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Teaching Vocabulary in English literature for Thai L2 Students through Productivity-based Instruction*

การสอนศัพท์ในวรรณกรรมภาษาอังกฤษสำหรับนักเรียนไทยที่ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาที่สอง ผ่านการสอนเชิงผลิตภาพ

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Abstract

This paper is to propose English language instruction using literature as a learning material focused on the first, small unit of language that is vocabulary and productivity based instruction. The content will start from the overall concept of teaching English language through literature. The scope of this paper is to concentrate on teaching vocabulary for Thai second language (L2) of English students, whose first language (L1) is Thai. Hence, it will discuss how a teacher can prepare vocabulary learning lessons for the students. Lastly, productivity-based instruction will employ through vocabulary learning and teaching, activities that enable the students to obtain knowledge by learning and doing productively, to promote 21st Century learning skills.

Keywords: teaching English vocabulary, teaching English literature, productivity-based instruction

* The purpose of this article is to present vocabulary teaching through English literature for Thai L2 students based on productivity-based instruction in order to enable students to learn vocabularies in contexts effectively and produce their learning outputs corresponding to effective learners in the 21st Century learning skills.

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บทคัดย่อ

บทความฉบับนี้นำเสนอการสอนภาษาอังกฤษโดยใช้วรรณกรรมเป็นสื่อการสอนโดยเน้นหน่วยที่เล็กของภาษานั่นคือคำศัพท์และเน้นการสอนตามแนวคิดการสอนเชิงผลิตภาพ เนื้อหาของบทความนี้เริ่มต้นด้วยการนำเสนอมโนทัศน์การสอนภาษาอังกฤษโดยใช้วรรณกรรม ขอบเขตของบทความนี้มุ่งไปที่การสอนคำศัพท์สำหรับนักเรียนไทยที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาที่สอง บทความนี้จะนำเสนอวิธีการแก่ครูในการเตรียมบทเรียนเพื่อการเรียนรู้คำศัพท์สำหรับนักเรียน และกล่าวถึงแนวคิดการสอนเชิงผลิตภาพในการใช้จัดกิจกรรมการสอนและการเรียนรู้คำศัพท์เพื่อให้นักเรียนได้รับความรู้โดยการเรียนรู้และลงมือทำอย่างมีผลิตภาพเพื่อส่งเสริมการเรียนรู้ในศตวรรษที่ 21

คำสำคัญ : การสอนศัพท์ภาษาอังกฤษ การสอนวรรณกรรมภาษาอังกฤษ การสอนเชิงผลิตภาพ

The Overall Concept of Teaching English Language through Literature

English literature is a tool for exploring both the use of language itself, and a culture attached through context. The readers are able to learn use and style of language; moreover, they can also learn and understand various cultures through reading literature. In English language teaching, literatures are useful learning resources for teachers to implement in an English classroom. Carter & Long (1991: 2) proposed three main reasons for using literatures in English teaching. They consists of the cultural model, language model, and personal growth. That is, the students can understand and appreciate the cultures and ideologies, improve and develop student's English language competency, and help the students' personal growth and development through their pleasure and satisfaction from reading literatures.

Maxwell & Meiser (1997: 185) specified two major focuses on literature study for students. Firstly, it helps facilitate them to develop an appreciation and enjoyment through both the wide variety of literature, and the different styles, story lines, and genres of each literature. Next, for a higher-level student, literature becomes the use of formal analysis which connects the students, as readers, to the text. This analysis can improve the student's development of thinking skills (Choudhary, 2016), creativity, critical skills, interpersonal skills (Kiatchai, 2016: 173), personal development and growth (Carter & Long, 1991: 3), and awareness of learning different beliefs and cultures to prepare students to be global citizen (Nomnian, 2013: 28).

Knowing that literature is an authentic and rich resource for language learning, students are able to acquire the target language (TL), i.e. English, to expand their language awareness, develop their reading comprehension, and develop the ability to interpret and connect themselves between the readers and the text. Furthermore, it also encourages the

students to express their feelings and opinions received by reading literatures (Norton, 1992: 17; Lazar, 1993: 15; Maxwell & Meiser, 1997: 186; Chambers & Gregory, 2006: 11; Muhammed, 2013: 29; Choudhary, 2016). According to the aforementioned claims, literature for language teaching enhances many dimensions of students' experiences and it benefits teaching and learning English language.

