



**AN ANALYSIS OF THAI ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN
LANGUAGE STUDENTS' LEARNING BEHAVIOR BASED
ON JOAN RUBIN'S GOOD LEARNER MODEL**



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เรื่อง : การวิเคราะห์พฤติกรรมการเรียนของนักศึกษาไทยที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษ
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คำสำคัญ : ลักษณะที่ดีของผู้เรียนภาษา, การมีส่วนร่วม, การอภิปรายในชั้นเรียน

งานวิจัยนี้ เป็นการศึกษาลักษณะของผู้เรียนภาษาที่ดีในชั้นเรียน และศึกษาความคิดเห็นของครูผู้สอนตามแนวคิดผู้เรียนภาษาที่ดี ของ รูบิน กลุ่มตัวอย่างประกอบด้วยนักศึกษาระดับปริญญาตรี สาขาภาษาอังกฤษและการสื่อสาร คณะศิลปศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยอุบลราชธานี จำนวน 6 คน โดยใช้ การ เลือกกลุ่มตัวอย่างแบบเจาะจง (Purposive sampling) งานวิจัยนี้มีขั้นตอนดำเนินการวิจัยโดยการ สังเกตการณ์ในชั้นเรียน การสัมภาษณ์นักเรียนกลุ่มตัวอย่าง และการสัมภาษณ์ครูผู้สอน โดยการ เก็บข้อมูลจากการสังเกตการณ์ในชั้นเรียน จำนวน 7 ครั้ง ครั้งละ 3 ชั่วโมง ผลการวิจัยครั้งนี้แสดงให้เห็นว่า นักเรียนทุกคนแสดงออกถึงลักษณะดังต่อไปนี้ มีแรงผลักดันในการสื่อสาร, สนใจความหมายของการใช้ภาษา และ แสวงหาโอกาสในการใช้ภาษา ซึ่งผลการวิจัยที่ได้จากการสังเกตสอดคล้องกับ ผลการวิจัยจากการสัมภาษณ์ครูผู้สอน อย่างไรก็ตาม แนวคิดผู้เรียนภาษาที่ดีของรูบินมีข้อจำกัดบางประการเมื่อนำมาใช้เป็นกรอบแนวคิดในการศึกษาคุณลักษณะการเป็นผู้เรียนภาษาที่ดีด้วยการสังเกต พฤติกรรมในห้องเรียนเป็นหลัก

ABSTRACT

TITLE : AN ANALYSIS OF THAI ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN
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PARTICIPATION, CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to identify good language learner characteristics in the classroom and the teachers' reflections on the students' behaviors based on Rubin's good language learner model (1975). The participants recruited by purposive sampling were six undergraduate students majoring in English and Communication at the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Ubon Ratchathani University, Thailand. The data was collected through classroom observations, student interviews, and teacher interviews. Seven 3-hour class meetings were observed in their entirety. The observation findings show that Rubin's *having a strong drive to communicate, attending to meaning and seeking out opportunities to use the language* characteristics were common characteristics that the participants showed in the classroom. The observation findings were also consistent with the teacher interviews. However, Rubin's good language learner model has some limitations when used as a conceptual framework to examine good learners' characteristics primarily through observation of classroom behavior.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and rationale

In the Thai context, English is the main foreign language that every student is required to study in school. According to the Basic Education Core Curriculum (2008), “Thai students learn the English language in order to communicate in various situations, seek knowledge, engage in a livelihood and pursue further education at higher levels” (p. 252). This is an ambitious goal, as it is not easy to master English. Much has to do with the learners themselves, as it has long been recognized that language learners are very crucial to the process of language learning. According to the EF English Proficiency Index 2019, Thailand was placed 74th out of 100 non-native English speaking countries and Thailand was placed 17th out of 25 countries in Asia. Thailand scored 47.6, which is regarded as having very low proficiency. Many studies investigated problems that influenced Thai students’ English proficiency (Adamson, 2004; Noom-ura, 2013; Panthumasen, 2007, Wiriyachitra, 2001). Noom-ura (2013) surveyed problems that influence English language teaching and learning in high school. The results show that the teachers thought many problems came from the students. Some of the problems were as follows. The students did not practice English on their own. They lacked opportunities for English exposure outside the classroom. They had insufficient knowledge and skills in English. In addition, they also lacked self-confidence in speaking English.

Based on my own teaching experience, I found that many students struggled in learning English. Some students do not pay attention in learning English in class and some of them seem to be too shy to speak in class because they are afraid of making mistakes. Moreover, their vocabulary knowledge is limited. They also do not know how to use grammar rules in real communicative situations. This is why many of them cannot use the English language to communicate with their teachers or foreigners. In contrast, some students can speak English very fluently; they have some characteristics that students with limited English proficiency do not have. For

example, they pay attention in class. They seek opportunities to use English both inside and outside the classroom. That is, it is believed that a good language learner possesses certain traits or characteristics that help her or him become successful (Cohen, 1977; Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975). Rubin (1975) is the first to propose a model describing what characteristics a good learner should have. She describes seven good language learner characteristics, which I will discuss in the next chapter. It is worth mentioning here that some characteristics, such as being a willing and accurate guesser; having a strong drive to communicate; being willing to make mistakes, are important ones.

When I first became interested in Rubin's claims about good language learners, I once interviewed one undergraduate English major student who I found to be able to speak English very fluently. Note that she was not the participant in the present study. Based on what she said, I found that she had most of Rubin's good language learner characteristics. For example, she said that she sought opportunities to use the English language by talking with foreigners and exchange students from other countries when she became an English major. In addition, she said she did not fear making mistakes when she communicated with foreigners. She also stated that she used body language or tried to describe some words that she did not know in order to continue a conversation. Moreover, she mentioned that she always monitored herself and her friends by improving her weakest skill and giving feedback to her friends. The conversation with that student raised my curiosity to know more about the traits of good language learners.

Several global research studies have examined characteristics of a good language learner. Those research studies mostly used Oxford (1990) language learning strategies as a framework to investigate the good language learner, referred to here as GLL (Bremner, 2006; Maftoon & Seyyedrezaei, 2012; Mochizuki, 1999; Park, 2008; Takeuchi, 2013). In addition, research studies on GLL in Thailand only investigated the overall language learning strategies of Thai students (Apairach & Vibulphol, 2015; Iamla-ong, 2014; Phonhan, 2016; Prakongchati & Intaraprasert, 2007; Toomnan, 2019).

