can do and cannot do regarding their vocabulary learning skills.

(3.1) High Achiever

With regards to this level, the five students demonstrate proficient knowledge and skills in vocabulary knowledge for their own educational level as a result from the pre- and post-tests, meeting the requirements as scoring from 52 to 76.

(3.2) Middle Achiever

With regards to this level, the five students demonstrate proficient knowledge and skills in vocabulary knowledge for their own educational level a result from the pre- and post-tests, meeting the requirements as scoring from 25 to 51.

(3.3) Low Achiever

With regards to this level, the five students demonstrate proficient knowledge and skills in vocabulary knowledge for their own educational level a result from the pre- and post-tests, meeting the requirements as scoring below 25.

1.10 Summary of the Chapter

In Chapter one, the researcher has described the background for the present investigation is an attempt to put the study in context, followed by the problem statement for the present investigation. This chapter also presented a brief overview of the background of teaching and learning vocabulary through reading as well as the use of VLS, especially in Thailand. This is followed by a discussion of the purposes

of the study, the research questions, significance of the study and limitation of the study in the present investigation. Lastly, the chapter also provides operational definitions used in this study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) and vocabulary acquisition (VA) through reading is broad and involves many aspects of education. This chapter provides a related literature review to support the study of the effect of providing short narrative reading exposures on the students' ability to learn vocabulary as well as explore the successful learners' VLS in acquiring words.

Thirteen aspects relevant to this study are reviewed to provide a general background for the study. The pedagogical issues about (1) vocabulary acquisition, (2) intentional and incidental vocabulary acquisition, (3) vocabulary knowledge, (4) cognitivism theory, (5) schema theory in reading, (6) implementing schema theory in EFL reading, (7) narrative texts in EFL reading, (8) definitions of VLS, (9) classification of VLS, (10) promoting VLS in a reading class, (11) related studies, (12) conceptual framework and (13) summary.

2.1 Vocabulary Acquisition

The process of vocabulary acquisition in ESL/EFL pedagogy has been discussed in terms of language development and lexical growth. Related to this is a clear distinction between explicit and implicit vocabulary learning. Explicit learning is associated with learning vocabulary out of context. However, it can also occur in context, for example when we look up words in the dictionary while reading, or review new words in a text after reading and note down their meanings. It is also can be said that explicit learning is a more conscious operation where the individual makes and tests hypothesis in a search for structure (Ellis, 2017). According to

Ellis (2017) terminology, implicit learning is typically defined as acquisition of knowledge by a process which takes place naturally, simply and without conscious operation, while explicit learning is said to be characterized by more conscious operation where the individual makes and tests hypotheses in a search for structure. Among the many features of implicit learning, one can readily refer to the unconscious status of the knowledge acquired by learners (Daskalovska, 2016).

Learning of implicit vocabulary involves indirect or incidental while the explicit method involves direct or intentional. As a matter of fact, explicit learning of vocabulary is conscious and is aware of what has been learned but implicit learning of vocabulary is non-conscious and without awareness of what has been learned. Vocabulary learning strategies can also be divided into those that involve (1) explicit, direct or intentional learning and (2) those involving implicit, indirect or incidental learning. There is good reason to believe that both explicit and implicit learning contributes to vocabulary development. Thus, vocabulary learning is most components of a language which helps learners to understand the text and can express the meanings. Second language vocabulary acquisition process involves several different learning processes and, hence, is a very complex phenomenon. Defined generally, explicit and intentional learning are characterized by the consciousness involved in the learning process, and both include the study of decontextualised vocabulary and using dictionaries and glossaries (Zárate, 2017). In the field of vocabulary acquisition, incidental learning is largely defined as the learning of vocabulary as a byproduct of any activity not explicitly geared towards vocabulary learning (Liu, 2018). In contrast, intentional vocabulary learning is defined as any activity geared at committing lexical information to memory (Rashidi & Ganbari Adiv, 2010).

Implicit knowledge is intuitive, procedural, systematically variable, automatic, and thus available for use in fluent unplanned language use. There has been much discussion in the literature on whether vocabulary is best learned through direct study or incidentally through reading. The evidence suggests, however, that both are effective in different ways. On the other hand, implicit vocabulary learning through reading depends a great deal on the learner's ability to guess the meaning of words from the context, which means that we need to know the words in the context. In vocabulary acquisition studies, one key research direction is to explore the points at which implicit vocabulary learning is more efficient than explicit vocabulary learning, to ask what are the most effective strategies of implicit learning, and to consider the implications of research results for classroom vocabulary teaching (Mustafa et al., 2019). There are many techniques which help one acquire new vocabulary explicitly as described below:

(1) Synonyms: Newton (2013) holds that synonym is the derivative of the Greek word with the roots referring to the words that are different but have the same or similar meaning. As a result, these words are called synonymous; for instance, seek is synonymous with hunt. Synonyms are also an important resource for euphemisms that help in language usage. Synonyms can be used to reduce the repetition of certain words that reduces monotony of over using a certain way. A good knowledge of synonyms will help you express the same idea in very many ways.

(2) Memorization: Although memorization can be seen as tedious or boring, associating one word in the native language with the corresponding word in the second language until memorized is considered one of the best methods of vocabulary acquisition. By the time students reach adulthood, they generally have

gathered a number of personalized memorization methods. Although many argue that memorization does not typically require the complex cognitive processing that increases retention (Nouri & Zerhouni, 2016), it does typically require a large amount of repetition, and spaced repetition with flashcards is an established method for memorization, particularly used for vocabulary acquisition in computer-assisted language learning. Other methods typically require more time and longer to recall.

(3) Mnemonic Techniques or techniques to enhance memory: one popular mnemonic technique is the keyword method in which an L2 word is attached to an L1 word by an image. These tend to show that mnemonic methods work, but not that they are more effective than other methods. Comparisons are also often made complicated by the need for training and the intervention of other variables. It is sometimes argued that vocabulary learning is best organized in terms of lexical sets. For example, we may learn words connected to a particular theme together - including synonyms, antonyms and hyponyms. The problem is that related words can easily be confused - for example, the difference between two synonyms may be difficult to grasp if both words are new or the meanings of antonyms may be reversed. Mnemonics as aids to memory has fascinated philosophers, psychologists, teachers, and learners ever since antiquity (Nouri & Zerhouni, 2016).

(4) Guessing word meanings from context should probably be called inferring (i.e. guessing based on evidence). According to Masoudi (2017), inferring meanings from context is more difficult than it appears at first sight and depends upon a relatively large sight vocabulary.