

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to understand the vocabulary teaching situation in Thailand, let us start by studying the main frame that shapes teaching, that is the National Education Act of Thailand.

#### **2.0 The General Background of the National Education Act of Thailand**

Before the Reformed National Education Act of Thailand (RNET) in 2008 (NEC, 2000), being caught in a severe economic crisis, political turmoil, cultural, virtue and moral deterioration, and defeat in a highly competitive arena where quality and capability reign supreme, Thais and their society have been forced to follow the various changes affecting the kingdom. As long as most people are still poor and morally weak, their rights deprived and the opportunities for developing themselves, their families, and improving their living standards are still low, the call for reviewing the country's educational quality is needed. The demand for an immediate education reform has set the authorities to provide quality education to all and for all through budgetary allocation for education to serve the demands of life and society as well as keeping up with global events. Yet, the curriculum framing the teaching – learning process and its actual practice has not reached these desirable goals.

Learners of all age learn only subject matters from written texts. This quality of teaching and learning is far from satisfaction. Restricted by time – tables and classroom - blocked walls, they have no opportunity of being in stilled with desirable attributes – to be more knowledgeable and more capable in every aspect, both in and out of class. The teaching – learning process and actual practice consist of routine and repetitious method of transferring knowledge to students. To simply put it, it is rote learning rather than practicing and training how to think. Learners become used to following examples, and without them, are incapable to seek the answer to the task.

This evidence shows that some things must have severely went wrong with the nation's schooling system. The teaching – learning method does not give the right amount of emphasis to give opportunities for training in analytical thinking, self-expression and acquiring knowledge themselves as the main goal of every kind of learning, a lifelong learning. As a result, emphasis is on teaching through textbooks rather than guiding learners, making them handicap to think for themselves. Even more depressingly, there is no link between local wisdom and modern sciences. The pride in national treasures of art and culture has not been inculcated in the nation's education. The inculcation of moral and virtue are not at the extent to yield benefit to learners. Without preserving and reserving one's origin from the inside out, the realm of moving forward for improvement is dim.

In class, teachers still have the mind set that they are the most knowledgeable, most correct and most powerful in the teaching – learning process, while learners as a receiver forcefully have to attune themselves to the subject matters and the teachers' methods. Serving and boosting the teachers' ego but forcing and suppressing against the learners' will, learning process becomes boring and filled with de - motivation. All involved are under stress and self – immobilized because they need to adhere to the prescribed curriculum and subject matters. Making things worse than it is already is, examinations and its results dictated the students' success in learning, making grade points more important than what gist they learn and can apply in real life. This is only one facets of the pitfall of the former education system.

The schools' atmosphere and environment is another deprive of success in Thailand's education system. They do not create the 'motivation for learning' but create the 'motivation for teaching' because teachers hold sway in the classroom. The content for learning has no necessity in real life and is remotely far from natural and learning resources, hindering intellectual ambiance. Even more so, learners, families and communities have no saying in planning and organizing the learning process. To involve all, many teachers and education personals have been developing the teaching – learning process through the application of the learner – centered approach. However, these efforts are mostly superficial remedies and painting the surface.

To put the issue in more perspective, the Reformed National Education Act has led to extensive educational reform, regarded as being at the heart of educational reform. Provisions in all aspects of the Act aim at maximum benefits for learners as summarized below.

**National Education Act of Learners as the Highest Importance or  
The Learner – Centered Approach**

- General provision
- Educational rights and duties
- Educational system
- Educational administration and management
- Educational standards and quality assurance
- Teachers, faculty staff and educational personnel
- Resources and investment for education
- Technologies for education

(Taken from NEC, 2000: 9)

## **2.1 The Rationale for the Learning Reform**

All members of the educational communities involving in the management of the educational system share the same view that the reformed national education of Thailand is imperative because of numerous reasons besides what is required by law. On top of being a legal mandate, the first and foremost reason for reformation is to improve the quality of living of the countrymen. The reformed learning culture will contribute to the development of Thais to endow with knowledge and morality. In other words, be blessed with linguistic and mathematical intelligence, scientific analytical thinking, systematic thinking, etc. Above all is being able to use their intelligence cleverly and profoundly from and through learning to attain truth, intrinsic value and beauty. Below summarized the procedures of how the educational communities involved in managing the learning process through learner – centered approach.

