

Chapter Four

Findings and Discussion

This chapter consists of findings and discussion about the problems and strategies of Thai students in learning English vocabulary. There are three main points that are explained in this part based on the three research questions made by the researcher. First, it presents the general strategies of Thai students in learning English vocabulary. Second, this section also discusses Thai students' problems in learning English vocabulary. Third, it reports the Thai student's strategies used to solve those specific problems in learning English vocabulary.

The Strategies of Thai students in Learning English Vocabulary

The first objective of this research is to find out the kinds of general strategies used by Thai Students. To gather the data, the researcher took four participants to find the strategies. Based on Thai students' responses, the researcher found out that Thai students have many strategies for learning English vocabulary. The results of the interview will be presented in the following section.

Using dictionary. One of the participants stated that using dictionary was one of the strategies used in learning English vocabulary. She mentioned that she used dictionary to find the meaning of words. She said, "I find the meaning of unknown words from a dictionary" (P1.12). Dictionary is one tool that the participant uses to learn English vocabulary.

Participant one used a dictionary as her strategy in learning English word.

This is in line with Cook (2008) who said that using a dictionary is one of strategies to learn vocabulary with the meaning of words. Actually, a dictionary can be used in all skills, it may be minimal in speech but it is important during reading and writing. It also tells learner about grammar and pronunciation. Harmer (1991) also support that many teachers would still prefer students to use a dictionary in learning English. It is an easy way to find things out and it has clear definition and useful information.

Memorizing vocabulary. The second strategy is to memorize the word.

There were two participants who had same responses that they learn new vocabulary by memorizing. This has been stated by participant one, "I memorize the word by using a dictionary" (P1.9) and "I memorize 10 words at a time" (P1.10). She mentioned that she memorized word in learning vocabulary and the way she did was she memorized 10 words at a time. The participant two stated, "The first strategy I used in learning vocabulary is memorizing" (P2.6). This strategy was also one of the most strategies she used in learning English vocabulary. She mentioned, "I use memorizing word the most, it is just a habit. Because starting from kindergarten the teacher always asked us to memorize" (P2.26). In addition, she also said, "I think this strategy is convenient for me. I feel comfortable to do that" (P2.27).

Based on the explanation above, some Thai students used memorizing word as a strategy in learning English vocabulary. According to Chamot (2005), most students were willing to adopt memorization strategies for learning vocabulary. The

memorization strategies had been helpful in learning new vocabulary. It seems that memorizing is also beneficial to increase Thai students' knowledge about vocabulary.

Writing down the word. Based on the participants' response, the third strategy to learn English vocabulary was writing down the word. The participant one said, "I will write down the word I don't know"(P1.11). Then, the participant two stated, "Practicing to write a word and also meaning" (P2.9) Further, participant two said that "When I have a new word, I will write it first" (P2.28). The participant three said, "I generally learn vocabulary by listening to music by writing the lyric of the song" (P3.16). The participant three also mentioned that he used to write down the word as the most strategy used. Participant three said, "I use writing because I can memorize word while I write a word and it makes me remember the word easily." (P3.33).

It means that after writing down new vocabulary, the student can remember the word better. Writing helps students remember the vocabulary that student found easily. Chamot (2005) also mentioned that writing strategies could be beneficial for the second language learners when they find the word they need to remember. Writing down the word can help them to link their ideas with coherence and produce an appropriate target. This is one of the technique that help students keep remembering the word and also make them write the word correctly.

Listening to music/news. According to the participants' response, three of four participants used this strategy in learning a new word. Listening music is an enjoyable strategy that they use in learning English vocabulary. Participant one said

that “I used to listening music” (P1.13), and “I listen to the news in English” (P1.14). Participant one not only used listening to music but also uses listening to the news to increase her vocabulary. Participant three said, “I generally learn vocabulary by listening to music by writing the lyric of the song” (P3.16). The last, participant four said, “I like listening to music. Listening helps us practice to pronounce word and correct accent” (P4.11). Listening music is also one of the most strategies used by these three participants. Besides, this strategy is enjoyable and also a relaxed way to learn new word such as stated by the participant. Participant four said, “Listening to music makes me more relaxed to learn a new word” (P4.22), and “I think we can listen whenever we want when we are free” (P4.23). In addition, participant four also mentioned, "Music also makes us feel relaxed. If we do not understand the word of a song for the first time, we can listen to it several times. Then, find the word we do not know the meaning. It is the best strategy for me to learn English word" (P4.24).

