

## INVESTIGATING ENGLISH VOCABULARY ACQUISITION PROBLEMS OF THAI EFL UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AT RAJABHAT UNIVERSITIES

Tawan Phimphet<sup>1</sup>, Sarinrat Sertpunya<sup>2</sup> and Pikun Ekwarangkoon<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup> English Language Studies Program, Faculty of Liberal Arts, North Bangkok University

\*Corresponding author e-mail: tawan.phim@gmail.com

Received 7 September 2024

Revised 18 October 2024

Accepted 18 October 2024

### Abstract

This research was survey research, aiming at examining the specific challenges encountered by students at Rajabhat University in acquiring vocabulary, focusing on aspects of word form, word meaning, and word use of first-year students at Rajabhat Universities in Thailand. The research included 200 students as samples chosen from Yala Rajabhat University, Kamphaeng Phet Rajabhat University, Rampaipanee Rajabhat University, and Muban Chombueng Rajabhat University, all enrolled in general English courses during the second semester of 2023. They were selected by employing purposive sampling. The study focused on these institutions to provide insights into the context of Rajabhat University students. Data were collected using a 5-point scale questionnaire as the research tool which was designed to identify vocabulary learning problems, with analysis conducted through means, standard deviations, and percentages. The Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) value of 0.86.

The findings indicate that students faced substantial difficulties with word forms, meanings, and use. Notably, challenges were most pronounced in identifying word parts of speech and comprehending their grammatical functions. Students also struggled with recognizing word meanings and applying vocabulary accurately in context. Despite these pervasive issues, the study emphasized that targeted interventions addressing difficulties in word forms and grammatical functions could lead to significant improvements in vocabulary proficiency among Rajabhat University students. This research provides valuable insights for enhancing vocabulary instruction and support in similar educational contexts.

**Keywords:** Vocabulary, Challenges, Learning Processes

## Introduction

Vocabulary is a crucial component of language proficiency, essential for communication in both spoken and written forms. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, a strong vocabulary enables learners to understand texts, engage in conversations, and express ideas clearly. To effectively know a word, learners must grasp not only its meaning but also its form, usage, and context (Nation, 2001; Halim&Halim, 2019). Thai EFL learners face unique challenges in acquiring English vocabulary due to linguistic differences and limited exposure outside the classroom, affecting their ability to perceive and retain words (Islam, 2023). Analyzing these challenges offers insights for tailored teaching approaches.

The primary issue in vocabulary learning among Thai students, given their limited vocabulary repertoire, stems from their ability to understand the meaning of words in receptive skills in knowing word meanings and forms, which does not sufficiently develop into accurate and appropriate use of vocabulary in productive skills in various appropriate contexts. The acquisition and mastery of vocabulary is a crucial aspect of language learning, yet it remains a significant challenge for many students, particularly in the Thai context. The issue then heavily lies in the disparity between students' receptive skills, where they can understand the meaning of words and forms, and their productive skills, where they can accurately and appropriately use those words in various contexts (Nirattisai & Chiramanee, 2014). Research has demonstrated that this knowledge underscores the necessity for a holistic approach to vocabulary instruction, which effectively addresses both the receptive and productive dimensions of language acquisition (McKeown, 2019).

Even though, it is apparent that extensive research has highlighted the challenges of vocabulary acquisition among Thai students, it's also important to acknowledge that students from different social contexts face varied obstacles. Factors such as socio-economic status, educational resources, and cultural influences shape these differences. Urban students may have better access to learning tools and English exposure, while rural students often rely on traditional methods. In the Rajabhat University context, limited opportunities for English exposure and resource constraints present unique challenges (Phatanasakoo et al., 2022; Islam, 2023). These specific barriers highlight the need for tailored strategies to support vocabulary learning and address proficiency gaps.

While there is extensive research on vocabulary acquisition in EFL contexts, studies specifically addressing Thai EFL learners in Rajabhat universities are limited. Existing literature often generalizes findings, potentially overlooking unique challenges faced by Rajabhat students. This research aims to fill that gap by providing a nuanced understanding of vocabulary learning in this context. Studies show that vocabulary knowledge is strongly linked to language proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016; Sedita, 2005). By focusing on Rajabhat learners, the research seeks to identify causes of

their vocabulary difficulties.