### **Policy 1: Preparation**

- Policy formulation
- Need identification
- Plan and project preparation
- Public relations

### **Policy 2: Action**

- Personnel development:
  - Attitude inculcation
  - Increasing knowledge and understanding as well as competency in action
- Curricular implementation and services:
  - Mixed class arrangement
  - Curricular preparation
  - Activity arrangement
  - Provision of learning ambience
  - Provision of guidance services
- Supporting services:
  - Provision of research sources
  - Provision of media, materials and equipment
  - Assigning learning development to a responsible person
- Setting up an internal demonstration system:
  - Demonstration
  - Monitoring, follow – up
  - Providing encouragement and moral support

### **Policy 3: Evaluation**

- Evaluation of action:
  - Schools
  - Teachers
  - Learners
  - Other parties

(Taken from NEC, 2000: 45)

Learning reform with a view to serve the needs of all involved which are learners, teachers, parents and Thai society will allow all to contribute to the successful enactment of the National Education Act. New opportunities will be provided for teachers, parents and communities to enjoy more freedom in order to instill learning culture in harmony with local situations but also correspond with global events. There will also be a decrease of restrictions, rules and regulations and directives from the central authorities in order to attain varieties in practice like classroom and time – table arrangements flexibility and conducive to learning in lesson designing and planning through collective effort and mutual support of all that is involved. Below summarized the phases of how teachers work through the procedures in organizing the learning process through the learner – centered approach.

#### **Phase 1: Preparation**

- Self - preparation
- Preparation / Identification of learning sources
- Preparation of teaching plans

#### **Phase 2: Action: Organizing activities enabling students to:**

- Construct and discover knowledge themselves
- Interact with a variety of learning sources
- Have physical participation suitable to the students' ages and interests
- Acquire process learning
- Apply the knowledge gained

#### **Phase 3: Evaluation: Measurement and authentic evaluation based on:**

- A variety of methods
- Practical work
- Portfolios

(Adapted from NEC, 2000: 46)

Strengthening the society is also a mission in learning reform. No society will ever succeed in reforming politics, bureaucracy and economics unless that society succeeds in learning reform, which is at the heart of education reform. Harmonize learning in a globalize world fills in the bigger picture of Thailand as a member of the world. Learners in the globalize age must be able to use more than one language. As a national language, they must be fluent in Thai language and also have a good command of at least one more foreign language to facilitate communicating internationally. Because the globalize world is driven by electronics and optical fibers, they must be able to competently use new technologies because these are the gateways for accessing knowledge.

## **2.2 The Reformed National Education Act of Thailand (RNET) in 2008**

The Ministry of Education (2008) has revised the Reformed National Education Act of Thailand (RNET) in 2008 to be used as a core curriculum for reference to the fundamental education from Prathomsuksa 1 to Mattayomsuksa 3, nationwide. Mattayomsuksa 4 to 6 is still in try out mode. The RNET is revised for the purpose of creating integration of different contents in line with learners' interests and managing what is being taught in schools to be up - to - date with the ever - changing economics, society and sciences. This is hold to be a new strategy in increasing educational quality in order to answer the needs of individual and social levels throughout the Kingdom of Thailand. The students are aimed to being capable in succession and cooperating creatively in the society because the curriculum is composed with the following importance.

### **2.2.1 The Principles**

In order to manage the fundamental education to serve the policy of the national education management, the following principles are established:

1. To establish the unity of the nation in managing education by emphasizing the traditional Thai way along with the international mind set
2. To manage education equally to the people and for the people with the same standard nationwide by involving the society in education management

4. Social Sciences, Religious Studies and Cultural Studies
5. Physical Education and Health Education
6. Arts
7. Vocational and Technical Studies
8. Foreign Language Studies

Of all the eight groups of subject areas, this research will look at the Foreign Language Studies, focusing specifically on English language in vocabulary being taught and used in class of the in service teachers teaching in the Fundamental Education Level from Prathomsuksa 1 to Mattayomsuksa 3 who are located in Mahasarakham Province, Thailand.