Rubin's model is one of very well-known models attempting to describe characteristics of a good language learner. It has been cited in many research studies

(Hao, 2016; Kazemi & Kiamarsi, 2017; Lee & Heinz, 2016; Salikin, Bin-Tahirb & Emelia, 2017; Tang & Tian, 2015). A simple search on Google Scholar shows that the model has been cited over three thousand times. But to the best of my knowledge, there is no empirical study that has verified the model's claims. So, this raised my curiosity as to why there is no empirical study examining this model. For this reason, this study aimed to test out the model in investigating good language learner characteristics in an English classroom.

1.2 Research questions

The research questions guiding this study are as follows:

1.2.1 To what extent do the students show characteristics of a good language learner in the classroom?

1.2.2 To what extent do such characteristics correspond to their verbal performance evaluated by the teacher?

1.3 Limitations of the study

This study is a small-scale case study aiming to closely examine language-learning characteristics of a group of university students majoring in English. The analysis is limited only to two intact classes from two subjects. This study only observed the students' characteristics in the classroom and their teachers' reflections, the findings generated from the data do not necessarily show the same characteristics in other learning contexts. Thus, the findings may not be predictive of their learning behavior or outcome elsewhere.

1.4 Significance of the study

By examining learner's learning behavior of good language learners, the study will likely contribute to our understanding of the good language learner model by Rubin (1975) in the classroom context and whether such characteristics are predictive of their L2 performance based on their teacher's assessment.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Ministry of Education in Thailand sets the English subject as a core subject and wishes for Thai students to master all of its skills. Because the acquisition of a second language is recognized as a challenging learning process (Gentner & Namy, 2014), to become a successful learner in English, students follow some strategies. Many researchers have suggested strategies that help learners become successful or improve their language learning skills (Naiman, 1996; Norton & Toohey, 2001; Oxford, 1990; Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975). Rubin (1975) states that good language learning depends on at least three variables: aptitude, motivation and opportunity. Because classroom language learning (as opposed to naturalistic learning) is highly common, many learning activities take place in the classroom. It is justified here that if we take into account Rubin's theory about learning variables, then a language classroom should be a place to look for how these variables play out. Classroom discussions are the focus of this research, as they provide opportunity for learners to express themselves and interact with other learners or the teacher, which in turn makes observation of learning behavior possible.

This chapter starts with the role of classroom discussion activity and language learning. Then, I review Rubin's good language learner characteristics. I discuss SLA theories relevant to each characteristic in detail. I also examine previous studies addressing characteristics of a good language learner in order to show general knowledge on the topic.

2.1 Classroom discussions

Discussion is an exchange of knowledge between teachers and students, or students and students (Thomas, 2010). Classroom discussion is a common activity in which students have to interact with teachers or other students in order to exchange ideas. Larson (2000) claims that discussion is a useful teaching technique for developing higher-order thinking skills, which require language learners to explain

their ideas rather than memorize facts and details. Second language researchers have conducted studies examining class discussions as a context in which learning takes place. In their studies the results showed both signs of positive acquisition and signs of struggles. In terms of the learning process, discussions or conversations in the classroom show that learners benefit from either their fellow learners who are more advanced or their teacher (Dallimore, Hertenstein & Platt, 2010; Hardman, 2016; Taylor, 2002; Trent, 2009; Tuan, 2010).

Hardman (2016) examined the tutor–student interaction in the classroom discussion. The participants consisted of 23 third-year undergraduate students and 30 postgraduate international students. They were enrolled in the engineering management class. Two classes were taught by the same tutor. The author collected the data by observations. The author observed 1-hour classes four times in order to see the interaction between the tutor and the students. The common activity in this study was asking and answering questions. The tutor mostly initiated the questions. The findings of this study revealed that the students sometimes answered incorrectly, so the teacher gave them the correct answer. When the conversation between the tutor and the students occurred in many turns, the students were able to initiate the conversation. This study shows that classroom discussion promotes the students to speak and learn from their mistakes. In addition, when the students are familiar with the instruction, they can initiate the conversation.

Trent (2009) investigated students' participation in classroom discussion for learning English. The participants were eight first-year Chinese undergraduate students from the majoring in economics and finance who enrolled in a compulsory English for academic purposes course and two English language teachers from the English Centre at the university. The author collected the data from observations of the student's participation in the classroom discussion and interviews regarding the student's thoughts and feelings about participating in classroom discussion. In addition, the author also interviewed the teachers for their reflections on the students' behaviors in the classroom. The author observed the class for 12 weeks. Additionally, the teacher interviews and the student interviews were conducted every week. The teachers assigned a topic about finance to each student, they had to talk and teach the assigned topic to their friends. The findings showed that all students participated in

the classroom discussions without fear and shyness because the teachers did not put an overwhelming amount of pressure on grammatical accuracy. The teachers focused on oral fluency, rather than linguistic accuracy. Therefore, the students were not as worried about speaking English. In addition, the topics that they were assigned were related to their background knowledge, so they had content for asking and answering their classmates. To conclude, the classroom discussion was an activity that created opportunities for the students to use the target language and the classroom discussion also promoted the students to become active learners.

Classroom discussion is quite challenging for students who have low language proficiency. They tend to be silent when their anxiety levels are high. Anxiety seems to be a major cause of students' limited degree of participation in classroom discussions (or lack of participation at all). Many research studies have examined reasons for second or foreign students' anxiety (Kitano, 2002; Peters, 1978; Young, 1991; Zhang, 2011; Zhiping & Paramasivam, 2013).

Zhiping and Paramasivam (2013) conducted a study to examine anxiety faced by adult users of English where English was used as a foreign language. Their participants were eight Ph.D. students taking economics courses taught in English at a Malaysian University. Three were three Nigerian, three Iranian and two Algerian nationals. The total number of students taking that course was 20. Besides these eight students, the rest of the students were Malaysian. The data came from the authors' observations of whole class sessions and semi-structured interviews of the participants' perceptions toward using English. The authors stated, "The observations involved whole class sessions of three hours each (2013, p. 5)" without describing what exactly they observed left the methodological section of the paper vague. However, the authors stated that one of the sessions in the classroom was discussion in which the teacher mostly asked the questions to the students. The teacher always gave praise even if the student's answer was not correct in order to reduce anxiety. In addition, the semi-structured individual interviews were conducted before or after class with twelve questions. The questions in the interviews were asked about the student's perception toward using English as a medium for learning and their anxiety when they spoke English. The authors found that these students suffered from anxiety while speaking English in the classroom. The authors explained that there were three

major reasons for their anxiety: fear of public speaking, fear of negative evaluation from their teachers and classmates and fear of speaking inaccurately.