In summary, the findings of this research will yield a comprehensive understanding of the various challenges associated with vocabulary learning within the specific context of Rajabhat universities, particularly regarding its meaning, form, and usage in diverse contexts. In addition, it also shed light on EFL pedagogy and curriculum development in Thailand. Educators can design more effective instructional materials and strategies (Binmadnee, 2016). This includes the development of contextually relevant teaching methods, incorporation of technology-enhanced learning tools, and the creation of supportive learning environments that facilitate vocabulary growth. Ultimately, the research aims to inform policy-makers and educators, leading to improved EFL curricula and teaching practices that better serve Thai learners.

## Literature Review

### Problems on Vocabulary Acquisition

Vocabulary acquisition poses several challenges for language learners, often hindering their overall language development. One common issue is limited exposure to new words in meaningful contexts, as learners may encounter them in isolated lists. Another major problem is an excessive reliance on rote memorization, where learners focus solely on memorizing word meanings without fully grasping their usage, collocations, or grammatical forms. This can lead to superficial knowledge, preventing learners from effectively using the vocabulary in communication (Graves et al., 2012). Additionally, learners often face difficulties with polysemous words, which have multiple meanings depending on the context. Without appropriate context, learners may misunderstand the meaning, leading to confusion and improper usage (Lin, 2021). Pronunciation and spelling also present challenges, particularly in languages like English, where there are many exceptions to rules. This can hinder learners from accurately recalling and producing words in both written and spoken forms. Addressing these problems requires a holistic approach to vocabulary teaching, involving frequent exposure to words in context, integrating form, meaning, and use, and providing learners with strategies for autonomous vocabulary learning.

### Vocabulary Acquisition

To effectively learn and use a vocabulary word, learners must acquire knowledge across three key aspects: word form, word meaning, and word use. Paul Nation's framework (Nation, 2013) on vocabulary acquisition covers three key aspects of vocabulary learning: word form, word meaning, and word use. These aspects work together to facilitate effective vocabulary acquisition.

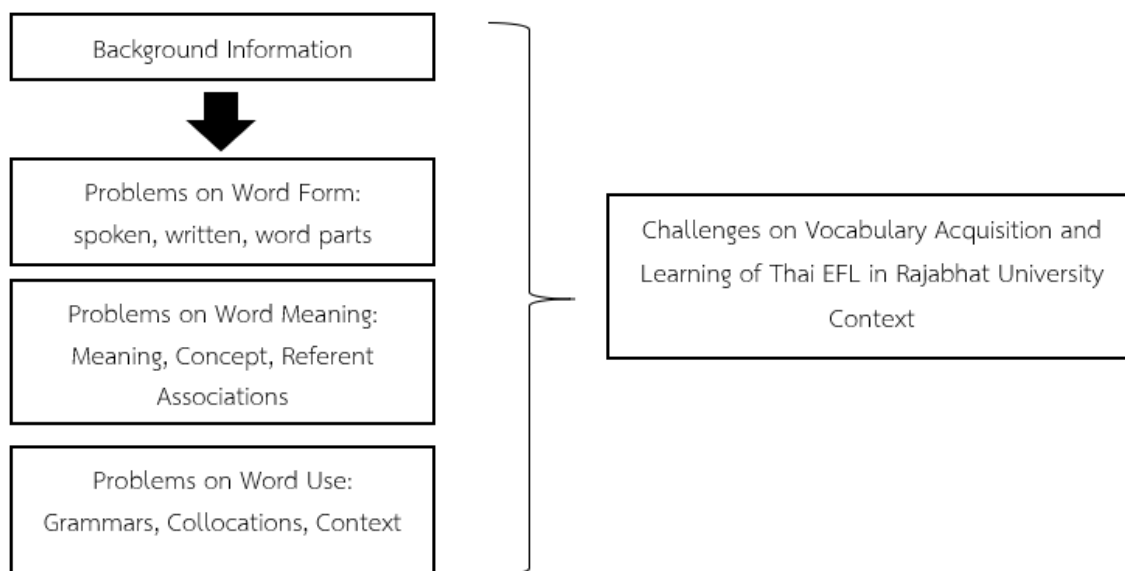
1. **Word Form:** This involves the physical structure of a word, including its spelling, pronunciation, and morphological variations. Understanding how a word changes when it becomes plural or takes different verb forms is essential. Mastering word form helps learners

recognize and produce the word correctly in diverse contexts.

