ASSESSMENT OF TV VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION BROADCAST IN THAILAND NATIONWIDE

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Abstract

Because of the crucial role of English in all aspects of life, including business and education, local and national attempts have been made to ameliorate English language instruction. Academically, the Ministry of Education of Thailand has broadcast its educational TV programs on the English subject since 2007 to enhance high school students' English proficiency. Individuals recognized to be successful English teachers at tuition centers in Thailand were invited to teach English lessons televised nationwide. Given the significance of vocabulary in successful communication, their vocabulary teaching receives our attention. This study specifically aims to assess the effectiveness of vocabulary instruction theoretically and empirically. Theoretically, three unique vocabulary activities were described and subsequently assessed based on current vocabulary teaching theoretical frameworks. Empirically, 125 high school students who acknowledged that they were regular viewers of TV vocabulary instruction lessons were the participants of this study. The test devised to examine the impact of vocabulary instruction was based on the TV teaching materials, consisting of 15 word pairs whose meanings are subtly differentiated. Based on these word pairs, 15 sentences were constructed to examine the students' ability to choose the appropriate words for particular contexts. The participants' test scores, as well as interviews, suggested that such instruction did not seem to contribute to sustainable vocabulary learning. The results highlight the indispensable nature of theoretically informed instruction for the benefit of Thai learners of English and implicate practical suggestions to empower English language teachers in vocabulary instruction.

Keywords: Vocabulary instruction, educational TV programs, Thailand

Introduction

English has played a crucial role in all aspects of life, including business, entertainment, science and technology, and education. Specifically, in education, English as an international language plays a key role determining academic success and employment opportunities. Consequently, people with relatively strong English abilities are needed in order to compete nationally and internationally.

As far as English teaching and learning is concerned, in general, the four macro skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading and writing are mainly focused on in a language classroom, leaving vocabulary instruction relatively marginalized in the English curriculum (Fan, 2003). However, vocabulary is regarded as one of the crucial and indispensable building blocks of language, learning both receptively and productively (Nation, 1990, 2001; Laufer, 1997; Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001; Zimmerman, 1998; Cobb, 2007). For instance, Nation (2005) finds that vocabulary and reading comprehension are closely connected. The development of a vocabulary repertoire contributes to the enhancement of reading skills. In addition, Coxhead (2006) asserts that vocabulary instruction is very important to the development of performance in the four skills because the retention of vocabulary can be best achieved when words are explicitly taught and recycled several times in what the learners read, write, listen to, and speak.

In Thailand, English education has not been particularly successful as demonstrated by a number of national and standardized tests (Kirkpatrick, 2012; Prapphal, 2003). As an attempt to help boost Thai students' English ability in general, the Ministry of Education of Thailand initiated educational TV programs which have been broadcast nationwide since 2007. Among a number of principal subjects, educational TV programs on English were implemented with the objective of enhancing high school students' English proficiency. Individuals successful in teaching English at different tuition centers in Thailand were invited to teach English lessons televised nationwide.

With the emergence of the educational TV programs, and particularly the creation of activities specifically for teaching vocabulary in televised lessons, this paper has the main objective of assessing, theoretically and empirically, the effectiveness of the nationwide TV vocabulary instruction. The results generated from this study will heighten the awareness of the importance of teaching and learning vocabulary as well as sharpen scholars' sensitivity to be more prudent when delivering their instruction. By

extension, educators, teachers, the Ministry of Education of Thailand, and all involved parties can not only make full use of these findings but also make informed decisions to improve the quality of vocabulary teaching in Thailand.

Literature Review

In recent years, the study of second language vocabulary acquisition has become an increasingly interesting topic of discussion for researchers, teachers, curriculum designers and theorists (e.g., Nation, 2005; Schmidt, 1990; Skehan, 1999; Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001). Since teachers cannot directly teach all of the words students need to become proficient readers, Nation (2005) proposed an approach to effectively teach vocabulary. To elaborate, Nation (2005) suggests that the first decision that needs to be made is whether the word is worth spending time on or not. Nation stipulates that there are three levels of vocabulary that should be taught to students, and effective vocabulary instruction, if possible, should be sequenced as follows. Basic vocabulary which refers to general vocabulary used in everyday life and is easy to recognize (e.g., *want, follow, university*) needs to be taught first. Then, academic vocabulary and other words frequently used in academic issues (e.g., *investigate, industrious*) need to be taught. Finally, low frequency words often associated with specific disciplines (e.g., *isotope* in geography and physics, *lathe* in metal industry) can be taught.