Teaching and Learning English Vocabulary in Literature for Thai L2 students

Vocabulary knowledge plays one of the particular goals in Language learning. Nation (2013: 95) mentioned the learning goals as *'LIST'*- a *L*anguage goal including vocabulary and grammar; *I*deas referring to the content such as cultural knowledge; *S*kills determining an accuracy and fluency; and *T*ext covering discourse schema, rhetoric devices and interaction routines. In general, many English teachers, especially in Thailand, are focusing on grammar-based teaching to students, using grammar and translation for the students. However, the other *L*anguage goal that cannot be ignored is vocabulary. Although, to teach vocabulary for Thai L2 students it is sometimes found that students are forced to memorize a list of words standing alone without context. They usually spell and recite the words given by Thai meaning on the side of the list. Finally, students have lost the ability to memorize the list of words in long-term memory. They are awkwardly forced to recite 10 words a day, every morning, as a test. And they have to start another set again every day. This short-term approach to memorizing does not provide any positive learning outcomes in learning English vocabulary. Furthermore, Thai L2 students who are still struggling with figuring out the vocabularies, continue to use a dictionary to translate word by word, and follow by putting Thai meaning over English vocabularies on the text given. This problem hardly provides an effective result in vocabulary learning.

Reutzel & Cooter (1992: 139) said that the acquisition of a reading vocabulary is one of the most significant ways of literacy development for language learners. Hence, many curricula have attempted to build the students' reading vocabulary competence in order to involve the students' experience and basic comprehension with context, rather than just understanding only an individual word.

As can be defined, a word is "a single unit of language that has meaning and can be spoken or written" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2017: online). However, in order to learn words, it is inevitable to separate words from context. That is, students have to learn the meanings of words together with context. Teaching vocabulary in reading has two purposes, mentioned in Maxwell & Meiser (1997: 209-210), to learn the meanings of the present texts, and to increase

reading vocabulary to facilitate the understanding of meanings in the further texts. Therefore, it can be concluded that teaching vocabulary with context is more effective for students' learning than teaching words without context.

In accord with the reasons above, teaching vocabulary can be useful for Thai L2 students to study English vocabularies through literature because the rich and comprehensible vocabulary, in context, can also enable their vocabulary learning process.

Selecting an English Literature for Thai L2 Students

Before selecting the vocabulary, we, as teachers who play an important role in the classroom to facilitate our students' learning process, have to select an appropriate literature for them. Graded readers are books based around the general core vocabulary at each level of the learners' language competency. This ranges from starter and beginner to upper intermediate (from A1 to B2 following CEFR: The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). Each level of books is simplified to satisfy the competence of reading in regards to vocabulary, grammar, and context provided in the text (Macmillan Readers, 2014: 2-3). As well, a teacher can test students' vocabulary size before selecting graded readers by using the website: http://my.vocabularysize.com.

The way to help students' vocabulary growth increase effectively was suggested by Nation (2013: 224-230) claiming that non-native speakers of English (Thai L2 falls into this group) have a much more limited vocabulary range comparing to native speakers. A five-year-old native speakers of English has a 5,000-word coverage, whereas non-native speakers are much more restricted depending on their learning experiences. Therefore, Thai L2 students might have difficulty to learn the same texts as native speakers. This might have an effect on their fluency and enjoyment to learn English through literature given. Moreover, Moolngoen, (2017: 170) concluded that to teach English effectively for Thai L2 students, a teacher has to consider students' diverse background and proficiency levels; select suitable teaching and learning materials concerning students' age, grade levels, and English proficiency levels.

In conclusion, the selection of English literatures of Thai L2 students should depend on students' language competence. A teacher can then choose texts by using graded readers, as well as simplified versions that are suitable for students' vocabulary size.