2. Word Meaning: This refers to the semantic aspects of a word—its definition, nuances, and relationship to other words.

3. Word Use: This aspect pertains to a word's usage in various contexts, including its collocations, register, and grammatical patterns. Knowing how to use a word correctly in sentences and grasp its connotations is crucial for effective communication.

Nation's framework (Nation, 2013) emphasizes that comprehensive vocabulary teaching should address all three aspects, enabling learners to both understand and use new words accurately and appropriately in diverse situations. Previous research has highlighted the importance of this multifaceted approach to vocabulary instruction (Stahl, 1985). After the review of both vocabulary problems and acquisition, the research conceptual framework has been adapted. The framework was illustrated as in the following figure.



The Theoretical Concept Adapted from Nation (2013)

**Figure 1** Research Conceptual Framework

Source: Nation (2013)

Based on the principles and concepts discussed above, it is clear that vocabulary knowledge consists of three key components: word form, word meaning, and word use. Students must possess this knowledge, which will indicate whether they are still lacking in certain areas or experiencing any difficulties.

### **Research objective**

This research was survey research, aiming at examining the specific challenges encountered by students at Rajabhat University in acquiring vocabulary in acquiring vocabulary, focusing on aspects of word form, word meaning, and word usage.

### **Research methodology**

The research design involved a quantitative survey approach, utilizing questionnaires to collect numerical data from a large sample of participants. This method allows for the statistical analysis of vocabulary learning challenges and identifying key problems among students.

#### **Scope of the study**

##### **1. Population and sample group**

The research population consisted of 200 first-year students from Yala Rajabhat University, Kamphangphet Rajabhat University, Rampaipanee Rajabhat University, and Muban Chombueng Rajabhat University. These universities were selected due to their collaboration agreement. Purposive sampling was used to target these institutions, as the study aimed to investigate the context of Rajabhat University students. The participants were all enrolled in general English courses in the second semester of 2023, reflecting their recent transition from high school and their need for enhanced skills to succeed in these courses and ultimately graduate.

##### **2. Scope of the area**

The research was conducted at four Rajabhat universities: Yala Rajabhat University, Kamphaeng Phet Rajabhat University, Rampaipanee Rajabhat University, and Muban Chombueng Rajabhat University. These regional institutions, often located in rural areas, face challenges such as financial constraints, outdated infrastructure, and limited educational resources (Rawat et al., 2015). These limitations can impact the quality of academic programs and support services. Despite these challenges, Rajabhat universities are vital for regional development and providing accessible higher education to local communities.

##### **3. Limitations**

The limitations of this study included the lack of a pre-assessment to gauge the vocabulary knowledge of the learners, as this process was complex and time-consuming, especially considering the large sample size. Consequently, the researcher relied on the average scores of students in their English subject as a substitute for this assessment.

#### **Research instrument**

Instrument: The questionnaire was meticulously crafted to evaluate a range of issues pertaining to vocabulary acquisition and learning, grounded in three fundamental dimensions of vocabulary knowledge: 1) Form: encompassing spoken form, written form, and morphological components; 2) Meaning: addressing the interplay between form-meaning

concepts and referent associations; and 3) Use: focusing on grammatical functions, collocations, and contextual constraints on usage. This can be elaborated in detail as follows:

1. Word Form: This section included 3 items related to difficulties students may encounter with the formation of words, such as spelling, pronunciation, and morphological changes.

2. Word Meaning: This section contained 3 items that explore challenges students face in understanding and interpreting the meanings of words.

3. Word Use: This section consisted of 3 items that examine issues related to the application of words in different contexts, including their practical use in speaking and writing.

The questionnaire employed a 5-point scale to measure the frequency of occurrences for each issue, ranging from "Never" to "Always." This scale helps gauge how often students experience these problems in their general English courses. The questionnaire was designed as a bilingual document in both English and Thai. This ensures that students who might not be comfortable with English could understand the content in Thai and responded accurately and truthfully.

#### **Data collection**

The process involved the following steps:

1. Questionnaire Preparation: A Google Forms questionnaire was designed, focusing on Word Form, Word Meaning, and Word Use, with 3 items in each category and a 5-point frequency scale.

2. Distribution: The questionnaire was circulated online to 200 first-year students across four Rajabhat Universities and remained open for 1 month.

3. Data Collection and Analysis: After the collection period, responses were retrieved and tallied to analyze the frequency of issues reported in each category.

#### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis procedure involved exporting responses from Google Forms into a spreadsheet and enter into SPSS program, followed by preprocessing the data to ensure completeness and accuracy. Responses were then organized into three categories: Word Form, Word Meaning, and Word Use. Each response was tallied to calculate the percentage of each frequency point (e.g., Never to Always) for each item. They were categorized based on a Likert-type scale, where each numerical rating represented a different frequency of occurrence: 5 denoted "Always", 4 denoted "Often", 3 denoted "Sometimes", 2 denoted "Rarely", and 1 denoted "Never". This scale enabled respondents to indicate the frequency with which they experienced or observed a particular phenomenon. For example, a rating of 5 signifies that the respondent experiences the highest level of difficulty frequently, whereas a rating of 1 means they encounter no difficulty at all. The responses were then tallied to determine the percentage distribution across these frequency points for each item, providing

a detailed account of how often various issues occurred according to the participants' experiences. Descriptive statistics were computed. Finally, key findings were summarized, highlighting major vocabulary learning challenges with supporting evidences from the statistic data.

## Research results

This research aimed to examine the specific challenges encountered by students at Rajabhat Universities in acquiring and utilizing vocabulary, focusing on the frequency of these problems. The findings are organized into four main parts:

Part 1: General Information of the Participants: This section provides an overview of the demographic and background information of the students involved in the study, including their academic levels and language proficiency.

Part 2: Problems with Word Forms: This part addresses the difficulties students face with the structure and formation of words, such as issues with inflection, derivation, and word formation rules.

Part 3: Problems with Word Meaning: This section explores the challenges students encounter in understanding and interpreting the meanings of words, including difficulties with vocabulary definitions, connotations, and nuances.

Part 4: Problems with Word Use: This part examines issues related to the practical application of vocabulary, including difficulties in using words appropriately in sentences and contexts, and applying vocabulary effectively in communication.

Part 5: Vocabulary Problems in Summary: The final part was a summary of all the results to provide an overview of the vocabulary problems.

**Table 1** General Information of the Participants

General Information	Number (200)	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender:</b>		
1) Male	72	36
2) Female	128	64
<b>Major of Study:</b>		
1) Art Education	30	15
2) Music Education	35	17.5
3) Business English	25	12.5
4) Information Technology	60	30
5) Early Childhood Education	50	25
<b>Previous English Language Performance (Grade):</b>		
1) A	45	22.5
2) B	70	35
3) C	67	33.5
4) D	16	8
5) E	2	1

From Table 1, the findings revealed general information of the participants included an analysis of gender, major of study, and previous academic performance. This section provided a detailed breakdown into aspects:

Gender distribution: Of the participants, 36% were male and 64% were female, indicating a higher representation of female students in the overall group.

Major of Study: The major with the highest number of participants was Information Technology, representing 30% of the total group. Conversely, Business English had the lowest representation, with only 12.5% of participants enrolled in this major.

Previous English Language Performance: The average performance distribution among students showed that the highest percentage of students received an average grade of B, accounting for 35% of the participants, whereas, the lowest percentage of students received a grade of E, which was only 1% of the total group.

The study found that 64% of Rajabhat University students were female, with the highest enrollment in Information Technology (30%) and the lowest in Business English (12.5%). Despite the variations in enrollment and academic performance, vocabulary problems were prevalent across the students. Notably, students in Information Technology, who comprised the largest group, faced significant vocabulary challenges, reflecting in their overall performance.

**Table 2** Problems on Word Forms

Evaluation List on Word Forms	N	Level of Frequency (%)					$\bar{x}$	S.D.
		5	4	3	2	1		
1) I have a problem pronouncing English words correctly.	200	23 (11.5%)	64 (32%)	88 (44%)	18 (9%)	7 (3.5%)	3.31	0.93
2) I have a problem in spelling English words correctly	200	20 (10%)	60 (30%)	74 (37%)	39 (19.5%)	7 (3.5%)	3.25	0.96
3) I have a problem identifying parts of speech of English words I find.	200	19 (9.5%)	65 (32.5%)	83 (41.5%)	27 (13.5%)	6 (3%)	3.35	0.91

Note: 5 = Always, 4 = Often, 3=Sometimes, 2 = Rarely, 1=Never

According to Table 2, the data revealed the following mean scores for vocabulary problems: difficulty in pronouncing words correctly had a mean score of 3.31, difficulty with spelling words had a mean score of 3.25, and uncertainty about the part of speech of a



word had a mean score of 3.35. The highest mean score was for uncertainty about the part of speech of a word (3.35), while the lowest mean score is for difficulty with spelling words (3.25). These scores indicated that, on average, students encountered the problems “sometimes”.