Specifically, with regard to vocabulary teaching, to know a word, teachers have to present vocabulary to students from both explicit and implicit perspectives, which are referred to as intentional instruction and incidental instruction (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001). In an intentional instruction or explicit approach, students intend to commit the processed information to memory, and they are told in advance that their recall will be tested afterwards (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001: 10). Practically, teachers may teach students how to analyze words into parts. In addition, resorting to dictionaries and using explicit guessing strategies when reading texts should also be taught to students and practiced in class.

As opposed to an explicit approach, in incidental vocabulary learning or implicit instruction, students are typically required to perform a task involving the process of some information and do not intend to commit this information to memory (Schmidt, 1990). They are not told in advance that they will be tested afterwards on their recall of that information. Similarly, Wesche and Paribakht (1999) suggest that intentional vocabulary learning is

learned as a by-product of another activity, such as reading or communication, without the students' conscious decision or intention to learn the words. According to Nation (1990), repeated exposure to the words is necessary to acquire new words. Teachers, therefore, may also modify the reading texts by making unknown words appear more frequently in context. This idea is in agreement with Meara (2005), who emphasizes that teachers need to teach target words in context. This is because learning lists of words by heart in context is somewhat easier than working with individual words decontextualized.

In addition to Nation's classification of vocabulary (2005) and Laufer and Hulstijn's vocabulary teaching approaches (2001), scholars (e.g., Nation, 1990; Lewis, 2000; Thornbury, 2002; Calderon, 2007) congruently purport that to teach a new word, teachers need to make sure that students should know not only the meaning of the word and its spelling, but also how to use the word correctly. First, in terms of knowing the meaning, teachers may provide students with the target vocabulary, giving the meaning by using L1 translation, because the mother tongue enables them to understand its meaning simultaneously. Moreover, using L1 translation can help them to remember the word more easily. Then, teachers may teach a known L2 synonym by giving a quick demonstration and drawing a simple related picture or diagram. If possible, teachers should break the word into parts and give the meaning of the parts and the whole word together. Finally, teachers should give several example sentences to illustrate how the words are actually used in context to convey possible multiple contextualized meanings.

As far as knowing how to spell is concerned, teachers may draw students' attention to the form of the word by showing how the spelling of the word is similar to that of other known words. Then, teachers need to clarify the stress pattern of the word and other prominent phonological features. Apart from this, prefixes, stems, and suffixes, making up the word should not be overlooked.

Finally, knowing how to use the word is crucial when teaching vocabulary. Teachers should clearly point out the grammatical pattern of the word such as countable or uncountable nouns, transitive or intransitive verbs, etc. In addition, teachers should mention any restriction on the use of the word (e.g., formal or informal style, colloquial, polite or impolite words, technical jargon, and infrequent words). This information will help students use the word in appropriate situations.

According to the scholars mentioned above, it can be concluded that,

to effectively teach vocabulary, teachers need to be highly selective when choosing words for their students to study. As for students, to know a word, students should be able to, first, pronounce and spell the word correctly. Then, they should know how to identify its grammatical function. Next, they should know the meaning of that word in their mother tongue and also its synonym and antonym (if available). Then, they should be able to analyze its subcomponents or morpheme to help predict the meaning of the word.   Later, they should be able to provide example sentences to demonstrate their ability in using the word in context. In addition, they should recognize its collocations and its use in formal and informal situations. Lastly, they should know multiple meanings of the word and a range of possible connotations.   If students can accomplish the aforementioned knowledge, it can be said that vocabulary instruction achieves its goal.

English Language Learning in Thailand and the Assessment of Vocabulary Teaching

This section provides a description of the English language teaching scenario in Thailand. Subsequently, three principal activities of vocabulary instruction implemented by the teachers on educational TV programs are described.   Finally, the theoretical assessment of these three activities is presented.