Zhang (2011) also examined the student's anxiety in the classroom discussions. The participants consisted of 15 Chinese adult immigrants' learners at a Chinatown's church school in Philadelphia and 2 ESL teachers in this school. The participants studied in the English course only once a week and the class lasted for 2 hours and half. The data came from the author's observations of the students' performance, interaction and discussion in the classroom and the follow-up student's interview. The authors observed the classroom discussions between student and student, and student and teacher. The observation findings showed that the students felt stressed to answer the teacher's questions after several turn-taking patterns. In contrast, when the students were assigned to discuss as a whole class in any topic that they were interested in English, they talked about their summer plans, job, and life in the U.S. Based on observation findings, all the students actively participated in the discussion and they seemed to have more strong willingness to communicate with fellow students. The author concluded that the students were more engaged in student-student conversation than in teacher-student conversation. After the observation sessions, the author conducted the interviews to ask about how they felt about the course. The interview findings revealed that the students had a different level of anxiety in the language classroom. They were not familiar with questions and answers in the classroom. Sometimes, they were nervous when they could not follow up what the teachers were talking about. On the contrary, the students said that they felt comfortable when they discussed with their friends because the teachers did not join in the discussion. They could talk about everything that they wanted to talk about in the classroom.

As shown above, class discussions can be a useful research context because it creates an opportunity to observe students' learning behavior. Class discussions allow students to show their speaking skills as well as strategies they use to learn the lesson at hand. For the purpose of this research, I therefore examined Rubin's good learner characteristics through students' behavior in class discussions.

2.2 Rubin's Good Language Learner Model and second language acquisition

Interest in the concept of the good language learner (GLL) began in the mid-1970s. Good language learner (GLL) is a model created by Rubin (1975). This model was used to describe learner characteristics. The model describes seven characteristics, which are discussed in detail below. Rubin (1975) only explains each characteristic, but she does not give the title for each characteristic. So, I give the title for each characteristic in order to be easy to understand when mentions to each characteristic. The title for each characteristic, I name them from Rubin's explanations.

According to the model, a good language learner was believed to possess characteristics that promote language learning. Rubin was the first researcher who proposed a model describing a good language learner. Rubin was interested in the differences between successful and unsuccessful language learners. The article she published in 1975 was very much based on her teaching experience, not empirical evidence. It was based on her theoretical assumption that the good language learners had these characteristics that made them become successful. Despite its lack of empirical support, the model has been cited extensively. In the following section I review what she proposes and attempt to map them with second language research theories to put her claims into perspective.

2.2.1 Willing and accurate guesser

Rubin states that the first good language learner characteristic is a willing and accurate guesser. According to Rubin (1975), "A good guesser is one who gathers and stores information in an efficient manner. The good guesser uses all the clues which the setting offers him" (p.45). In other words, the learner attempts to guess from what she or he knows from context. Rubin (1975) did not give the example for this characteristic, so I tried to give the examples to give a clearer picture for this characteristic. In the classroom, the learner shows this characteristic by answering teacher's questions and using the word "I think" or they speak quietly to show their guess. This characteristic often occurs when the learners learn new vocabulary or respond to reading comprehension questions. Many research studies examine the benefit of guessing in context for learning vocabulary and reading comprehension (Alsaawi, 2013; Çetinavcı, 2014; Kojima & Narita, 2004; Mart, 2012). These studies

show that guessing from context helps the learners learn the unknown words in reading comprehension. Lafford (1987) states that guessing occurs in the decoding reading stage when the teacher asks the students to guess the meaning of some words in the context. The students have to guess the meaning of the word by retelling a sentence and using synonyms.

This characteristic is related to Krashen's (1977) concept of comprehensible input. The good language learner is able to make use of comprehensible input. To do so, the input that the learner is exposed to must not be too difficult for her or him to understand although it contains elements that are a bit more advanced than the level that the learner has. Despite being criticized for lack of clarity of what exactly comprehensible input is, Krashen's theoretical assumption that input must not be within the learner's ability to take in and process is sound, at least in principle. Comprehensible input provides an opportunity for the learner to use their skills in guessing, perhaps using clues in the input itself in order to make sense of the input. Being a good guesser then means the learner employs not only what he or she knows, but also what is in the language itself (input) to help him or her communicate despite the fact that not all in the input is already known. Second language research along this line of thinking has examined how learners use guessing as a strategy to understand reading texts or conversational elements (Gu & Johnson, 1996; Huang & Eslami, 2013; Mokhtar, Rawian, Yahaya, Abdullah & Mohamed, 2017; Park, 2000; Teng, 2014).

Mokhtar, Rawian, Yahaya, Abdullah and Mohamed (2017) investigated the vocabulary learning strategies of adult ESL learners. The participants were 360 university students from a university in Malaysia. The authors used The Vocabulary Learning Questionnaire (VLQ), developed by Gu and Johnson (1996) to collect data on the students' preferences of vocabulary learning strategies. The results from the questionnaire showed that the students preferred to use guessing strategies the most when dealing with vocabulary problems. The authors pointed out, "Extensive use of the guessing strategy in learning English vocabulary has its benefits" (p. 139). Swanborn and Glopper (1999) confirmed that while reading students incidentally learned an average of 15% of the unknown words.

Huang and Eslami (2013) also studied the roles of guessing for vocabulary learning. Their participants were 100 voluntary international graduate students at a large Southwestern U.S. university. The questionnaire was used to collect the data. The questionnaire consisted of two sections: participants' backgrounds and vocabulary-learning strategies that the participants used. The authors found that the participants most often used the main idea and background information to formulate their guesses. In addition, they used the contextual clues for guessing, such as the relationship between the new word and other words in the sentence, and the relationship between the sentence's words and conjunctions. This means that the participants have a deeper understanding of the meaning of unfamiliar words. .

To conclude, guessing strategies are one of the strategies that help the learners learn a language especially in terms of vocabulary and reading comprehension.

2.2.2 Having a strong drive to communicate

The second characteristic is that the good language learner has a strong drive to communicate, or learn from communication. Rubin (1975) states, "He is willing to do many things to get his message across" (p.46). Rubin (1975) gives the examples for this characteristic. The learner uses gestures to get his message across or spell a word when his pronunciation is not clear or paraphrases to explain instead the word that he does not know. Rubin (1975) mentions, "this strategy has an important by-product in that if he is successful in communicating, his motivation to participate and acquire the necessary tools to do so will be enhanced" (p.47).