### **2.3 The Foreign Language Studies Subject Area in the RNET**

English language has been and probably will be an international language for a very long time. The language seeps into every aspects concerning communicating internationally. This calls a need for everyone to learn and master the skills in order to be able to communicate in English. The National Education Commission of Thailand (NEC), therefore emphasize the importance of this by continually developing the teaching – learning process of the subject and also add it into the RNET under the category of developing human resources and increasing work efficiency. This category has been divided into sub – categories according to the purpose of using the language which are:

1. Language for communication
2. Language and culture
3. Language and its relation to other subject areas
4. Language and the local and global interaction

To provide suitable learning content to each individual, the language proficiency and the development of the language learners are divided into four learning ranges:

Learning range 1: Preparatory Level: Prathomsuksa 1 to Prathomsuksa 3

Learning range 2: Beginner Level: Prathomsuksa 4 to Prathomsuksa 6

Learning range 3: Developing Level: Mattayomsuksa 1 to Mattayomsuksa 3

Learning range 4: Expanding Level: Mattayomsuksa 4 to Mattayomsuksa 6

It is a mission that after the 12 years period, students should be able to understand and have the skill in communication. It is also hope that they will be able to use the language as tools to open the gateway of international knowledge. For the language learners to achieve such command and competence in being able to communicate in English, practice is the key. Classifying language usage as skills, the learning lessons have to provide the chance for practice using the target language as much as possibly could, both in and outside of class, under classroom instructions and independent learning. Designing the teaching – learning process needs to coincide with the nature and characteristics of the language by providing varieties of teaching – learning process, both as language skill practicing activities and training language learners for autonomous learning which will lead to the highest goal of education, lifelong learning.

Besides managing teaching - learning English to specifically arm the language learners with the ability to communicate effortlessly through grammar structure teaching, vocabulary teaching is equally important. Therefore, RNET includes a list of vocabulary (The Ministry of Education, 1999) to be taught in elementary schools as a guideline for teachers to teach accordingly as shown below.

### Vocabulary List for Elementary Schools (Classified in categories)

รายการคำ ระดับประถมศึกษา จำแนกตามหมวดหมู่

#### Category 1: Noun

หมวดที่ 1 คำนาม

##### 1.1 Things found in and outside the classroom/ สิ่งที่พบในห้องเรียนและนอกห้องเรียน

bin, broom, box, dish, duster, flower, fork, flag, glass, map, picture, spoon, tree, notebook, pencil box, pen, pencil, blackboard, homework, school bag, paper, clock, chair, desk, table, jar, vase, jug, bowl, bottle, mug, carton, thing, tissue paper, stairs, basket, bell, can, chalk, door, window, floor, ceiling, money, change, bed, mat, plate, radio, television, comb, powder, mirror, fan, light, lamp, switch, plug, iron, telephone, toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, towel, pillow, blanket, fridge, etc.

##### 1.2 Animals/ สัตว์

bat, cat, dog, bird, duck, chicken, pig, cow, buffalo, fish, ant, elephant, wolf, tiger, lion, rabbit, horse, zebra, bear, dolphin, parrot, bee, fly, butterfly, spider, mosquito, sheep,



animal, bug, ox, goat, mouse, puppy, etc.

### 1.3 Vegetables and Fruits/ผักและผลไม้

banana, orange, papaya, mango, apple, pineapple, coconut, durian, mangosteen, rose apple, sugar apple, tomato, potato, bean, carrot, lettuce, onion, garlic, chili, cucumber, cabbage, lemon, long bean, egg plant, vegetable , etc.

### 1.4 Body parts/ส่วนต่างๆของร่างกาย

head, hair, face, eye, nose, mouth, arm, hand, leg, finger, foot, feet, neck, back, knee, chin, cheek, ear, shoulder, body, elbow, hip, toe, tooth, teeth, chest, thumb, ring finger, little finger, tiny finger, etc.

### 1.5 Alphabet/ตัวอักษร A - Z และ a - z

### 1.6 People/บุคคล

King, queen, father, mother, brother, sister, boy, girl, man, woman, men, women, daughter, child, children, uncle, aunt, person, people, parents, grandparents, grandfather, grandmother, grandchild, grandchildren, niece, nephew, cousin, American. English, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Australian, Thai, monk, boyscout, etc.

### 1.7 Occupation/อาชีพ

doctor, nurse, farmer, soldier, carpenter, dentist, bus driver, fisherman . vet, fishermen, policeman, policemen, postman, postmen, merchant, dressmaker, occupation, fruit seller, teacher, salesman, salesmen, singer, boxer, sailor, navy, hairdresser, secretary, butcher, etc.