Based on the finding, it can be concluded that most of Thai students in this study prefer listening to music in their learning English vocabulary. It is supported by Maulaya (2008) who said that the use of the song is effective to make students remember the word easily and feel more motivated in learning because they learn in an interesting way. Besides, learning vocabulary through song help students get the word and meaning easily. Learners could enjoy and feel happy while learning. The participants have the same view with this expert showing that this strategy is effective way and improve their language skill.

Watching a movie/ video. The next strategy based on first and second participants statements was watching video and movies. Participant one responded, “I also like watching a movie” (P1.16). She learns new vocabulary by watching a movie. In the movies, there are a lot of new vocabulary usually used in daily activity, so the student could learn by watching the movie. Another strategy is to watch video. Participant four stated, “I watch English video” (P4.10). Video here means video of native speaker talk.

It can be concluded that some of Thai students used watching movie or video as the strategy to learn a new word. Sabouri and Zohrabi (2015) stated, many researchers investigate that using movie and subtitles is improving general L2 reading and listening comprehension. Students can learn some words and phrases used in the movies and learn how to pronounce a word by subtitle. This strategy is beneficial for students in finding the new word and for correcting the pronunciation of a word. Watching a movie or video can be interesting and improve students' vocabulary. This strategy would not make students feel bored in learning English vocabulary.

Using English application. The researcher found that there are three participants who use an application in the hand phone as one of the strategies to improve their vocabulary. It seems that using English application as needed by the Thai student in this university. Participant one said, “I also used TED Talk, it is an application that we can learn English” (P1.17). Participant one mentioned more, “TED talk is useful. We can use it whether in Thai language or English” (P1.25) and “TED talk is easy to understand” (P1.26). So, this strategy is mostly used by her.

Participant three also said, “I read a Webtoon” (P3.10), and “I search in translation application” (P3.15). In addition, participant three stated, “I read a news in BBC like sports news and politics news. When I saw the unknown word I underline that word and find the meaning from dictionary application” (P3.18). Participant three uses many kinds of English application to learn a new word. Furthermore, the student also used a game in learning English vocabulary. This statement is in line with the what the participant one said, “I play a game in the application in the phone, game about English vocabulary” (P1.15).

From those explanations, it shows that Thai students in this study used various kinds of English application in learning English word. Using English application look is student needed by the students. It is based on Basoglu and Akdemir (2010) who stated that mobile technology is getting more popular now, it gains more importance part of language learning. Additionally, it is stated that mobile phones are the most frequently used. Even though the use of mobile phones in learning is limited, the result shows that it has positive effects on the learning process. This is modern tools that would be used by students now. This strategy is helpful for students and it is easy to use, and also saves time. This way seems is also a popular way for Thai students in acquiring new word.

Repeating and practicing. The researcher has found that all of the participants of this research show the same way that they keep practice to learn a new word. This is what all participants said, "I also keep practicing" (P1.31), and “I will

use that word by using in the class and speak in daily conversation” (P2.31). In addition, participant two mentioned, “Then, I also practice to write” (P2.8). She used a strategy of practicing by writing. She still keeps practicing. This strategy is also the most strategy used by participant two. Participant two responded that she repeats the word in learning English word. She said, “I always repeat vocabulary” (P2.7). Furthermore, there was a participant who stated that she also used this way to practice to learn new word. Participant four said, "I make a sentence then speak in front of a mirror" (P4.30). Actually, this is the way she practices to get a new word in the long term. Using mirror as a tool was used when practicing a new word.

It can be concluded that students use different ways in practicing to increase their vocabulary. Students have their own ways to practice in learning English vocabulary. The repetition and practice is a common way of remembering the word. Learners usually repeat the word again and again until they know it by heart (Cook, 2008). More practice could help students improve their vocabulary knowledge. When they always use the word, it makes them automatically have that word in mind. It could increase their vocabulary and learn the language easily. Brester, Ellis and Girad (2002) supported that learners often repeat word and phrase in order to become completely comfortable with the sound and meaning of that word.

Reading book or novel. Reading is one strategy that learners use in increasing vocabulary. There are so many kinds of English book available to read. According to this statement, participant three said, “I read a Webtoon” (P3.10). Participant four stated, “Sometimes, I also read a book” (P4.12), and “Mostly, I read

novel or comic in English” (P4.13). These Thai students prefer to read non academic book like English novel, cartoon, and others.