Selecting Vocabulary in Literature for Thai L2 Students

Having measured students' vocabulary size, a teacher can categorize the students into groups and provide them an appropriate literature based on graded readers. Then, the vocabulary included will motivate them to learn more effectively. In this step, the suggested way that a teacher can choose the vocabularies from literature is to focus on frequency-based word lists. Nation (2013: 16) showed three categories of words by the frequency lists of word families – high-, middle-, and low-frequency words. The high - frequency words are the most frequent 2,000 word families found in general text. The mid-frequency words are the next 7,000 word families on the 3rd to 9th of every 1,000-word lists inclusive. That is, there are 10,000 words in these high- and mid-frequency words. Then, the words in the 10th 1,000-word list, totaled to be around 50,000 words, are categorized in the low-frequency words which are infrequently found in general text. However, there are an additional two categories – Academic Word List (AWL) and Technical Word List (TWL) – which are counted by the specific contexts and do not appear frequently in general use.

By referring to the frequency-based word lists mentioned above, the teacher should realize that the most frequent 2,000 word families, the high-frequency words, should be focused on in vocabulary teaching and learning. The classic list of high-frequency words has been known as Michael West's (1953) A *G*eneral *S*ervice *L*ist of English Words (GSL). In the current study, Schmitt & Schmitt (2012), however, argued that the high-frequency words should be increased to 3,000-word family on the list. The high - frequency (2,000 word families) covers 86% based on British National Corpus – suggested by Nation (2013: 22). Furthermore, he stated that to a teacher or a course designer, it is worth affording and spending their teaching time focused on high-frequency words to cover the most frequent words found in general reading.

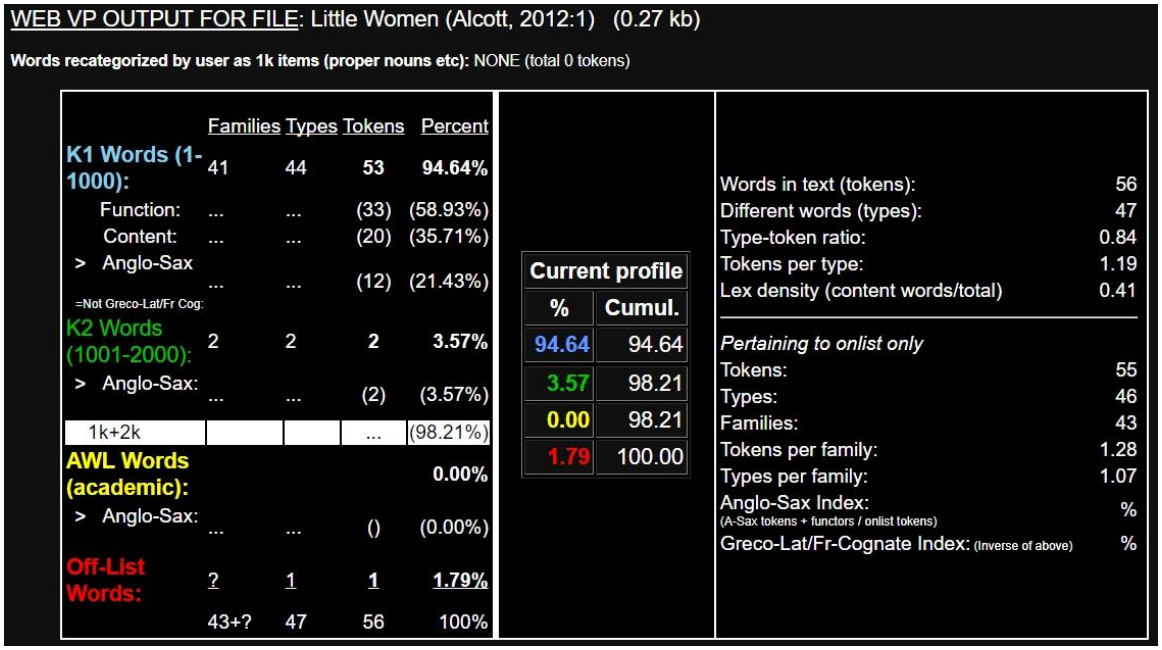
For each period of teaching literature or any excerpt provided to students, a teacher can figure out the first 2,000-3,000 high-frequency words. The resources are well organized in Paul Nation's website; see: https://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/about/staff/paul-nation. In his website, there many useful resources for English teachers. For example: vocabulary lists, vocabulary tests, and graded readers. Another website teachers can use to check words is Vocabprofile in Lextutor; see: https://www.lextutor.ca./vp. This website is able to calculate the text into lists of A1, A2, and AWL with the result of tokens and percentage; moreover, each type of text will be highlighted in different colors. An example of how the word count program works will be demonstrated by the following steps.