### 1.8 Food and Drinks/อาหารและเครื่องดื่ม

rice, egg, soup, ice-cream, curry, noodles, cake, candy, beef, pork, bread, jam, food, meal, sweets, breakfast, lunch, dinner, supper, meat, chicken, fish, fish sauce, salt, sugar, snacks, pepper, salad, hotdog, hamburger, sausage, cookies, flour, drinks, milk, water. juice, tea, coffee, ice, etc.

### 1.9 Toys/ของเล่น ball, doll, toy, balloon, kite, yo-yo, robot, marble, etc.

### 1.10 Clothing and Accessory/เครื่องนุ่งห่มและเครื่องประดับ

hat, cap, blouse, skirt, shirt, shoes, shorts, socks, boots, jeans, belt, pants, T-shirt, tie, trousers, jacket, dress, clothes, pin, ring, ear rings , etc.

### 1.11 Games and Sports / เกม/กีฬา

football, volley ball, basketball, table tennis, rugby, badminton. chess, bingo, dominoes, hide and seek, scrabble, etc.

### 1.12 Cardinal Numbers / จำนวนนับ 1-1000

### 1.13 Ordinal Numbers / ลำดับที่ the first, the thirty-first

### 1.14 Place / สถานที่

school, home, house, room, classroom, shop, temple. hospital, clinic, health- center, zoo, river. market, food shop, sweet shop, police station, park, upstairs, downstairs, airport, cinema, supermarket, bedroom, bathroom. toilet, bus stop, cai park. playground, address, road. street. Amphoe. Changwat, Tambon. bank, office, etc.

### 1.15 Time, Date, Month, Year, Season / เวลา วัน เดือน ปี ฤดูกาล

morning, afternoon, noon, evening, night, o'clock, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, New Year's Day, Christmas Day, birthday, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Loy Krathong Day, Songkran Day, January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, December, year, season, hot season, rainy season, cold season, winter, etc.

### 1.16 Vehicle / ยานพาหนะ

bicycle, bike, boat, bus, car, taxi, train, ship, motorcycle, tricycle, plane, airplane, truck, lorry, spaceship, helicopter, etc.

### 1.17 Religion / ศาสนา

Buddhism, Buddhist, Christianity, Christian, Islam, Moslem or Muslim, etc.

### 1.18 Country / ประเทศ

country, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, The Philippines, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, England, Australia, New Zealand, America, Canada, Thailand, etc.

### 1.19 Direction / ทิศทาง

north, east, west, south, northeast, southeast, northwest, southwest, left, right, forward, backward, ahead, direction, here, there, etc.

1.20 Shape/รูปร่าง circle, square, triangle, round, rectangle, etc.

1.21 Greeting and Parting/คำทักทายและคำกล่าวลา

Hi, Hello, Good morning, Good afternoon, good evening, Good night, Good-bye. Bye.

1.22 Sickness/อาการเจ็บป่วย

diarrhoea, toothache, headache, cold, stomachache, fever, illness, sickness, accident, etc.

**Category 2: Adjective: size, color, shape, characteristics, status, taste, weather**

หมวดที่ 2 คุณศัพท์บอกขนาด, สี, รูปร่าง, ลักษณะ, สถานะ, รสชาติ, สภาพอากาศ

big, small, large, white, black, red, yellow, pink, green, orange, purple, violet, blue, brown, grey, fat, thin, tall, short, long, wet, dry, light, heavy, hungry, thirsty, thick, top, bottom, good, bad, pretty, nice, beautiful, ugly, clean, dirty, new, old, young, happy, sad, tired, quick, slow, afraid, naughty, little, easy, difficult, alive, all right, alone, sour, dangerous, safe, ill, sick, salty, sweet, spicy, hot, cold, cool, windy, rainy, cloudy, warm, absent, cheap, expensive, etc.

**Category 3: Adverb**

หมวดที่ 3 กริยาวิเศษณ์

quickly, slowly, well, carefully, loudly, fast, too, not, ago, all right, all, about, across, each, etc.