It has been shown that Thai students in this study used various books in learning English vocabulary. According to Krashen (2018), more comprehensible language learning is more vocabulary acquisition. He asserted that learners who perform better on vocabulary test spent more time doing in reading. Based on this finding, everyone has their own willingness to choose the book to read for increasing their vocabulary.

Translating. Another strategy that Thai student used in learning English vocabulary is a translation. There is only one participant mentioned that he used this way. Participant three said, "I translate a word in Thai" (P3.17). He mentioned that the way he uses to obtain new word is to translate English word in Thai.

It can be concluded that some student still translates an English word into Thai language in getting a new word. Brester, Ellis and Girad (2002) stated that translation is one technique learners can use in understanding and learning the meaning of new word, this technique saves a lot of time. The Thai student also uses this strategy to acquire new vocabulary.

Thai Students' Problems in Learning English Vocabulary

This research revealed the participant's response related to their problems in learning English vocabulary. Based on the participants' responses, the researcher found that there are six problems in learning English vocabulary faced by Thai

students. From the data, it can be seen that the students have difficulties when they learn a new word.

Basically, the main problem of learning vocabulary is not knowing the meaning of a word. It is supported by Harmer (1991) who said that the problematic issue of learning vocabulary is meaning. Students do not know the meaning of a word. The point is the problem which comes from the students who do not know the meaning of vocabulary. There are many aspects which make students not know the meaning of word. The finding will be reported in the following section.

Advanced lexicon. The first problem faced by Thai students in learning English vocabulary is advanced lexicon. Advance lexicon is high vocabulary that may have difficulties in spelling and writing. There are two participants who mentioned that they have problems with an advanced word. Participant one said, "I don't know the advanced lexicon" (P1.18). Another participant also explained that advance word was a big problem for her because the advance word affected many skills such as writing and spelling. This is what the participant two said, "If we are in higher level of study, we will face with a difficult word or advance lexicon" (P2.11), "It is difficult to stress in pronouncing, write, and spell the advance word" (P.2.12,13,14). Another statement was, "Advance word is hard to memorize" (P2.15).

The description from the paragraph above indicates that the advanced word is a big problem for some Thai students. These two participants need more practice in learning higher word because this will affect others skill. Vocabulary is the most sizable component and seems to be important. Further, the more learners know the

meaning of vocabulary the easier to learn that language (Yang & Dai, 2012).

Therefore, students must have a lot of vocabulary and they must acquire more about advanced words to be easier for them in learning English.

Forgetfulness. The second problem was based on the participants' responses that they forget vocabulary easily. The participants found that the obstacle of them in learning English vocabulary is easy to forget the word. There were three participants having the same responses. Participant one, two, and three stated, "The problem is easy to forget the word" (P1.19).

Three of four students have problems in learning the word when they found a new vocabulary and it was difficult to remember. It may be related to how they keep practicing the word. If students always practice the word, it is likely for them to remember that word. This statement is in line with Arifiani (2017) who stated that when students do not practice the word they have got regularly, it would make them forget the words easily.

Synonym of a word. The third problems that Thai students faced were the synonym of the word. There is only one participant who stated that she has a problem with a synonym for learning English vocabulary. She said, "The problem is a synonym of the word" (P2.16).

According to Harmer (1991), the second problem in learning vocabulary is words have synonyms, for example when we say bad and evil, these words are quite same in meaning. The word used is depends on the context and situation. Sometimes, it is difficult to find the real synonyms. Sometimes, it is difficult to find the real

synonyms (Harmer, 1991). In line with Harmer's statement, the Thai student considered synonym as a problematic issue of learning vocabulary.

Pronunciation. The next problem is pronunciation. Pronunciation is the way in which a word is pronounced. Based on participants' response, both participants explain that the problem in learning English vocabulary is about pronouncing the word. Participant four stated, "The main problem is about pronunciation" (P4.16). The pronunciation looks as a big problem for some students because it depends on their pronouncing a word. This statement was according to participant three who said, "How to pronounce of vocabulary. Sometimes, if we pronounce vocabulary wrong, it can change the meaning of vocabulary" (P3.21).

From the explanation above, the students understood that they had to have correct pronunciation when learning English vocabulary. If they are mispronounce, it affects other people who do not understand and it can change the meaning too. It is in line with Rush (2010) who argued that the problems the students faced when learning vocabulary are the pronunciation, the spelling, the word "s" idiom. In this pronunciation aspect, the students who still find the difficulties to pronounce some words should learn more or practice more about pronouncing the word.