**Table 3** Problems on Word Meanings

Evaluation List on Word Meanings	N	Level of Frequency (%)					$\bar{x}$	S.D.
		5	4	3	2	1		
1) I have a problem in understanding the word meanings	200	25 (12.5%)	63 (31.5%)	75 (37.5%)	34 (17%)	3 (1.5%)	3.37	0.93
2) I have a problem in understanding the word concepts.	200	7 (3.5%)	24 (12%)	65 (32.5%)	79 (39.5%)	25 (12.5%)	2.58	0.98
3) I have a problem thinking of other relevant words.	200	9 (4.5%)	35 (17.5%)	69 (34.5%)	60 (30%)	27 (13.5%)	2.66	1.02

Note: 5 = Always, 4 = Often, 3=Sometimes, 2 = Rarely, 1=Never

According to Table 3, the data showed that students have an average score of 3.37 for the difficulties in understanding word meanings, 2.66 for problems in thinking of relevant words, and 2.58 for problem in understanding the word concepts. The highest mean score was for understanding word meanings (3.37), followed by the difficulties in thinking of relevant words (2.66), with the lowest mean score for understanding word concepts (2.58).

This indicated that students primarily struggle with understanding word meanings, while they experience fewer issues with thinking of relevant words and grasping word concepts.

**Table 4** Problems on Word Use

Evaluation List on Word Uses	N	Level of Frequency (%)					$\bar{x}$	S.D.
		5	4	3	2	1		
1) I have a problem in identifying word grammatical functions.	200	24 (12%)	65 (32.5%)	80 (40%)	25 (12.5%)	6 (3%)	3.38	0.95
2) I have a problem in selecting proper word that goes along together.	200	20 (10%)	62 (31%)	80 (40%)	30 (15%)	8 (4%)	3.31	0.98
3) I have a problem in using the words in proper context.	200	19 (9.5%)	55 (27.5%)	83 (41.5%)	36 (18%)	7 (3.5%)	3.31	1.00

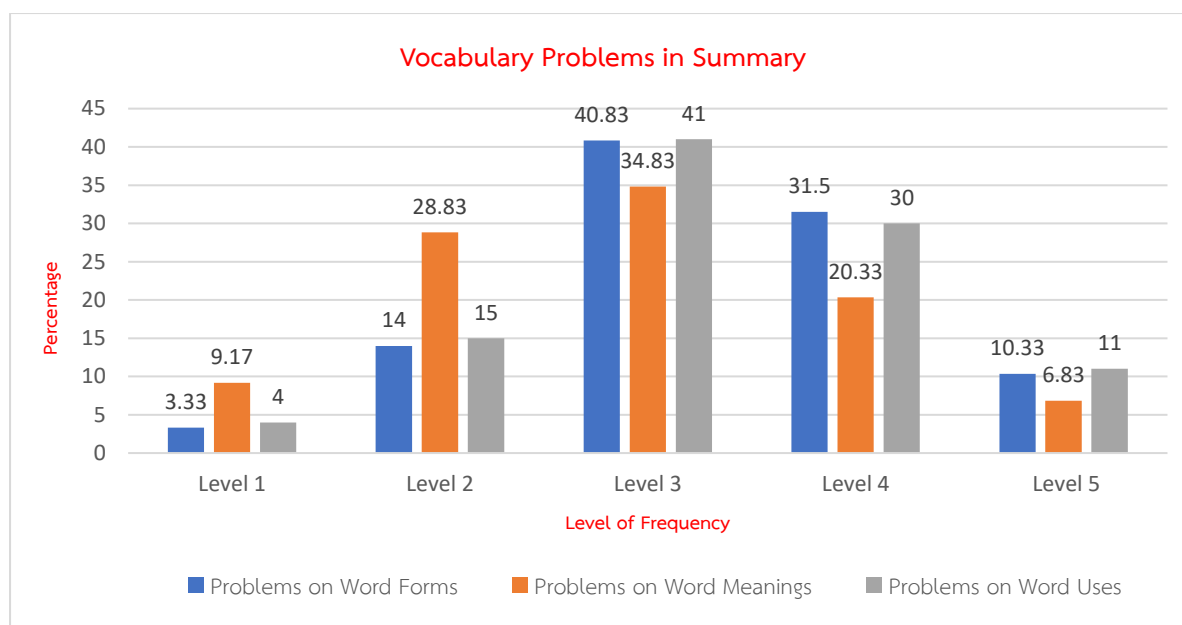
Note: 5 = Always, 4 = Often, 3=Sometimes, 2 = Rarely, 1=Never