(1) Selecting an excerpt from the literature.

> *The four young faces round the fire cheered up as they thought of this, but then Jo said sadly, 'We haven't got Father, and we won't have him for a long time.' She didn't say 'perhaps never', but each silently thought it, remembering that he was away at the war in the South. – Little Women simplified version for pre-intermediate reader (Alcott, 2012: 1)*

(2) Put the excerpt in the box provided in VP Classic: https://www.lextutor.ca./vp. Please note: do not forget to delete the text shown in the box before putting the selected text. Then, submit the window.

(3) The calculation will be shown as in Picture 1



WEB VP OUTPUT FOR FILE: Little Women (Alcott, 2012:1) (0.27 kb)

Words recategorized by user as 1k items (proper nouns etc): NONE (total 0 tokens)

	Families	Types	Tokens	Percent
K1 Words (1-1000):	41	44	53	94.64%
Function:	...	...	(33)	(58.93%)
Content:	...	...	(20)	(35.71%)
> Anglo-Sax	...	...	(12)	(21.43%)
=Not Greco-Lat/Fr Cog:				
K2 Words (1001-2000):	2	2	2	3.57%
> Anglo-Sax:	...	...	(2)	(3.57%)
1k+2k			...	(98.21%)
AWL Words (academic):				0.00%
> Anglo-Sax:	...	...	()	(0.00%)
Off-List Words:	?	1	1	1.79%
	43+?	47	56	100%

Current profile	
%	Cumul.
94.64	94.64
3.57	98.21
0.00	98.21
1.79	100.00

Words in text (tokens):	56
Different words (types):	47
Type-token ratio:	0.84
Tokens per type:	1.19
Lex density (content words/total)	0.41
Pertaining to onlist only	
Tokens:	55
Types:	46
Families:	43
Tokens per family:	1.28
Types per family:	1.07
Anglo-Sax Index: (A-Sax tokens + functors / onlist tokens)	%
Greco-Lat/Fr-Cognate Index: (Inverse of above)	%

Picture 1: Text analysis by Web VP

With regard to the text analysis in Picture 1, it identifies that the selected text consisting K1 words with 41 families, 94.64% coverage in the text, K2 words with 2 families, 3.57% coverage in the text. However, there are no AWL words in the text. Moreover, if you scroll down the window, you will discover lists of words by type, highlighted in different colors. These details are very useful for preparing a vocabulary lesson.

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By these beneficial channels, the teacher can focus on the high-frequency words, bring them into the classroom, and also use as learning resources for students. However, it does not mean that the teacher cannot teach mid- or low-frequency words. These two lists can be taught after students can use the high-frequency words and store them enough in their vocabulary storage. Besides, the teacher can portion the high-frequency words in vocabulary teaching with the highest percentage, such as 80-90%, then mid- and low-frequency words can be the next priorities in each lesson. However, if the students are more familiar with most of the high-frequency words,the mid- and low-frequency words, plus academic words, will enable them to expand their vocabulary size. Nevertheless, AWL consisting of 570 word families (Thornbury, 2002: 21; Nation, 2013: 19) and TWL consisting of 1,000 entries in technical dictionaries (Nation, 2013:19) are the words occurring in the specific purposes of use in a particular context. That is, the teacher should consider teaching these academic or technical words if they are needed for the students to learn and comprehend. In other words, the word are frequently mentioned in the literature given, or it is a useful word or keyword affecting the needs to understand context.

To sum up, selecting vocabulary for students will be based on students' vocabulary size, graded readers, high-frequency to low frequency words, AWL and TWL. These are the factors affecting the effectiveness of teaching and learning vocabulary.