British or American lexicon. Based on the researchers' interview, there was a participant who revealed that he faced the problem with British and American lexicon in learning English vocabulary. According to participant three the problem was, "It is about accent, we must think that we will use British or American lexicon"

(P3.22). In addition, he said, “Some of the word are different in writing and reading but it is same in meaning” (P3.23).

To conclude, both British and America lexicon also affected the students in learning vocabulary. Students should think which accent they would use. Further, in many words, both accents are quite different whether in writing or reading that made students feel complicated to learn a new word.

Unmotivated. The last problem that participant responded was unmotivated to learn a new word. This statement was according to the participant four stated, “The big problem is unmotivated” (P4.14), and “Some words are difficult to pronounce and that makes me unmotivated to keep memorizing” (P4.15).

According to Wu and Huang (2017), vocabulary is the critical element for language learners. It is developing skill vocabulary knowledge in their communication. However, learning the second language is difficult and stressful. Students feel boring in memorizing vocabulary, and they lack motivation in a learning activity. This statement is same as the participants’ response that the difficult words have an effect making the students unmotivated to learn. The students feel bored and lazy to acquire new word. Moreover, students might lack motivation in learning vocabulary.

Thai Students’ Strategies used to solve the Problems in Learning English Vocabulary.

Related to the certain strategies used to solve the problems in learning English vocabulary. The researcher had gathered the data through the interview from four

participants. There are many strategies that they used in learning English vocabulary.

The strategies they used to solve their problems are explained below:

Strategies dealing with advanced lexicon. There are two participants who have this problem and both of them use different strategies to solve their problems.

They are mentioned below;

Using dictionary. Using a dictionary is one of the strategies to learn vocabulary dealing with the meaning of words. Students can find the meaning of an unfamiliar word and check the information about grammar. Participant one said, "I used a dictionary to find the advanced word. It is like when I saw the advanced word then I used a dictionary to find the meaning of that word" (P1.20). She argued that using a dictionary is the way for her to solve the problem about an advanced word.

Memorizing word. The memorization strategies had been helpful in learning new vocabulary. It seems that memorizing is beneficial to increase Thai students' knowledge about vocabulary. They can memorize word to get the meaning of an advance word. It is based on participant two who said, "The first problem is advanced lexicon, to solve that problem we memorize the meaning of that word" (P2.17). She mentioned that she memorized word and meaning to help her remember the advanced word.

Practicing. Participant two also mentioned that "Keep practicing like memorizing that word in more time" (P2.19). She also keeps practicing the word she got to add her vocabulary. Students should practice more in learning English vocabulary. Practice is a common way to remember words. Learners usually repeat

the word again and again until they know it by heart. It is the way for students to easily get the new word.

Writing down a word. Writing could help students easily remember the vocabulary that the student found. Participant two said, "Write down a word and meaning" (P2.19). The last strategy that she used to solve the problem its dealings with advanced word is to write down the word and its meaning. This is the technique to help students keep remembering the word and also improve them to write a word correctly.

From each explanation above, there are two students who faced advanced word as their problem in learning English vocabulary. Both of them used different strategies to solve their problems. Participant one only used a dictionary to find out the meaning of an advanced word and participant two mentioned that she used three strategies to solve this problem which are memorizing word, practicing, and writing down the word. It can be seen that each participant choose the strategy they feel useful and easy to used to solve this problem. Students mostly used the strategies that they perceive was useful. Then, they always used it more often than strategy that they perceive was not useful (Chamot, 2005).

Strategies dealing with forgetfulness. There are three students mentioned this problem in their response. Every student use different strategies to solve their own problems which are mentioned below;

Practicing and repeating. Using in daily conversation or repetition words are the strategies to solve a problem used by two students to help them remember the

word and its meaning in learning new English vocabulary. Participant one said, “we need to always use words that we got, to make us not easily forget like trying to always use words and always speak with friends” (P1.21). She said that she should always use vocabulary she got such as used to speak with a friend to help her remember the word in the long term. The other participant mentioned that repetition can help him to solve the forgetfulness. When he gets new vocabulary he tries to repeat a word. Participant three said, “I solve the problem by always repeating. Keep repeating the word” (P3.30). This repetition strategy was considered to be suitable for him to keep the word he had got.