If we are to link this characteristic to an SLA theory, it is related to motivation. Gardner (1985) defines the word "motivation" as an effort and desire to learn the target language. Gardner formulates a formula for motivation consisting of effort to learn the language, desire to learn the language, and positive attitudes toward learning the language.

According to Gardner (1985), motivation can be divided into two types: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to doing something from the learner's internal interest. For example, a learner wants to learn English because he enjoys some games in the classroom. Extrinsic motivation refers to doing something to gain some rewards or praise from others. Another aspect that is related to intrinsic

and extrinsic motivation is orientation. According to Gardner (2010), orientation refers to an overall aim and purpose of language learning. There are two types of orientation: integrative and instrumental orientation. Integrative orientation is the desire to learn the target language of that society in order to become part of and integrate into culture and society while instrumental, refers to the desire to learn the target language in order to gain some benefits for himself such as the self image, better careers and business opportunities and to further study (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). For the above explanation, there are many sources of motivation that drive the learner to communicate.

A large number of studies have investigated motivation as a factor in second or foreign language learning (Hong & Ganapathy, 2017; Kimura, Nakata, & Okumura, 2001; Liu & Zhang, 2013; Shams, 2018; Tsai, 2012; Ushida, 2013; Zhao, 2012). Some studies analyze motivation by using types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. Some studies analyze by using orientation: integrative and instrumental. In addition, some studies analyze two varieties, types and orientations. The major claim from these studies is learners have instrumental motivation more than integrative motivation. The common research questions that the authors mostly ask for examining the students' motivation are: which kind of motivation do they hold more strongly in English learning?; and What are the areas of problems that affect ESL students' motivation towards English language learning? These studies use questionnaires and focus group interviews to answer the questions and find out the orientation of motivation that the learners have.

The studies reviewed below are examples of research studies that found that students had instrumental motivation rather than integrative motivation.

Hong and Ganapathy (2017) investigated ESL students' motivation towards English language learning. The participants were twelve students who were aged 16 from a Chinese secondary school in Penang, Malaysia. They were divided into three groups (four students in each group). They were selected from the same class, taught by the same English teacher, and using the same textbooks or materials. The reason that the authors selected the participants from the same class, the same teacher, and the same textbooks is because the authors aimed to minimize any uncertain factors that could interfere with the results of the study. The author used

focus group discussions to collect the data. The questions in the focus group discussions were developed from Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMI) which consisted of three parts: general information, student's motivation related to integrative or instrumental motivation types, and students' perception of language learning difficulties. The findings showed that students were more instrumentally motivated than integratively motivated. The author explained that most of the students studied English in order to pass an exam, to get a better job in the future, or to know English for their success and achievement.

Zhao (2012) investigated Chinese non-English majors' motivation in English learning. The author analyzed orientation and types of motivation. The participants consisted of 124 first year and second year non-English majors students in a college of China. They were randomly selected and participated in the study. The author used a questionnaire that was adopted from the study of Gao, Zhao, Cheng, and Zhou (2004) to collect data. The results indicated that the students had instrumental motivation more than integrative motivation. The author explained that the students learnt English as a supportive or pragmatic tool for other areas such as job searching, communication, and individual development. They did not learn for integration into the target community. In addition, the author found that the students had both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, but the extrinsic motivation was a little bit higher than the intrinsic motivation. The author explained that in the result the students emphasized that learning English was important for them because English was a very useful tool for communication in contemporary society and their future career development.

In addition, some studies found that the students had both instrumental and integrative motivation. For example, Muftha (2013) found that the Malaysian pre-university students had high motivation on both instrumental and integrative. The author studied language learning motivation of 182 non English major pre-university students in one university in Klang Valley on the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia. The participants varied in nationality, culture, religious and linguistic backgrounds. The questionnaire was used to collect the data. The questionnaire was adopted from the English version of the attitude/motivation test battery (AMTB) by Gardner (2004) along with Clement et al.'s (1994). The author adopted Gardner's AMTB in terms of

the point in Likert Scale format. The original AMTB was a 7-point Likert Scale format, but in Muftha's study was a 5-point Likert Scale format. The students had high motivation on both instrumental and integrative, but their instrumental motivation was higher than any other. The reasons that motivated the language learning of the students included getting a good job, improving their future career, making them more knowledgeable, and for general communication.

To conclude, Rubin (1975) states, "the good language learner will use whatever knowledge he has to get his message across. If he is successful in communicating, his motivation to participate and acquire the necessary tools to do so will be enhanced" (p.47). The previous studies show that motivation, especially instrumental motivation plays important roles to the learner in language learning. The common reason that motivates the learners is communication which is one of the most important skills in language learning.

2.2.3 Willing to appear foolish

The third characteristic of a good language learner is a willingness to appear foolish. Rubin (1975) states, "He is willing to make mistakes in order to learn and communicate" (p.47). For this characteristic, Rubin does not explain anything or provide examples. Therefore, I have interpreted his meaning and provided my own examples. Willing to appear foolish shows that the learner is driven by the urge to communicate despite the risk. In the classroom, the students show this characteristic by answering questions without fear even if the answer is not correct. Moreover, they initiate the conversation from their curiosity. In the classroom, they ask the teacher or their peers with some questions that they are curious about. This characteristic relates to risk taking concepts. Ely (1986) defines a risk taker as a person who does not hesitate to use a new linguistic element and the risk taker is willing to use complex or difficult linguistic elements. Sometimes the risk takers use a guessing strategy to deal with the uncertainty in a particular situation (Beebe, 1983). There are many factors that influence the risk taker. Kogan and Wallach (1965) state that providing the situation is one of the most important components for the risk taker because the situation gives the opportunity to the risk taker to perform their ability. Another factor that can encourage risk taking is a reward or prize. When the learners are encouraged

with the reward or feedback from the teacher, they are proud of themselves and the reward motivates them to become the risk taker.

Some studies have examined the role of risk-taking concepts and language learning (Bouhenika, 2015; Hobbs, 2010; Kusumaningputri, 2012; Rueckert, 2013; Sharma, 2015).