Activities for Teaching Vocabulary through Productivity-based Learning

In the 21st Century and in Thailand's context, we are attempting to drive our economic model called 'Thailand 4.0'. Thailand 4.0 is an economic model that is willing to shift the country from the past Thailand 1.0 (focusing on agriculture), Thailand 2.0 (focusing on light industry), and Thailand 3.0 (focusing on advanced industry). Thailand's policy has endeavored to unlock the country from 3 challenges; namely, a middle income trap, an inequality trap, and an imbalanced trap (Royal Thai Embassy, Washington D.C., 2015). Hence, the Thai education system has lunched Education 4.0 to respond this national policy. Puncreobutr (2016: 94) stated Education 4.0, referring to Thailand's educational context, is the new era for Thai learners' new characteristics which requires to develop the new learning behaviors based on the modern technology in order to help change and develop the society. Sinlarat (2016: 16) presented CCPR Model: *C*riticality-based, *C*reativity-based, *P*roductivity-based, and *R*esponsibility-based Instruction based on the output as well the outcome of learning in order to serve the future requirement of Thai educational achievement. Productivity-based instruction aims to manage learning activities for students in order to

stimulate students to produce from learning activities given. The product can be new thoughts or ideas, academic tasks, or projects reflecting their learning output.

Teaching and learning vocabulary effectively cannot separate from the context. It was proclaimed that incidental learning of vocabulary from context is a powerful means for constructing vocabulary. That is, the learners should obtain the context while they are studying vocabularies (Ruddell, 1986; Norton, 1992: 59; Blachowicz & Fisher, 1996: 17; Nation, 2013: 356, 440). A teacher can facilitate and encourage students to develop the ability to solve a problem of using new words in their contexts.

Nation (2013: 96) suggested vocabulary learning activities and the learning goals as shown in Table 1.

Activity	**Learning goals**
Guessing from context	Word form, form-meaning link, collocates Learn a strategy
Keyword technique	Link form to meaning, word form Learn strategy
Breaking words into parts	Link form to meaning, word form Learn a strategy
Split-information tasks with annotated pictures	Bring receptive vocabulary into productive use
'It's my word …': Learners present words they have met	Teach word form, meaning and use Develop an awareness of what is involved in knowing a word

Table 1: The learning goals of some vocabulary activities (Nation, 2013: 96)

For the next paragraphs, the vocabulary learning activities and goals will be suggested and amalgamated with the productivity-based instruction. There are many teaching and learning vocabulary activities which can be delivered to students; the examples will be shown as follows:

1) Guessing from context is to use context clues to imply the meaning of the target words. The focus word will be highlighted for the students – make sure the selected words are unknown words. Then, ask students to guess the meaning of the words highlighted. The very first questions can be basic ones for drawing students' attention and curiosity to learn; for example, "Guess whether it has a positive or negative meaning", "Why do you think it is

positive or negative?", "Which context or words help you to figure out and learn the target word?".

Another way to do the guessing from context activities is to replace the target words with nonsense words. See the excerpt below from *Fire on the Mountain* (Meister & Nation, 1979: 3)

> *One night just after the family went to bed, Sugeng heard a loud noise. It was like the noise of the* ***emilch*** *before the rain comes. But there was no wind. The noise came again. This time it was louder. Then his father cried, 'It's the mountain. Quick. Run to the river.'*

The excerpt consists of a nonsense word *emilch* which is replacing the real word from the literature. The replaced word is a non-meaning word which is coined for this particular use in teaching activities, and it does not exist or are not used for real meaning. Nonsense words will facilitate the teacher without concerning whether students know the target words or not. That is, it becomes a truly unknown word for all students. After students guess the words by using the context clue, a teacher puts the replaced word *thunder*, showing them the real word, and, if necessary, can ask them to look up the meaning of the word in the dictionary.

To create this activity with productivity-based instruction, a teacher can show students some examples of guessing from context. Afterwards suggesting them to find the target word in the high-frequency word lists, encouraging them to produce their own activities for the class. Each of group, or individual, will have their own product of learning and present to the class for practicing new words through this activity. Furthermore, this activity will facilitate learning how to find target words, how to replace the words that are surrounded by enough context to guess the target words. That is, the students will not be passive learners; but instead become active learners and contributors to their class.

2) Keyword technique helps students learn L2 by using L1 familiarity with the pronunciation or spelling of target words. There are four parts of the technique: (1) select the L2 word, English word (2) find the L1 which sounds like the selected word (3) put a mental image of the meaning of the keyword with Thai and English together (4) receive the meaning of English word. For example, a word *torment*, in case teaching non-high-frequency word, sounds similar to *ทรมาน* **[tɔ̄rʌ́mān]** in Thai. The table below will show an example of keyword technique.