Writing down the word. The second strategy that the students used to solve the problem was writing down a word. Writing the word was also common for Thai students to solve a problem about forgetting the word easily which is started by participant two, “I write that word; it makes me easily remember when I face that word again” (P2.30). So, she mentioned that she writes down a word she got is helpful. It is easy for her especially when she faced that word again.

Easily forget the word is the problem that was mentioned by three students who are participant one, participant two, and participant three. All of them have a different way to solve this problem. There were many strategies that were mentioned by them, but for this specific problem, participant one and participant three choose to solve by practicing or repeating the word, and participant two used to write down the word. Both of these strategies have a different step in doing, but it has same aim that

will help them always remember the word. When they always used the word they got either by repeating or speaking with friend, they will not easily forget the word.

Strategies dealing with synonym. There is only one participant who has this problem, but she used numerous strategies to solve her problem dealing with synonym. They are as follows:

Practice in making a sentence. Practice making a sentence was also used for Thai student to solve the problem about synonym of the word. Participant two said, "About the synonym, I should look at the sentence to know whether the word is appropriate or not. It means that I should have more practice in making a sentence" (P2.20). Based on this statement, she explains that she should practice making a sentence to help her be familiar with a synonym of the word.

Using Internet. The participants' response showed that beside practice in making a sentence she also used the Internet in solving her problem. This statement was mention by participant two. She said, "I find the words from the internet" (P2.22). The Internet is useful for students to get the information of word, learner can search whatever they want to know. This participant explained she found the synonym of a word from the Internet because there are a lot of synonyms of words provided in the Internet that is easy to use.

Memorizing word. The last strategy that Thai student used to solve the problem about synonym is memorizing the word. Memorizing word is a basic way and easy to do in learning English vocabulary. Participant two said, "Then, I

memorize word” (P2.23). After she got the knowledge of synonym, she would memorize the word to solve her problem.

From the participants’ responses, it has been shown that synonym of a word is also a problem for some Thai students in learning English vocabulary. This particular student gave a clear answer that she used several ways to solve problem started from using the word by making a sentence, using the Internet, then memorizing the word she got. This is a good way to solve the problem. This is in line with (Chamot, 2005); (Basoglu & Akdemir, 2010).

Strategies dealing with unmotivated. There is only one student has this problem. The strategy to solve her problem is mentioned below;

Writing down the word. Writing seems like the one of an effective way to learn vocabulary. Participant four stated, “If I am unmotivated to memorize I change the way to write down vocabulary instead” (P4.17). Writing helps students easy to remember the vocabulary that student found. This student said if she felt lazy she prefer to write down the word instead.

In short, based on feel lazy problem, a student chooses writing to improve her knowledge of the word. Writing strategies could be beneficial for the second language learner when they find the word they need to remember, writing could make her easy to remember the word.

Strategies dealing with pronunciation. Two participants mentioned that pronunciation also is an obstacle for them. Both of them have the same responses that they use listening strategies to solve their problem.

Listening. Two participants have the same responses that they used listening to solve the problem of pronouncing a word. Participant three said, "I listen frequently like listening to video of native speaker talk" (P3.27). In addition, he said, "I listen to music" (P3.28). Besides, participant four said, "I listen to a word by using translation app" (P4.18). She also said, "I listen to a word sound by using English dictionary Application" (P4.19). Moreover, "I use Google translate voice to check the accent and pronunciation of the word" (P4.20). Dictionary application as one of strategy looks popular use for participant four to help her learn in pronouncing a word.

It can be concluded that both students used different tools to practice pronouncing the word. The first participant listened to native speaker talk video and music while the second participant used English dictionary application or translation application in learning pronunciation. Every student prefers using the tool based on their familiarly.

Strategies dealing with British or America lexicon. This is the problem based on participant three. There is only one student who has this problem and he uses only one strategy to solve his problem which is mentioned below;

Using Internet. From the participants' responses, participant three has a problem with British and American lexicon. He felt confused which the accent he would use in learning a word. Participant three said, "An accent? I also use the internet, it helps me more in finding the meaning of word, to find the information of

British and American lexicon” (P3.29). When he faced with this problem, he decided to use the internet to find more words and the meaning of different accents.

From that finding, the participant has a problem with British or American lexicon. The internet is one of method that is appropriate for a student to solve this problem. A student can find the word from the Internet and it can help a student in increasing vocabulary knowledge. Besides, this way is easy to use and save time.