Rueckert (2013) investigated the impact of service-learning by the master degree students via their participation in the Community English School. The participants were 18 master degree students in the TESOL program at Oklahoma City University, United States. Fifteen of them volunteered to participate in the study and three of them worked as student professionals and received some financial compensation. They enrolled in TESOL's practicum in Teaching English course. They had to go to teach students in The Community English School at Oklahoma City University as a volunteer for sixty hours. For their teaching, they were required to speak only English. The author used many methods to collect the data such as observation, survey/questionnaire, and focus groups interviews. The author observed the instruction of the participants throughout the study. The author of this study was the director of the Community English Program, so, the author managed, trained, and supervised the participants for their instruction. The initial survey was used to determine the participants' previous teaching experience, biographical data, comfort with applying nontraditional teaching methods, and willingness to teach English. Seven students were randomly selected for the focus group interview. The focus group interview was conducted to discuss questions relevant to the study. Finally, the questionnaire comprising open-ended questions was distributed to the participants. The questions in the questionnaire were asked about their willingness to teach English; their willingness to use nontraditional methods in their future classrooms; their ability to use content taught in the MA in TESOL program in a practical environment; and the development of their own personal view of themselves as professionals in the TESOL field. Some of the main findings were at first the participants who were not confident with speaking English, they tended to look over the curriculum and appeared to prepare themselves. After a few sessions, all participants showed the risk taker characteristic by initiating conversation with community members and did not fear to adopt nontraditional teaching methods to

teach the students. The author explained that when the participants were willing to take risks by walking away from the traditional teaching methods and used only English in teaching. It improved the participants' confidence as professionals.

Bouhenika (2015) examined the effects of risk taking on the learning of speaking English at university. The participants consisted of 91 second year students at University of Constantine, Algeria. They were randomly selected from an oral expression English class. The author collected data from six classroom tasks including, idiomatic expression, problem solving, playing cards, personal qualities, movie narrating, and story completion. To evaluate the students' talk, the author adopted a 9-points rating scale; two for grammar, two for pronunciation, two for fluency, and three for frequency. For measuring correlation, the author used the Pearson correlation coefficient test to analyze the correlation. The results showed that risk taking was positively related to spoken English proficiency.

In summary, According to Rubin (1975), the good language learner was willing to make mistakes in order to learn and communicate without worrying to make mistakes. When the learners did not worry about their speech, it made them have the confidence to use language.

2.2.4 Attending to form

The fourth characteristic of the good language learner is attending to form. Rubins (1975) explains, "The good language learner is constantly looking for patterns in the language. He attends to the form in a particular way, constantly analyzing, categorizing, and synthesizing" (p.47). Rubin (1975) only explains the overall of this characteristic, but she does not give an example to the readers. Based on my interpretation, the students show this characteristic by correcting the mistakes when the teacher or friends give corrective feedback because they have to pay attention to the form of language. In addition, noticing and correcting their own mistakes can be examples for this characteristic. For example, when they catch themselves using the pronoun "she or he" in a way not consistent with the actual gender of the person being referred to and immediately change it to the correct form.

Noticing hypothesis plays an important role in focus on form because the student has to notice the input at first, then the input becomes an intake. Additionally, corrective feedback also plays an important role in focus on form. Corrective

feedback is the common input that lets the students focus on form. There are many types of corrective feedback that are mostly used to highlight grammatical errors, such as recast, explicit correction, elicitation, metalinguistic feedback, clarification recast, and repetition. Some studies have investigated the students being form-oriented and language learning (Bouffard & Sarkar, 2010; Lyster, 2004)

Lyster (2004) investigated the effects of form-focused instruction (FFI) and corrective feedback on grammatical gender in French. The participants were four Francophone teachers and their 178 grade five students in an early French immersion program from three different schools on the island of Montreal. Each of the four teachers had two classes, so there were a total of eight groups. Then, the authors divided two groups for FFI- recast group (received recasts following by errors in grammatical gender), two groups for FFI-prompt group (received prompts following errors in gender), two groups for FFI-only group (received form-focused instruction but no particular type of feedback), and two groups for control groups. Two written tasks and two oral tasks were used as the tests to assess the students' ability of grammatical gender. The results showed that all three treatment groups significantly outperformed the control group on the oral and written posttest which measured after two months of the instruction. The author explained that the FFI groups received the treatments that that control group did not receive. The treatments that the FFI groups received helped them develop abstract rule-based knowledge of grammatical gender. This shows that when they had the knowledge they could do the tasks. All three groups of FFI, even if they do not receive the same treatment, had to pay attention and focus on form in each treatment.

Bouffard and Sarkar (2010) also investigated the effects of form-focused instruction on language awareness. The authors studied children. The participants consisted of 43 grade three students from French immersion classes. Their ages were eight and nine years old. Most of the students did not speak French at home. The authors used many activities such as project presentations, narrative construction of stories and improvisation to generate naturally occurring types of errors. The errors in the study included lexical errors; grammatical errors; and L1 transfers. The teacher trained the students to engage in a process of metalinguistic questioning and exploration along certain guidelines over a period of three months. Corrective

feedback was used to elicit the students to notice grammatical errors. The findings indicated that the students could repair errors, but the teacher had to guide them before they could identify the errors. They could not analyze the features of errors. After they were trained around three months, they used metalinguistic ability to identify the errors fluently and correctly. Sometimes they were able to propose explanations for why the errors had occurred. It showed that the teacher could train young students to draw attention on the grammatical errors and to build their grammatical competence. The results relate to Rubin's claim, "The more experience a learner has with doing the sort of exercise the more successful he will be" (1975, p.47).

While other studies have attempted to investigate the efficacy of focus on form instruction, Poole (2005) tried to describe the types of forms that learners attend to when focus on form instruction is used. The author found that the learners mostly attended lexical in nature. The participants were 19 ESL learners who had studied English between one to ten years or more. Their ages were between 18 and 33. Most participants were from South and East Asian countries. Eight activities took place in order to prepare the learners for their individual essays by giving them the necessary background knowledge. After that they had to read essays and answer comprehension questions about them.

To conclude, the attending to form characteristic concerns many areas in SLA theory such as language inputs, noticing hypothesis, uptake, and corrective feedback. To analyze this characteristic it is necessary to analyze those aspects that are related to this characteristic.

2.2.5 Seeking opportunity to use and practice language

The fifth good language learner characteristic is seeking opportunity to use and practice language. According to Rubin (1975), "He will seek out opportunities to use the language by looking for native speakers, going to the movie or to cultural events. He initiates conversations with the teacher or his fellow students in the target language" (p.47). Based on my interpretation, the students show this characteristic by asking questions to the teacher or their classmates. In addition, they initiate conversation from their own curiosity. It is consistent with Long's (1983) interaction hypothesis of language learning. The interaction hypothesis emphasizes face-to-face

interaction which can promote language proficiency. When the learner interacts with the input, the input can promote learner acquisition. In addition, the learner has to interact with other people who are knowledgeable in order to develop their L2 competence. When a learner tries to communicate with another L2 speaker, she or he can develop her or his L2 competence.