The form link		The meaning link	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
English word to be learned	Keyword and its meaning	Image/sound to link the keyword to the meaning	Meaning of the English word
torment	ทรมาน [tɔ̄rʌ́mān]	Someone getting the physical or mental pain	extreme physical or mental pain

Table 2: The four parts of keyword technique for vocabulary learning (Nation, 2017)

As described in Table 2, the four parts are sequenced to match the keyword technique. When a Thai L2 student wants to memorize the meaning of (1) a word *torment*, then the student may think of (2) a Thai word *ทรมาน* meaning "pain" as the keyword. These two steps are the form link connecting the target word L2 and the familiar sound in L1 to shape a connectivity to them. The student imagines (3) a man is in pain and utters the Thai word *ทรมาน [tɔ̄rʌ́mān]*. The student can then connect the image or sound and (4) the meaning of the target word linked to the Thai similarity. These second last steps are the meaning link from image or sound to the target word learned by this technique. The picture taken from a website is illustrated based on the benefit for educational purpose to energize students' learning. However, the student, if he prefers, can draw his own picture as a product of learning through this activity.



Picture 2: The image of a vocabulary learned by keyword technique

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The product from this technique is a teacher can ask students to figure out the word given to a similar image or sound in Thai. Moreover, the students can be requested to produce their own pictures by drawing, pronouncing, and presenting their learning output to the class. The tasks can be collected in a drawing book, collection book, or learning portfolio which are purposely used to reflect their learning product. The product can be exhibited on the final of semester to show their productive learning evidences.

3) Breaking words into parts is also called “word parts” or “word building”. This technique is broadly used in English vocabulary teaching especially for L2 learners. A word can be broken into parts consisting of affixes (prefixes, and suffixes) and a stem. Sometimes, English vocabulary can be taught by noticing a root of the word. For instance, a word *revise* can be broken into two parts: *re-* means “back or again”, *-vis-* means “to see”. A teacher can deliver vocabulary learning activity to the students by using word parts as follows.

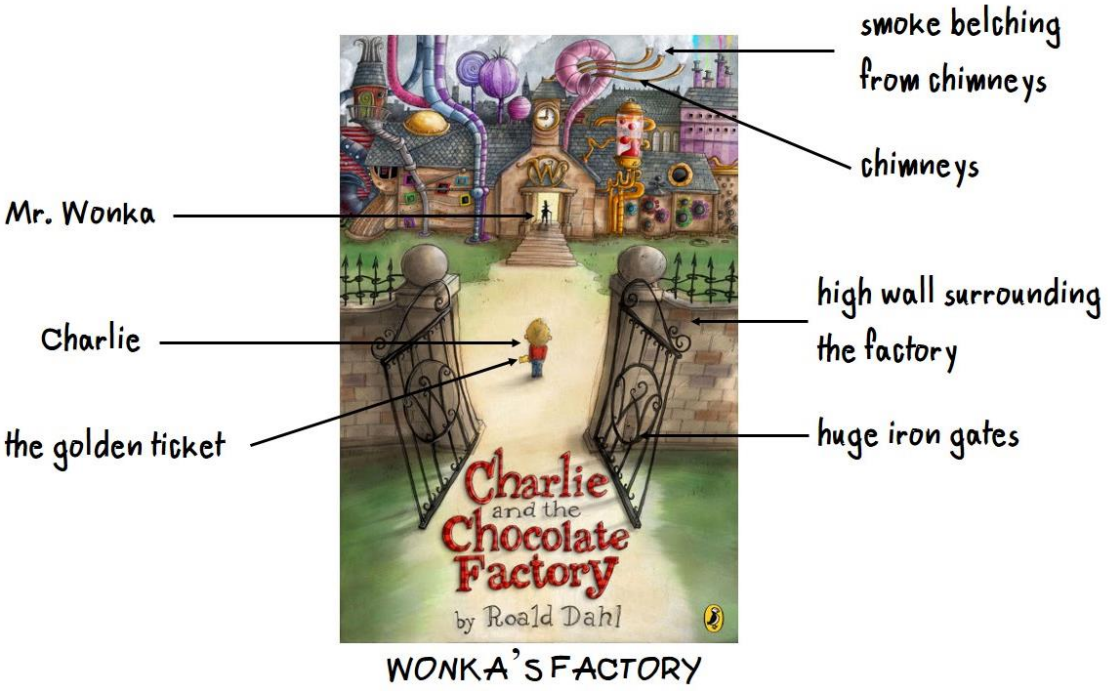
First, introduce the meaning and function of each part. In this stage, students have to analyze the word given and try to break it into parts: *re-* is a prefix meaning “again”, *-vis-* is a root meaning “to see”. In order to analyze the word parts, there are two factors that a teacher can investigate: the students’ knowledge whether they have experienced the parts needed or not. If the students do not have any idea about the word parts of the vocabulary given, the teacher can introduce them to students. After knowing, analyzing and recognizing the word parts, the students will encourage to connect and guess the meaning of the whole word regarding the previous knowledge. So, the students can guess the whole meaning of *revise* such as “to see something again”, “to look it again”, etc. Then, the teacher can show the context where the word *revise* exists to the students.