Referring to Table 4, the findings indicated that students had a mean score of 3.38 for difficulties in identifying the grammatical function of words. This was followed by challenges in selecting appropriate words that fit together as a collocation, with a mean score of 3.31, and difficulties in using words correctly within sentences, which also had a mean score of 3.31.

This indicated obviously that students primarily faced more difficulties with identifying the grammatical function of words. They encountered fewer problems with using words in context and with word collocation.

**Table 5** Vocabulary Problems in Summary

Level of Frequency	Problems on Word Forms (%)	Problems on Word Meanings (%)	Problems on Word Uses (%)
1) Level 1	3.33	9.17	4
2) Level 2	14.00	28.83	15
3) Level 3	40.83	34.83	41
4) Level 4	31.50	20.33	30
5) Level 5	10.33	6.83	11



**Figure 1** Graphical Summary Representation

According to table 5 and table 6, the analysis of vocabulary problems across different levels reveals the following patterns:

At the level 1 (No problems), students reported having no problem with word meaning the most frequently, with a percentage of 9.17%. This indicates that, in general, students find word meanings to be the least challenging aspect.

At the level 2 (Rarely having problems), the highest percentage of students who rarely had a problem on the word meaning was at 28.83%. This suggests that while word meaning is not completely problem-free, it is the area where students face difficulties but at the least. There was coherence between Levels 1 and 2 which demonstrates that word meaning remains the most manageable aspect across both levels of problem frequency.

At the level 3 (Sometimes having problems), students experienced problems most often on word uses, with a frequency of 41%. This represents the highest level of difficulty faced by students, indicating that issues with word use are quite common.

At the level 4 (Often having problems), students most frequently encountered problems with the word form, at 31.50%. This signifies that word forms are a significant area of concern for students, reflecting a notable challenge in this category. However, this is not markedly different from the difficulties encountered with word uses, which is at approximately 30%. This indicates that word forms and word use are similarly challenging for students at this level, both reflecting significant concerns.

At the level 5 (Always having problems), the highest percentage of students who always had a problem was observed in word use, at approximately 11%. This is the greatest challenge among the three categories, indicating a persistent issue with word use for this group of students. This is only slightly higher than the difficulties encountered with word

form, which is at approximately 10.33%. This close percentage suggests that both word uses and word forms present persistent challenges for students at this level.

Overall, the data reveals that while students generally face the least difficulty with word meaning, they encounter significant challenges with word use and word forms, particularly when problems are frequent or persistent. The consistency between Levels 1 and 2 regarding word meaning highlights it as the least problematic aspect for students. The close percentages for word form and word use at Levels 4 and level 5, indicate that both categories present considerable and persistent challenges to EFL students at Rajabhat universities.

## Discussions

The findings of this study indicated that students at Rajabhat Universities faced notable challenges with vocabulary acquisition, specifically in the areas of word forms, meanings, and use. These issues were particularly pronounced in identifying word parts of speech, understanding superficial meanings, and applying grammatical functions to it.

Previous research indicated that Thai students had a very limited understanding of vocabulary. Specifically, they struggled to read and comprehend texts effectively and were unable to use vocabulary appropriately in context (Nirattisai & Chiramanee, 2014). This raised questions for the researcher regarding which specific aspects of vocabulary knowledge were problematic, prompting the need to identify effective strategies to address these issues. It became increasingly evident that various challenges were associated with their understanding of word forms, word meanings, and word usage (Pearson et al., 2007).

Firstly, the difficulty in identifying word parts of speech aligned with previous research. The findings showed that, students often struggle with grammatical elements of vocabulary, which could impede their overall language proficiency. (Choemue & Bram, 2020). The high mean score for challenges with grammatical function also reflected a significant issue, corroborating findings by Schmitt (1997), who emphasized that understanding word forms is crucial for effective vocabulary acquisition. These difficulties suggest that students might not fully grasp the syntactic roles of words, which could affect their ability to use vocabulary accurately in various contexts.