There were many studies supporting the interaction hypothesis (Ellis, Tanaka & Yamazaki, 1994; Gass & Varonis, 1994; Loschky, 1994; Namaziandost & Nasri, 2019; Pica, Young & Doughty, 1987).

One of the earliest works in this area, Pica, Young and Doughty (1987) compared the effects of two environments for acquisition on nonnative speakers' comprehension of input; lecture based and interaction with native speaker activity. The participants were sixteen nonnative speakers from ESL classes. The results showed that interaction had a facilitating effect overall on comprehension.

The results in Magnan and Back (2007) also supported the previous research. Magnan and Back (2007) investigates the role of social interaction in language gain among study abroad students in France. The participants were 24 students from a large Midwestern university in the United States who participated in one of two semester-long programs in Paris and Montpellier, France, during spring semester 2003. Many questionnaires were used to measure the students: expectations and experiences; the Can-Do self-assessment scale (Clark, 1981); the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI); the Language Contact Profile (LCP; Freed, Dewey, Segalowitz & Halter, 2001). The Can-Do Scale self-report was used to measure tasks an individual performance in a language. The LCP was a self-report which was used to measure which students shared the approximate hours per week they used French. The results indicated that the students improved their speaking ability in French during their study abroad experience. Moreover, the students grew more confident in their ability to speak French. The authors explained that self-confidence motivated the students to be confident to speak the target language.

2.2.6 Monitoring his own and other speakers' speech

The sixth characteristic is the good language learner monitors other speakers' speech and her or his own. Rubin (1975) says "He is constantly attending to how well his speech is being received and whether his performance meets the

standards he has learned. He can learn from his own mistakes” (p.47). For this characteristic, Rubin (1975) does not provide the examples, so based on my interpretation from the definition, the learners show this characteristic by noticing their mistakes when they speak. Sometimes, they pronounce some words incorrectly or sometimes they use grammar incorrectly. When they notice their own mistake they change immediately by themselves, but sometimes their teacher or friends give the corrective feedback to them. Apart from monitoring their own mistakes, this characteristic also concerns monitoring their friend's mistakes. This characteristic is quite similar to the *Attend to form* characteristic.

This characteristic once again is related to Schmidt’s (1995) noticing hypothesis. By monitoring their performance, learners have an opportunity to notice their mistakes and they have to pay attention to all elements that occur during the conversation. The noticing hypothesis made claims about the relationship between input, intake, and output. Input was the language to which learners were exposed. What the learners noticed in the input was what became an intake for learning (Schmidt, 1995). This means that input alone was not sufficient in helping learners acquire the target language. They needed intake, and intake was facilitated by noticing. Learners who were observant about the forms and functions of the target language were thus likely to take in the input for further processing. Being analytic about forms and functions helped language learning for the reason discussed above.

2.2.7 Attending to meaning

The last characteristic is that the good language learner attends to meaning.

He knows that in order to understand the message, it is not sufficient to pay attention to the grammar of the language or to the surface form of speech. He attends to the context of the speech act, he attends to the relationship of the participants, he attends to the rules of speaking, he attends to the mood of the speech act. (Rubin, 1975: 47-48)

Rubin (1975) explains quite a lot for this characteristic, but she does not give the example for this characteristic. From my analysis, this characteristic is quite difficult to observe, so I try to specify the student’s behaviors for this characteristic. In the classroom, the students have to use the target language appropriately with the classroom context. Sometimes, they may use technical terms when talking about

something in the academic materials. Sometimes, they may use informal language to talk about the general topics in daily life.

This characteristic is related to pragmatics. Pragmatics is defined as the appropriate use of language in context. Some studies have stated that pragmatics was situated when learners had awareness and noticed the input (House, 1996; Rose and Ng, 2001; Takahashi, 2001).

Bardovi-Harlig and Griffin (2005) examined the students' pragmatic awareness in the classroom. The participants consisted of 43 ESL students who enrolled in the Intensive English Program at Indiana University. The authors used video tasks and classroom activity to collect data. Video task and classroom activity contained three types of sentences: sentences which were pragmatically appropriate, but ungrammatical, sentences which were grammatical, but pragmatically inappropriate, and sentences which were both grammatical and pragmatically appropriate. After each video task session, the students were required to do worksheets to reflect the pragmatics in sentences. The results showed that the students knew the appropriate and inappropriate pragmatics in sentences and what to change, whether speech act, formula, content, or form.

To recall good language learners pay attention not only to the grammatical forms of the target language, but also to the meaning that is derived from pragmatic or sociolinguistic factors including the context of communication, relationships between speakers, and social norms of language use. Good language learners thus know how to use language appropriately to the social context.

In addition to Rubin, Oxford (1990) later proposes language learning strategies that learners use. It has become one of the most examined models in language learning strategies. Although Oxford does not attempt to claim that these strategies always bring success in second or foreign language learning, some of the strategies are naturally used by learners and help them succeed to some degree. So it is worth discussing them here.

2.3 Oxford's (1990) language learning strategies (LLS)

According to Oxford (1990), there are six major strategies: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. She argues that learners use these strategies to develop their second or foreign language proficiency.

First, memory strategies help students store and link information from images, sounds, and body language. Students compare their L2 that they gain with their L1 knowledge. Moreover, if they practice using the information again and again, it will become stored in long term memory.

Second, cognitive strategies help the students understand and produce the target language. Using cognitive strategies, students practice the language by repeating, recognizing and using formulas or patterns. They often analyze the target language, compare it with the first language, and often end up transferring their first language knowledge to the production of their second language. When transfer happens, there is no guarantee that it will be target-like. Sometimes, such transfer results in forms more like the first language than the second. As a result, in this case, using cognitive strategies does not always result in desirable L2 learning outcomes.

Third, compensation strategies help the students communicate by writing or speaking even when their vocabulary is limited or when they lack grammatical competence. They can continue communication by guessing linguistic clues, switching to their mother tongue, using gestures, getting help, or using synonyms.

Fourth, metacognitive strategies help the students control their own learning process by centering, arranging, planning, and evaluating. For example, they can link their prior knowledge with their new knowledge. They can organize and plan their language tasks which are suitable for them. Moreover, they can monitor and evaluate their language by themselves.

Fifth, affective strategies are techniques that help the students manage and control their emotions, feelings, attitudes, and motivations. The techniques in using affective strategies are lowering their anxiety by using music or meditation, encouraging themselves by making positive statements, and taking their emotional temperature by writing diaries or discussing their feelings with someone.