To encourage the class to produce the learning outcome based on the productivity-based instruction, a teacher can provide project-based learning by assigning them to search for word parts, collecting in storage such as a book, word cards, pictures designed by the students’ preference. These word parts can also be posted or exhibited on bulletin boards to remind students. Moreover, learning word parts associate more related vocabularies, so the students are able to expand their vocabulary size by using this technique. A teacher can ask them to look up the related words in the literature assigned or in other literatures, or reading texts.

4) Split-information tasks with annotated pictures is the technique that the students add notes or comments on the space of the picture. This is the way students can learn to identify and specify the picture parts matched to the vocabulary. Conversely, with regard to

the nature of literature-based instruction, a teacher can reverse this task by assigning the students to sketch out the picture from an excerpt provided or that students have selected. This refers to various types of descriptive scenes in the literature such as a climate, an environment, a house plan, physical characteristics of humans or animals, etc. For example; the below excerpt is taken from *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (Roald Dahl, 1964: 9)

> *And it wasn't simply an ordinary enormous chocolate factory, either. It was the largest and most famous in the whole world! It was WONKA'S FACTORY, owned by a man called Mr Willy Wonka, the greatest inventor and maker of chocolates that there has ever been. And what a tremendous, marvellous place it was! It had huge iron gates leading into it, and a high wall surrounding it, and smoke belching from its chimneys, and strange whizzing sounds coming from deep inside it. And outside the walls, for half a mile around in every direction, the air was scented with the heavy rich smell of melting chocolate!*



Picture 3: Split-information tasks with annotated pictures (photo composed by Brooke, 2009: online)

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Picture 2 is to express how the literature works with split-information tasks with annotated pictures. The students will be able to read and point at each part of the photo given. Conversely, they can also produce their own work to detail and picture their imagination reflecting on the literature they read. This task is a part of the productivity-based instruction which its product derives from each student's creativity.

5) 'It's my word …': Learners present words they have met. This activity is a productive one since students will present words they select from literature. They can present in various ways such as using a word card, doing a role play, playing a word guessing game, using pictoword, etc. At the same time, the students can also encourage the class to learn via technology if other students or the classroom facilities provide them the devices to connect the internet; for example, they can use Kahoot (see: https://kahoot.it/#/) facilitating the games or activities. This is also relevant to the findings of Nitisakunwut & Soranastaporn (2014) stating that using games for English language teaching and learning encourage the students' enjoyment, interaction, positive attitude, and language improvement. A teacher then summarizes the knowledge to the class after they have finished the presentation. The language focus in this activity is similar to other vocabulary teaching, that is, a teacher should focus on word form, meaning, and use of the target vocabulary. The learning goal is to develop students' awareness – not only the presenters, but also the other audiences in the class.

Conclusion

In conclusion, when teaching vocabulary it is highly suggested to teach with context. Literature is a rich and powerful resource for students. In order to select the literature for Thai L2 students, a teacher should be concerned with their background knowledge, and language competency by testing students' vocabulary size, then selecting the literature which is appropriate to their abilities and interests. The high-frequency words are the first 2,000 words that students should learn since they are frequently found in general text with a high coverage of 86-90%. This proves that teaching high-frequency words will importantly benefit the students' vocabulary size. According to Education 4.0, Thai L2 students are encouraged to learn more actively, to be an active learner in the 21th Century. Thai English teachers have to change their old teaching styles which treat the students as passive learners. Productivity-based instruction is valuable to be implemented to motivate Thai L2 students to learn English productively.

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