English Language Teaching in Thailand

In Thailand, it is a fact that English is taught mostly in a classroom. As a result, the opportunities to use English outside class are quite limited. The English language is prescribed to be instructed in public schools when the students are in Grade 1. Thus, by the time the Thai students finish their high school, they will have studied English for about 12 years. Many private schools, however, opt to offer English lessons earlier than that, due to the high demand from the parents and the importance of the language. However, the results from several standardized tests revealed that Thai students' English performance is far from satisfactory. Some major factors responsible for this failure include teachers' qualifications, students' motivation, curriculum, and teaching materials (Kanoksilapatham, 2005, 2009, 2010, 2013).

Educational English TV Programs and Vocabulary Instruction

All involved parties in education have attempted to improve Thai students' abilities and competence in several subjects to meet international standards and be competent nationally and internationally. For example, the Thai Government decided to launch nationwide educational TV programs in 2007 to help boost Thai high school students' abilities, with the hope of helping them pass the entrance examination, and expands the students' opportunities, especially those in rural areas, to study many subjects (e.g., physics, chemistry, biology, mathematics, Thai, English, social science) with teachers from different tuition centers. Moreover, these programs were expected to provide a channel for broadening teachers' vision and exchanging teaching tips. In short, these programs aimed to prepare high school students for university education, and to improve teachers' English language instruction. Selected teachers of different subjects were invited to teach an actual class of high school students. The teaching of each subject was alternatively aired nationwide on Saturday for a period of about one hour.

As far as English is concerned, a number of individuals teaching English were selected from teachers at popular English tuition centers in Thailand. It should be noted that there was no standardization of teaching methods and materials to be used in the instruction, and thus these teachers can freely create and use their own teaching methods and materials without reference to each other. These instruction materials and techniques are claimed to be effective to help the students learn English. In this regard, even though they had freedom to focus on specific areas of the English language, they commonly followed the basic components of the national entrance examination: vocabulary, reading comprehension, grammar and structure, and writing. These teachers employed different teaching activities which were claimed to be interesting and appealing to high school students, compared to those used in a regular classroom setting.

Given that the focus of this paper is on vocabulary teaching, the review of the English lessons recorded allowed us to note three activities which deserved our attention. For the sake of convenience in terms of reference and description, the three activities captured by the descriptive phrases invented by the authors of this article are: 1) *Mix and Match, Patch a Song;* 2) *Memorize the Set, Refresh the Memory;* and 3) *Provide the First,*

Search for the Rest. The descriptions of these teaching activities are as follows:

Mix and Match, Patch a Song

The first popular activity used in teaching vocabulary or introducing new words The first popular activity used in teaching vocabulary or introducing new words to students is *Mix and Match, Patch a Song.* In this activity, songs are created and used as a device to help students memorize certain words implanted in the lyrics. A number of words which have overlapping or related meanings are put together in the songs. The melodies of the songs are usually adopted from those of Thai songs which are popular and familiar to students. The songs created for vocabulary teaching purposes contain Thai and English words. To provide a better understanding of the songs created, here is an example of *Mix and Match, Patch a Song* created by the researchers to demonstrate its use for vocabulary instruction:

> Loving you too much, so much, very much right now
> MAI-ROO-WAH-JUR-TUR-TUM-MAI-TEUNG-YOW
> Chill out DAI-MAI you know my heart's beating
> RUK-TUR-MARK-GURN precious, priceless, worthwhile
> costly, numerous, worthy
> RUK-ROW beloved, adored, admired, cherished

This song, for instance, was generated based on the famous song called "*Too Much, So Much, Very Much*", which was sung by Thongchai Mcintyre, a famous singer in Thailand. The lyrics of the song are presented in three facetypes. First, the words written in uppercase are in a karaoke format, indicating the pronunciation of Thai words, taken from the website of this song. Second, since this song is pedagogically aimed to focus on a series of ten words which share the partial meaning of "valuable" (*precious, priceless, worthwhile, costly, numerous, worthy, beloved, adored, admired,* and *cherished*), these ten words are highlighted in bold. Finally, the words in regular print are exactly the same words that are originally in English.