The last strategy is social. Social strategies are activities that make the students interact with other people. The activities are, for instance, asking questions, cooperating and showing empathy with other people.

If we compare Rubin's (1975) good language learner model and Oxford's (1990) language learning strategies, we will see that these models share some characteristics but call them differently. For example, compensation strategies of Oxford (1990) refer to when the conversation gets stuck, the learner continues the conversation by guessing from the linguistic clues. It is similar to the first characteristic of Rubin's model, *Willing and accurate guesser* that talks about the learner stores information and uses all clues to guess something in the conversation. Another example, metacognitive strategies, are similar to the sixth characteristic of Rubin's model, the learners monitor other speakers' speech and their own. The learners monitor and evaluate their language by noticing their own mistakes.

2.4 Related studies

In the past 40 years, there have been several studies on good language learners (Ellis, 1989; Goh & Foong, 1997; Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006; Iamla-ong, 2014; Norton, 2000; Phonhan, 2016). Most research on good language learners tended to use Oxford (1990) language learning strategies as a conceptual framework (Goh & Foong, 1997; Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006; Iamla-ong, 2014). Some studies used several models, but some studies did not follow any model. Those studies only explained the student's behaviors that emerged in the study. In addition, there was limited empirical research that used Rubin's (1975) GLL as a conceptual framework.

Norton (2000) investigated learners' characteristics and learning strategies by following Rubin's GLL model. The study was qualitative. The author collected the data by journal entries and interviews. The author explored the characteristics of the good language learner. The participants were five female adult immigrants in Canada. They worked at a restaurant. They had little experience in speaking English, but one of the immigrants was considered more successful in learning English than the others. Her name was Eva. Eva worked as a worker who was to clean tables and floors and clear out garbage. Her job was seen as a "the worst type of job" for unskilled (Norton, 2000). She wanted to improve her English so she always sought opportunities to

speak English. Her co-workers were Anglophone speakers. She wanted to interact with them in order to practice her English, but nobody talked with her. Then she felt very nervous that no one talked to her. One day, a co-worker was very busy, so Eva had to do more tasks. She had more opportunities to speak with other co-workers and customers. After that, she felt good and began to interact with the co-workers. Her English gradually improved. Finally, Eva understood when her co-workers spoke English with her. Moreover, her co-workers also understand her English. The author concluded that she had the characteristics of GLL. For example, she used language for communication when she had an opportunity. She also monitored her language learning performance. This study is a small scale study and the researcher focused only Eva. I think the author should study the reasons why other participants were not successful in L2 language learning.

Ellis (1989) also explored learning styles which are effective in second or foreign language learning. Participants in his study were two adult L2 German learners at a college in London. Monique was a female and Simon was a male. Monique came from Mauritius. Her mother tongue was French creole, but she spoke English and French fluently and accurately. Simon was British. He was not a native English speaker, but he could speak and write English very well--having a native-like attainment. The author used several instruments to collect data including a questionnaire, a cognitive style test, a learning aptitude test, proficiency test, and diaries. The findings showed that the two learners differed in their cognitive styles. Both of them gained a high score on the grammatical proficiency test. Monique was afraid of making mistakes when she spoke German, but Simon was not. Monique wrote her diary entries very well. She was concentrating on all elements for writing diaries. She was quite worried about the formal properties of German. She was very concentrated on linguistic accuracy, but, she was not doing well in oral communication. She was, however, very successful in writing. In contrast, Simon was not very interested in writing a diary. He tried to figure out grammatical rules and analyze new grammatical forms. He was good at grammatical analysis and he was not concerned about making errors. He always sought opportunities to communicate in German, so he performed very well in speaking. This study has shown that what learners do can predict the outcome of their learning. Despite its interesting findings

about learners' characteristics and how they are related to their learning outcomes, this study is small-scale, and this is why further rigorous research is needed that examines learning behavior. Several research studies investigated good language learner by using Oxford (1990) language learning strategies as a conceptual framework (Goh & Foong, 1997; Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006; Iamla-ong, 2014; Phonhan, 2016).

Goh and Foong (1997) investigated learning strategies by using Oxford (1990) language learning strategies as a conceptual framework. The participants consisted of 175 ESL students from China who were studying in a 6-month intensive English program in Singapore. Their average age was 19. The participants were separated into three proficiency groups: high, medium, and low. The authors used a standardized test (SLEP) and a strategy inventory for language learning (SILL) questionnaire to collect the data. The SLEP test was a proficiency test that was used to measure listening and reading comprehension. While SILL was the questionnaire developed by Oxford which was used to explore language learning strategies. The findings showed that the learners used metacognitive strategies more frequently than other strategies. To recall, metacognitive strategies are the abilities to evaluate and notice one's own mistakes then seek ways to improve one's English skills. The authors explained that the learners used metacognitive strategies by noticing their English mistakes and improving from their mistakes. Moreover, they paid attention when someone was speaking English, and tried to find out how to become a successful English learner.

Similar results are also found in Hong-Nam and Leavell (2006) that the students mostly used metacognitive strategies. The participants were 55 ESL students from different countries (Brazil, China, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan, Thailand, and Togo) who enrolled in a college intensive English program at a large southwestern university. The authors used the SILL questionnaire and the individual background questionnaire (IBQ) to collect data. The authors explained that the ESL students in the IEP were familiar with instructions for planning, organizing, focusing, and evaluating their own learning. These instructions could make the ESL students to be an efficient planning and self-monitoring person. Efficient planning and self-monitoring were the elements of metacognitive strategies.

In another research study in Thailand, Iamla-ong (2014) examined language learning strategies that Thai students often used. The author also used Oxford (1990) as a conceptual framework to collect data. The participants were 396 undergraduate students at Mae Fah Luang University, Thailand. The SILL questionnaire was used to collect the data. The results showed that metacognitive strategies were the most frequently used by the students. The reasons that students used Metacognitive strategies the most were because they were interested in the language and wanted to be better in English. Moreover, they paid attention to learning language for their future career.

The aforementioned studies were survey research and used the SILL questionnaire as the main tool to collect the data. The authors only relied on the participants' opinions but did not gain in-depth information or other learning aspects of the participants. It did not show any in-depth reasons why the participants chose the metacognitive strategies. Its quantitative nature, however, helps to set apart the learners' perceived importance of metacognitive strategies in language learning.