In terms of word meanings, the prevalent issue of not knowing superficial meanings supported the observations of Nation (2013), who identified that students frequently encountered problems with word recognition and meaning comprehension. The difficulty in grasping superficial meanings suggested that students might lack sufficient exposure to and practice with new vocabulary, leading to gaps in their understanding of word meanings.

Furthermore, the challenge with using words correctly in sentences, particularly concerning grammatical functions, aligned with the findings Tshotsho (2015) who observed that English grammar was challenges for students in Congo. This issue underscored the

importance of targeted instructional strategies that emphasized not only vocabulary acquisition but also the practical application of words in sentence context.

From the three main keys, the study's findings underscored the need for enhanced focus on vocabulary instruction that addresses both the theoretical and practical aspects of word use. By integrating strategies that improve understanding of word forms, meanings, and grammatical functions, educators could better support students in overcoming these prevalent challenges. Future research should continue to explore effective interventions and instructional methods to address these specific areas of difficulty in vocabulary acquisition.

Additionally, the context of Rajabhat University students added an additional layer to these findings. The study showed a significant focus on vocabulary challenges, as reflected in their academic performance. The most common grade among these students was C, indicating that vocabulary problems had high possibility to impact their overall performance.

The research findings revealed that students at Rajabhat universities faced significant difficulties in their understanding of word forms, including both spelling and pronunciation, as well as the grammatical functions of words when required to apply English in practical contexts. This analysis suggested that the socio-economic status, educational resources, and cultural influences of these students differed markedly from those of their counterparts in urban settings (Entwisle, 1968). They often possessed a weaker foundational knowledge of language structure, primarily due to financial constraints that limited their access to supplementary English language instruction. Furthermore, the resources available for language practice at Rajabhat universities were considerably less comprehensive compared to those in larger urban universities, which benefited from more substantial funding and facilities (Rahman & Pandian, 2018).

Consequently, the prevailing attitudes among students at Rajabhat universities tended to prioritize the completion of the English curriculum without a clearly defined purpose for real-world application. In contrast, urban students encountered a distinct set of challenges (Hashmi, 2016). This highlighted the persistent issues related to vocabulary acquisition, which remained fundamental barriers to English language learning among students in Rajabhat universities. It was essential for these students to receive targeted vocabulary development to facilitate their advancement in utilizing English at more proficient levels. For students in Rajabhat universities, the obstacles and challenges they faced varied significantly across different learning environments when compared to those in other university contexts. Universities in urban areas and those in rural regions differed significantly. (Islam, 2023).

This Rajabhat university context emphasized the need for targeted vocabulary instruction that addressed both the theoretical and practical aspects of word use. The challenges observed in these students suggested that specific instructional strategies tailored to their academic and contextual needs could be beneficial. Future research should explore

effective interventions and instructional methods to address these vocabulary difficulties, taking into account the diverse academic backgrounds and contexts of Rajabhat University students.

### Research Implications

Research findings identified key challenges in vocabulary acquisition for EFL students at Rajabhat Universities. To address these, educators should adopt targeted strategies. Here are practical recommendations for improving vocabulary learning:

1. Incorporate Diverse Vocabulary Learning Strategies: Teachers should implement various teaching methods to enhance students' understanding of word forms, meanings, and uses through techniques like word meaning discovery and mnemonic strategy, etc.

2. Focus on Word Form Recognition: Teachers should emphasize activities that help students recognize and differentiate word forms, such as morphological analysis and identifying word families.

3. Enhance Word Meaning Comprehension: Teachers should use methods like semantic mapping and providing synonyms to deepen students' understanding of word meanings.

4. Promote Practical Word Use: Teachers should encourage tasks that require students to use new words in different contexts, such as sentence construction and dialogue creation.

5. Incorporate Contextual Understanding in Sentence Usage: Teachers should help students understand word meanings and functions within sentences through sentence analysis and cloze exercises.

By implementing these implications, educators at Rajabhat universities can enhance the effectiveness of vocabulary acquisition and learning processes for their EFL students in Rajabhat university context.