**Category 4: Action Verb**

หมวดที่ 4 กริยา

walk, sit, stand, point at, point to, show, play, cook, listen to, watch, dance, jump, hop, ride, drive, stop, start, begin, study, go, come, drink, eat, sleep, get up, get dressed, take a bath, help, hear, see, look, say, speak, talk, tell, meet, ask, answer, thank, buy, sell, like, hate, smile, laugh, cry, swim, read, write, open, close, get on, get off, put on, take off, keep, put, put...into..., pick up, find, visit, colour, clean, wash, understand, want, wait, shout, arrive, ask for, bring, borrow, break, brush, call, change, check, come on, come back, cost, cut, dry, etc.

**Category 5: Helping Verb**

หมวดที่ 5 กริยาช่วย

be, is, am, are, was, were, has, have, had, do, does, did, will, would, can, may, etc.

## Negative Form/รูปปฏิเสธ

isn't, am not, aren't, wasn't, weren't, don't, doesn't, won't, can't, etc.

## Category 6: Pronoun

หมวดที่ 6 คำสรรพนาม

- 6.1 **Subject/ประธาน** I, We, You, She, He, It, They. Somebody, Nobody, Everybody, etc.
- 6.2 **Object/กรรม** me, you, us, her, him, them, it, one. ones.etc.
- 6.3 **Demonstrative Pronoun:** This, That, These. Those, etc.
- 6.4 **Determiner Pronoun:** other, another etc.

## Category 7: Possesives

หมวดที่ 7 คำแสดงความเป็นเจ้าของ

- 7.1 **Possessive apostrophe's**
- 7.2 **Possessive adjective:** my, your, his, her, our, their, its, etc.
- 7.3 **Possessive Pronoun:** mine, yours, his, hers, ours, theirs, etc.

## Category 8: Connector

หมวดที่ 8 คำเชื่อม

and, but, because, after, either... or, neither... nor. before, if, so, so that, as...as, etc.

## Category 9: Preposition

หมวดที่ 9 มุขบท

in, on, at, under, to, near, next to, in front of, behind, of, opposite, between, over, up, down, through, into, across, for, from, about, after, away, around, etc.

## Category 10: Question Word

หมวดที่ 10 คำแสดงการถาม

10.1 **Wh-questions:** What, Where, Who, Why, When, Whose, What time, What colour, What animal, What fruit, Which, etc.

10.2 **How:** How many, How much, How old, How long, etc.

## Category 11: Comparison

หมวดที่ 11 การเปรียบเทียบ

older, younger, bigger, smaller, colder, hotter, warmer, taller, shorter, more, etc.

## Category 12: Miscellaneous

### หมวดที่ 12 อื่นๆ

12.1 **Subject/วิชา** English, Thai, Math, Art, Science, Music, History, etc.

12.2 **Measurement of height and wieght/หน่วยวัด ส่วนสูง น้ำหนัก**  
centimetre, kilos, baht. mile. meter, kilometer, inch, foot, feet etc.

12.3 **Form filling vocabulary/คำศัพท์เฉพาะที่ใช้ในแบบฟอร์ม**

Name, Surname, First Name, Last Name, Sex, Male, Female, Hobby, Age, Weight, Height, Mr., Mrs., Miss, etc.

This vocabulary list of 771 words covers the fourteen themes appointed by the Council of Europe who have done research as to what extend is necessary to be able to communicate in English. The appointed themes are:

1. Personal identification
2. House and home
3. Life at home
4. Education and future career
5. Free time and entertainment
6. Travel
7. Relation with other people
8. Health and welfare
9. Shopping
10. Food and drink
11. Services
12. Places
13. Foreign languages
14. Weather

However, no matter how vocabulary is carefully categorized for maximum learning, vocabulary is still one of the main factors that Thai language learners have problems with in communicating in English. It makes one wonder what went wrong with the nation teaching system. Astonishingly, the researcher cannot find any referential document to answer how this vocabulary list has come to be and created on what basis. Other lists like the one in 1967 (the Ministry of Education) also omitted rationale statement behind such a list. Could these lists be made up of thin air without hard research back up?

In the following chapter, we will find out the answers to these questions starting by comparing this list to the international renowned vocabulary list as the vocabulary lists of the School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies of Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, edited by I.S.P. Nation to see if there is any relevance between them by using The Range Program.



มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏมหาสารคาม  
RAJABHAT MAHASARAKHAM UNIVERSITY