Based on the well-known and popular rhythm of the song, *Mix and Match, Patch a Song* activity was employed, and the song was composed using a collection of synonyms. The students find the created song easy to remember because they do not need to make extra effort to remember it. A large number of songs created based on this strategy have been produced to focus on diverse sets of vocabulary. Emotionally, the students are likely to

find the song inspiring, entertaining, and rewarding because of the familiar melody. Moreover, they can feel a sense of achievement because in one song, they can learn, or at least be exposed to, a set of ten words overlapping in meaning. To make sure the students have a chance to independently practice this song and the vocabulary, music videos of the songs are produced so that students can practice and memorize the words at their own pace and convenience.

Memorize the Set, Refresh the Memory

Another common instruction strategy used by teachers in the educational TV programs is *Memorize the Set, Refresh the Memory*. In this strategy, the relationship between words or among the sets of words is expressed using the equal (=) sign. For instance, the words *effective* and *efficient* are presented to students as words with the same meaning. As a shortcut, the relationship of these words is captured as *effective = efficient*. Similarly, the same device is used with the word pairs of *large* and *gigantic*, and *add* and *increase*, resulting in the presentations of *large = gigantic* and *add = increase*. The = device is not limited to word pairs, but can be extended to a group of words: *agree = accord, concord, concede, concur, conform, comply*. This strategy seems to have a positive impact on students' attitude and motivation. That is, they possibly consider themselves equipped with an expanded repertoire of vocabulary. In this regard, based on presumably already-known words (words before the = sign such as *large, add,* and *agree*), students are pushed to learn additional new words (words after the = sign, such as *gigantic, increase,* and *accord*).

Provide the First, Search for the Rest

The last activity widely used in teaching vocabulary in the educational TV programs is *Provide the First, Search for the Rest*. To illustrate, in this activity, after teaching a word, the teachers pronounce the first syllable of the target word with a rising intonation pattern. The teachers aim to elicit the students' participation by encouraging them to provide the rest of the word. In so doing, what is taught is reinforced and recast in a question form. For instance, with a focus on the word *fighting*, the teachers provide other words which have overlapping semantic meaning such as *versus, attack,* and *assault*. To ensure that the students know these three related words, the teachers provide a prompt which is only the first syllable of the target word (e.g., *ver-, at-,* and *as-* for the target words of *versus, attack, and assault*). The prompt is uttered with rising intonation, encouraging the students to respond to the prompt by saying the rest of the words. Once familiar, this activity becomes

gradually automatic and is applicable to any new vocabulary entry encountered in a lesson. This activity demonstrates the teachers' attempt to attract students' attention and participation, resulting in classroom interaction.

The three activities described above have gained popularity not only among the students watching televised lessons but also from many school teachers who eventually try to also adopt these activities in their classroom teaching. These activities contribute to the instillation in the students that English vocabulary learning is fun, engaging, and challenging.

Vocabulary Instruction Evaluation

The three activities represent popular trends in teaching vocabulary in Thailand, reflected in TV educational programs. However, based on the theoretical frameworks presented in Section 2, these activities of vocabulary instruction seemed to be inadequate in many aspects.

First, the activities, be they *Mix and Match, Patch a Song; Memorize the Set, Refresh the Memory;* or *Provide the First, Search for the Rest,* do not place an emphasis on pronunciation, which is one of the basic requirements of vocabulary learning (Calderon, 2007). To be precise, particularly in *Mix and Match, Patch a Song*, when the students are presented with a set of vocabulary items in a song composed for vocabulary teaching/learning, in *Memorize the Set, Refresh the Memory,* in which the semantic relationship of words is highlighted, or in *Provide the First, Search for the Rest* in which the students are expected to provide the rest of the words, these activities are conducted in a manner ignoring the significance of word pronunciation. The consequence of these types of instruction can be disastrous because teaching a vocabulary item needs to be accompanied by its accurate pronunciation (particularly word stress placement). Given the fact that Thai students of English were diagnosed to have serious problems with English word stress (Kanoksilapatham, 2005, 2010, 2013), these activities do not solve the existing problems but even exacerbate them. In short, the strategies might not be beneficial for sustainable language learning.

