

Korean Vocabulary Learning Strategies of University Students in Thailand

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to investigate trends in the use of Korean language vocabulary learning strategies by Thai students and the relationship between students' use of vocabulary learning strategies and their specific characteristics. Participants comprised Thai students currently studying the Korean language. Data were collected through a questionnaire, examined for reliability, and then analyzed. The first step in data analysis was to explore trends in the students' use of vocabulary learning strategies, which could be categorized into two types, namely vocabulary discovery strategies and vocabulary consolidation strategies. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted using SPSS 24 in order to determine statistically significant differences between the two types of strategy as well as the frequencies of use of each strategy. Next, correlation analysis was performed via SPSS 24 to assess the relationship between the students' Korean language vocabulary learning strategies and their specific characteristics (i.e. gender, age, level of Korean language proficiency, experience in residing in Korea, length of Korean language study, experience in traveling/undertaking training in Korea, and state of being of Korean descent). From the analysis, it has been discovered that Thai students employed both discovery and consolidation strategies concurrently, yet consolidation strategies were used more frequently than the other. The most frequently used strategy was "If [I] cannot think of certain words when speaking or writing in Korean, [I] refer to the Internet or

a dictionary". Besides, statistical significance has been found in the relationship between vocabulary learning strategies and Korean language proficiency, while consolidation strategies were observed to correlate with the students' gender. The findings of this research would therefore enable teachers to recognize crucial elements of Korean vocabulary pedagogy, also allowing them to adjust their teaching so as to correspond with students' different levels of language proficiency.

Keywords: Vocabulary learning, Vocabulary learning strategies, Thai students learning Korean language, Learners' specific characteristics

INTRODUCTION

When learning a foreign language, vocabulary and grammar are crucially important elements that learners need to acquire. In developing language acquisition, it is imperative for learners to study grammatical rules and their applications as well as syntax of the target language thoroughly in order to be able to construct well-formed and correct sentences. In addition to a good knowledge of grammar, the ability to utilize diverse, appropriate and pertinent vocabularies is also essential as effective communication cannot take place if learners only know how to execute grammar but cannot figure out the right words to convey their message.

For Thai native speakers, learning vocabularies in foreign languages especially in Korean, which belongs to a different language family from the Thai language, can be considerably difficult because of differences in the two languages' morphology and phonology. In this connection, memorization is seen as an unavoidable mean that Thai students learning the Korean language at a fundamental level seek to employ. However, apart from memorization, there are other factors and learning strategies that help learners recognize words effectively. For example, some specific characteristics of learners have also been found to contribute to better vocabulary learning. A thorough study in this regard is therefore needed so as to help create effective Korean vocabulary learning strategies for Thai students.

The objective of this research is to answer two following research questions:

1. What are vocabulary learning strategies (i.e. vocabulary discovery strategies and vocabulary consolidation strategies) Thai university students employ in their vocabulary learning?