### Conclusion

The study found that students generally experience difficulties with word forms, meanings, and use, often at a “sometimes” level. They struggle with identifying word parts of speech, understanding superficial meanings, and applying words correctly in context. The most significant challenges are with word forms and grammatical functions, while understanding word meanings remains relatively stable. Addressing these specific issues with word forms and usage could notably enhance vocabulary proficiency for EFL students at Rajabhat universities.

## Recommendations for Future Research

1. Investigating the Impact of Major of Study on Vocabulary Acquisition: Since Information Technology and Business English students showed varying levels of interest and enrollment, it would be valuable to explore how students' major of study influences their vocabulary acquisition.

2. Exploring Gender Differences in Vocabulary Learning: Given the gender imbalance in the participant group, future research could investigate whether there are significant differences in vocabulary learning strategies and challenges between male and female students. This could help in developing gender-specific teaching approaches if differences are found.

## References

- Binmadnee, P. (2016). The Comparison of Vocabulary Learning Strategies among High School Students in Three Southern Border Provinces of Thailand and Malaysia. *Journal of Business and Social Review in Emerging Economies*, 2 (1), 61-70.
- Choemue, S., & Bram, B. (2020). Part of Speech Mastery of Thai Students of Xavier Learning Community, Thailand. *VELES Voices of English Language Education Society*, 4(2), 222-231.
- Entwisle, D R. (1968, July 1). *Developmental Sociolinguistics: Inner-City Children*. University of Chicago Press, 74(1), 37-49.
- Gilakjani, A P., & Sabouri, NB. (2016). A Study of Factors Affecting EFL Learners' Reading Comprehension Skill and the Strategies for Improvement. *Canadian Center of Science and Education*, 6(5), 180-180.
- Graves, M F., August, D., & Mancilla-Martinez, J. (2012). *Teaching Vocabulary to English Language Learners*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Halim, S., & Halim, T. (2019). Usefulness and Learnability in Teaching Vocabulary to ESL/EFL Students. *Global Research in Higher Education*, 2(1), 65-65.
- Hashmi, Q I. (2016, November 13). *A Study of the Difficulties in Learning of English Faced by Hindi and Urdu Speaking Students in India and Indian Expatriates in Saudi Arabia*. Macrothink Institute, 8(4), 29-29.
- Islam, M. (2023). The Especial Causes of Weakness behind Learning English language in the Secondary Schools: a Case Study of Rangpur District. *British Journal of Arts and Humanities*. 209-227.
- Lin, M. (2021). Metaphor Analysis of Polysemy and Middle School English Vocabulary Acquisition. *Frontiers in Educational Research*, 4(14).
- McKeown, M G. (2019). Effective Vocabulary Instruction Fosters Knowing Words, Using Words, and Understanding How Words Work. *American Speech–Language–Hearing Association*, 50(4), 466-476.

- Nation, I. S. P. (2001). *Learning Vocabulary in Another Language*. Cambridge University Press.
- Nation, I. S. P. (2013). *Learning vocabulary in another language (2nd ed.)*. Cambridge University Press.
- Nirattisai, S., & Chiramanee, T. (2014). *Vocabulary Learning Strategies of Thai University Students and Its Relationship to Vocabulary Size*, 2(1), 273-273.
- Pearson, P. D., Hiebert, E. H., & Kamil, M. L. (2007). *Vocabulary assessment: What we know and what we need to learn*. Wiley, 42(2), 282-296.
- Phatanasakoo, A., Sutthisai, W., & Soonthorn, S. (2022). Rajabhat University Development Model for Becoming an Entrepreneurial University. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 11(2), 292-292.
- Rahman, M. M., & Pandian, A. (2018, February 8). *A Critical Investigation of English Language Teaching in Bangladesh*. Cambridge University Press, 34(3), 43-49.
- Rawat, K., Bouchon, F., & Nair, V. (2015). Innovative practices in education to empower rural communities. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, 7(5), 516-529.
- Schmitt, N. (1997). *Vocabulary learning strategies (Vol. 2)*. Cambridge University Press.
- Sedita, J. (2005). Effective Vocabulary Instruction. *Insights on Learning Disabilities*, 2(1), 33-45.
- Stahl, S. A. (1985). To teach a word well: A framework for vocabulary instruction. *Reading World*, 24(3), 16-27.
- Tshotshop, B. (2015). English Language Grammar Challenges Facing Congolese International Students in South Africa. *International Journal of Educational Sciences*, 09(01).