Second, the relationship between two words is not always straightforward. Moreover, such relationship expressed by the equal sign ($=$) seems to be too simplistic. In so doing, the context in which the words occur is overlooked. When these activities are used in vocabulary teaching, they possibly lead to the habit formation of learning words as an independent entity or in isolation (decontextualized meaning) and rote

learning. Certain negative consequences of these activities include the inability to use the words appropriately in context and the negligence of collocation patterns prevailing in the English language. To demonstrate, consider the word pair of *gentle* and *tender* in the following sentences:

> *A gentle / tender wind is expected today.*

In TV lessons and corresponding materials, *gentle* and *tender* are related, but they are not identical in meaning and cannot be interchangeably used in the same context. The context in the above sentence allows the use of *gentle* not *tender*. The impact of context in determining the meaning of a word can be illustrated in the phrases. Similarly, in the phrases *heavy weight* and *heavy smoker*, the word *heavy* has multiple meanings, depending on what it collocates with. In short, the context is crucial, determining the use and the meaning of a word.

Finally, language learning is not a trained behavior. For instance, in the activity *Provide the First, Search for the Rest*, students rely on teachers to provide a stimulus which is the initial syllable of the word, urging the students to provide the rest of the word. Similarly, in the strategy *Mix and Match, Patch a Song*, the students are trained to recite the entire song to figure out what the target word means. These two strategies can be pedagogically beneficial at the beginning of the instruction; however, prolonging the activities can be quite unfruitful, possibly making students rely more and more on the prompts and the entire song. Over-reliance on a prompt can be quite dangerous because a prompt is not always available or accessible.

In summary, although the three activities seem to be entertaining and pleasant to students, they display certain limitations. Based on the theoretical frameworks of vocabulary instruction proposed by scholars presented in Section 2, the three activities exclude phonological features of word stress placement. In addition, the words focused are usually not presented with their neighboring collocates or in sentential context. Therefore, the application of these activities should be considered with caution.

The study

In addition to the theoretical assessment of the vocabulary instruction described, to empirically address the objective of determining the effectiveness of the vocabulary teaching activities used in educational nationwide TV programs, this section presents how the assessment was

conducted, including participant recruitment, test construction, data collection, and data analysis.

Participants

Because the goal of this study is to assess the effectiveness of the educational nationwide TV programs on vocabulary instruction, the ideal participants of this study are high school students who were regular viewers of these programs. In 2011, the study was conducted with high school students taking the entrance examination at a public university which was also a national examination site. A questionnaire was distributed to high school students towards the end of the last examination day. To recruit the participants, a question in the questionnaire, regarding the regularity of viewing the English vocabulary instruction programs televised, which is a five-point Likert scale with 1 representing 'never', 2 'hardly ever', 3 'sometimes', 4 'usually' and 5 'always' was employed to elicit whether they considered themselves regular viewers of the nationwide English televised lessons - the major requirement of being a participant of this study in order to make sure that they had adequate exposure to the vocabulary instruction programs. That is, only the questionnaires from those who answered this question of the questionnaire as '4: usually' were included in the current study.

Instrument

The instrument utilized in this study was a test examining the participants' ability to use vocabulary in context. The test comprises two parts. Part A is the respondents' personal data, including age, gender, and a five-point Liker scale asking the regularity of their TV program viewing. Part B is the 15-item vocabulary test. Based on the materials covered in the TV lessons as well as the word lists compiled by these teachers which were made available to the students, 15 word pairs (30 words) connected by the = sign were selected. Fifteen simple sentences were generated as a test to examine whether the participants could choose the correct word from each pair to complete individual sentences. In other words, each sentence constructed provides the context for only one single word of the pair to occur. For instance, to test whether the students could distinguish the difference between the words *efficient* and *effective*, and *distinguish* and *differentiate*, the sentence constructed as test items number 2 and number 8 are as follows:

(2)   Many girls dream of working in an *a. effective / b. efficient*

       international organization.

(8) For some people, it is hard to *a. distinguish / b. differentiate* an orange from a lemon.

The complete set of 15 sentences was checked for its accuracy and content reliability by a native speaker of English, and then it was piloted with a group of 15 first-year university students before it was administered to the participants. The list of these 15 sentences used in this study is shown in Appendix.

Procedures

The questionnaires were distributed to 150 high school students on the last day of the entrance examination in the year 2011. 125 returned questionnaires from the students who responded '4: usually' to the question regarding the regularity of exposure to nationwide TV lessons were included in the analysis. With regard to the vocabulary test, the total score of the test is 15 points, 1 point each. Descriptive statistics of the tests, namely maximum, minimum and mean values, was performed. To substantiate the test data, based on their test score, three participants were selected for subsequent interviews. The focus of the interview was to elicit additional information regarding their attitude and further insights towards the implementation of the three vocabulary teaching activities when performing the test. Specifically, in an interview, they were asked to nominate or describe the activity or activities used when they took the test and how they felt about the activities used. To select participants for a phone interview conducted by one of the researchers, only one participant was randomly selected representing each of the three ranges of test scores (high, mid, and low).

Results

125 high school students admitted being regular viewers of English TV lessons and thus were qualified to be the participants in this study. There were 55 males (44.00%) and 70 females (56.00%). Their age ranged from 17 to 19 years old. The test took them about 10 minutes to complete. The following sections present an analysis of the results of their test scores and the interviews.

Test scores

Out of 15 points, the highest score was 12, the lowest score was 3, and the mean score was 7.84. The test scores clearly showed that, generally, the students did not seem to have satisfactory vocabulary performance in the test. Table 1 summarizes the results of the analysis.

Table 1 Percentage of test score for correct answers (N=125)

Word pairs	Percentage of correct answers
1. accept / admit	43.20
2. effective / efficient	34.40
3. add / increase	80.00
4. decline / deny	49.60
5. suitable / appropriate	21.60
6. required / desired	32.00
7. tender / gentle	31.20
8. distinguish / differentiate	53.60
9. costly / valuable	71.20
10. ignored / omitted	56.00
11. obtain / acquire	60.00
12. advantage / benefit	41.60
13. evidently / explicitly	75.20
14. offered / supplied	66.40
15. combine / collect	68.00
Average	52.27

As shown, the average score was only 52.27%. The participants' unsatisfactory test scores suggested that the students were not able to choose the right words in context. In order to choose the right answers, the students need to possess knowledge of the words in context. In this regard, contextualization plays a significant role in determining the answers. To further identify which vocabulary items in the test the students found most difficult, five most frequent mistakes were found in the following word pairs: *suitable* vs. *appropriate, tender* vs. *gentle, required* vs. *desired, effective* vs. *efficient,* and *advantage* vs. *benefit.* This finding is congruent with Nation (2001) and Scholfield (1997), demonstrating that extended training and practice in guessing unknown vocabulary from context is essential. More importantly, they state that the most important condition for inferring word meaning from context is the understanding of the surrounding words. In summary, the students' performance in the vocabulary test did not seem to be very satisfactory, potentially indicating failure of the vocabulary instruction.

Interview results

Based on the participants' test scores (max = 12, min = 3), the participants were divided into three groups: high scores (9-12 points), mid scores (6-8 points), and low scores (3-5 points). Only one participant was selected from each group and requested to participate in an interview. In the interview, first, they were asked to nominate or describe the activity or activities used when performing the test. Then, they were asked how they felt about the activities used.

All of the three participants nominated more than one activity when working on the test. However, the preferences of the three activities nominated by the interviewees in order of decreasing frequencies were *Memorize the Set, Refresh the Memory* (nominated three times by the interviewees), *Mix and Match, Patch a Song* (nominated two times by the interviewees), and *Provide the First, Search for the Rest* (nominated only once).

As for their feelings and attitude about individual strategies, the three students admitted that they really enjoyed the activity *Memorize the Set, Refresh the Memory*. However, they found the test items quite difficult because they contradicted what they had learned about the word pairs presented with the = sign (e.g., *distinguish = differentiate, effective = efficient*). They were actually surprised when asked to choose one of the word pairs to complete a sentence because they believed the word pairs tested were synonymous due to the use of = sign.

As for their attitude towards the activity *Mix and Match, Patch a Song,* two interviewees admitted that they recited the songs containing the target words from memory. They admitted that they could vividly remember the songs created by the teachers and the meanings attached to the words when occurring in isolation. One of the interviewees admitted that, to figure out the meaning of a word implanted in the song, she needed to recite the entire song. A pertinent question arises whether, in our actual use of language, we can afford to wait until the end of the song to figure out the meaning of a word.

Finally, the interviewees' attitude towards the activity *Provide the First, Search for the Rest* was minimal. The infrequent use of *Provide the First, Search for the Rest* was possibly due to the absence of the prompt, which was usually provided by the teacher. In short, the interviewees generally expressed long lasting and positive attitude towards the activities. However, these strategies seemed to fail the interviewees when they grappled with the task of deciphering the word meaning in context.

Discussion

As shown by the test results and the interviews, successful teaching/learning of vocabulary is not limited to the knowing the meaning of the words. This study also demonstrates that contextualized meanings of the words cannot be overlooked. To substantiate our findings, an actual vocabulary test item from the National Entrance Examination of Thailand in 2007 is illustrated to highlight the value of contextualized vocabulary:

In 1609, no one was _____ to carry letters except messengers authorized by the government.

1) admitted   2) accepted

3) allowed   4) acquired

In order to answer this vocabulary test item, it is essential that students understand the context in which the word occurs and also the context in which that particular word is used. However, as congruently remarked by the interviewees, the lessons integrating the three activities raised students' learning motivation and instilled in them a positive attitude towards learning English vocabulary.

Crucially, the results of this study contribute to the significance of informed instruction for the enhanced benefits of language learning. The three strategies were created as a means to stimulate high school students to learn English vocabulary. However, without a clear and accurate understanding of the nature of vocabulary teaching/learning contributed by scholars in pedagogy, the activities cannot and will not fulfill the ultimate goal of vocabulary teaching. At this juncture, the present study has provided a number of pedagogical implications. These lessons and activities might not be contributing to the national goal of life-long and sustainable education. In contrast, they possibly lead to the reinforcement of rote learning which likely hinders vocabulary development in the long run.

Finally, this study is without limitations, and its generalizations must be made with caution. First, the teachers were alternatively invited to teach televised English lessons for a period of time. Therefore, it is possible that their future classes, which are not in the scope of this study, might move on to the levels of contextualized meanings and/or word stress placement. Second, the screening of the final pool of participants might be problematic. That is, those who considered themselves regular program viewers might have different opinions and interpretations with regard to the word 'regular'

in our questionnaire, varying in their frequency and extended period of time of viewing the programs. Taken into account, the participants' overall English proficiency might have impacted the results of the study if there was substantial variation. In addition, the positive response of being regular viewers did not imply that the students were attentively glued to the TV screen. Some other interventions or interruptions might have taken place while viewing and have had adverse impacts on the interpretation of the results of this study. Fourth, only three students were interviewed. A larger number of students interviewed would have contributed to more in-depth and reliable information, elucidating certain findings about vocabulary teaching/learning. Fifth, even though this study tried to focus on the participants' learning experience with the televised programs, it cannot be ignored that the test scores representing their vocabulary knowledge might have been impacted by not only televised lessons but also regular classroom vocabulary instruction. Finally, the initial recruitment of the participants leading to the final pool of 125 participants took place on the campus of only one university. Additional diversity of the participants will be more convincing.

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Appendix

Choose the best answer.

No.	Questions	A	B
1.	My mom could not *a. accept / b. admit* that I am getting married.		
2.	Many girls dream of working in an *a. effective / b. efficient* international organization.		
3.	Would you like to *a. add / b. increase* your name to the current mailing list?		
4.	Jennifer tried to *a. decline / b. deny* that she had taken the money.		
5.	Short dresses are not *a. suitable / b. appropriate* for visiting temples in Thailand.		
6.	To board a plane, an identity card is *a. required / b. desired.*		
7.	I prefer steak at this restaurant because the meat is *a. tender / b. gentle.*		
8.	For some people, it is hard to *a. distinguish / b. differentiate* an orange from a lemon.		
9.	Buying a car can be *a. costly / b. valuable* for many people.		
10.	He was arrested by a policeman because he *a. ignored / b. omitted* the speed limit sign at the side of the road.		
11.	Swimming is one skill that flight attendants need to *a. obtain / b. acquire.*		
12.	This car travels 20 kilometers per liter which is a(n) *a. advantage / b. benefit*, compared with other cars.		
13.	That teacher is popular because he explains the lesson *a. evidently / b. explicitly.*		
14.	On a bus, seats should be *a. offered / b. supplied* to young children and old people.		
15.	Dust and dirt has begun to *a. combine / b. collect* in the corners of the room.		