In another study, Phonhan (2016) also investigated language learning strategies of Thai students. The author also used the SILL questionnaire as one of data collection instruments. The author investigated the overall language learning strategies employed by Thai Education students at tertiary level. The participants were 165 second year students from four majors in the Education field at Buriram Rajabhat University in Buriram province, Thailand. They were divided into two groups based on their English proficiency: high and low proficiency level. The authors collected data by using the SILL questionnaire and semi structured interview. The results showed that high proficiency level students mostly used cognitive strategies while low proficiency level students mostly used compensation strategies. The author explained that the low proficiency level students preferred to use compensation strategies because they were not proficient learners, so they tried to use many techniques to help them for communication such as using guessing techniques, switching to the mother tongue, or using body language. Moreover, the low proficiency level students preferred to consult with a dictionary for learning when they were not familiar with vocabulary. For this study, the authors did not use only questionnaires to collect the data, they also used interviews in order to give

opportunities to the participants to explain the reasons why they used some strategies more often than other strategies. However, this study did not explain clearly why the high proficiency level students used cognitive strategies. The author only explained the reason why the low proficiency level students often used compensation strategies. This study was well organized in data collection methods because the author used interviews to triangulate with the survey data in order to gain more details that why the students used any strategies.

To conclude, the above studies showed that the students mostly used metacognitive strategies. The common reasons that the high proficiency level students in each study used metacognitive strategies were noticing their mistakes and using the mistake for improving their language. In addition, they used metacognitive strategies for paying attention when someone speaks. It showed that the high proficiency level students thought beyond the surface language, they did not only memorize vocabulary and communicate, but they paid attention and noticed both form and meaning of language. These student behaviors were consistent with the sixth GLL characteristics of Rubin. The sixth characteristic of Rubin's model emphasized on monitoring on their own and other mistakes. Therefore, Oxford and Rubins' models had the same purposes, but the characteristics were referred to using different terms. If we considered the objective of Oxford and Rubin, we would see congruent characterization behind each item.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

The following section describes the pilot study, the research design, the participants, the data-collection procedure, and the data analysis. To recall, the two research questions: to what extent do the students show characteristics of a good language learner in the classroom?; and, to what extent do such characteristics correspond to their verbal performance evaluated by the teacher?

3.1 The planning stage

To answer the research questions, I used qualitative methods, which will be discussed in detail later, to collect data. This was because I believed qualitative research would help me obtain details of students' behavior, which would in turn allow me to map their behavior details onto Rubin's model. After consultation with my thesis advisor, given the time constraints, I decided to use non-participant observations and interviews with students and their instructors. We thought that the study should involve observations of at least two different English classes. The classes had to be discussion-based in order to allow for students' expression of their language proficiency, which would in turn allow me to observe whether they showed any GLL signs or not. As for interviews, students who appeared to be the most competent and most active in their participation in class discussions would be chosen for an interview. The reason was that since the model's assumption was that a good language learner is the one successful in language learning, one indicator of "success" is showing linguistic abilities in speaking (in this case of class discussion) or in course performance overall. As for their overall success, I decided to interview the target students' teachers for their evaluation of target students. So with the plans in mind, in the very first step I conducted a pilot study, which is described below.

3.2 The pilot study

The purpose of the pilot study was to evaluate the feasibility of my data-gathering methods in two target courses in order to identify students who were potential candidates for interviews who engaged and actively participated in classroom discussion activity. Moreover, I would like to try to translate Rubin's descriptions of characteristics into observable behavior. For example, I would like to determine what self-monitoring in language learning looked like as a behavior. I also would like to check whether class discussions indeed create an opportunity for me to observe "good learner" characteristics.

Two courses were chosen as a setting for this research: *Advanced Intercultural Communication* and *Short Stories in English*. There were 24 students in the *Advanced Intercultural Communication* course and 37 students in the *Short Stories in English* course. All of them were fourth-year students in the English and communication program at Ubon Ratchathani University. I chose these courses because they promoted discussions in which students talk on various topics while focusing on the course content and critical thinking skills, which in turn allow for meaning-oriented interactions. The goals of the *Advanced Intercultural Communication* course were for the students to examine theories related to intercultural communication and analyze related issues. This course covered five main topics such as cultural models, Thainess, social and cultural identity, American culture, and struggles for citizenship, and inequality. The purpose of the *Short Stories in English* course was to analyze short stories in many aspects: literary techniques, periods, elements and forms. The short stories that were used in this course, included *An Outpost of Progress*, *Six Feet of the Country*, *The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World*, *A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings*, *Before the Law*, *In the Penal Colony*, and *The Dead*. For each course, there was only one teacher working with the students for the entire semester. Also, both teachers have taught the students before, so they were well acquainted with the students, who had been in the program for quite some time and were familiar with how courses were taught. Therefore, I did not foresee many issues of students being unfamiliar with the learning expectations or circumstances.

As with other qualitative research, I acknowledge the importance of cross-checking my analysis of the data. To crosscheck my observation findings in the pilot

study, I discussed the students' behavior that I found with the teachers in each course. My interviews with them also served to obtain their reflections on the student participants' performance. As for identifying potential interviewees, I also discussed with the teachers characteristics of students I found to have as those of good language learners. So my decision to approach these learners as key informants was approved. The teachers thought these students always participated in every class meeting and their overall scores in the subjects were in a "good" range. As a result of the pilot study, I identified 3 seemingly most competent and most active from each of the two classes, totaling 6, which will be discussed in the next section.

By conducting the pilot study I was able to identify problems that occurred in classes. For example, the voice recording was not clear when I sat too far from the participants. I could not see some behaviors clearly because I sat at the back of the classroom. To address the first problem, I used two audio recorders to make sure if one out of two audio recorders had problems, the other one would still function. To solve the other problem, I decided to move from one observation point to others. This meant I spent a limited amount of time in one spot, but it allowed me to observe students' behavior from different locations.

3.3 The final research design

As a result of the pilot study, I continued with much of the original plan.

3.3.1 Participants

The participants were six male and female fourth-year students majoring in English and Communication at Ubon Ratchathani University, Thailand. Of these, two were male and four were female. Based on the pilot study, they were considered to be good language learners. The judgment was made by myself and the teacher for each course by focusing on their verbal performance in the classroom and their grade in English major courses. The reason why I chose those considered to be GLLs was that being the only one person collecting data I could not observe all of the students in the class because it was very difficult to observe all of them at the same time. So, I chose only the students that actively participated in the classroom. By focusing on a small number of selected students, I hoped to pay attention to nuances and details in their

behavior which could escape my attention should I have opted to observe the entire class.

Three students were selected from the *Advanced Intercultural Communication* course, and three students were selected from the *Short Stories in English* course. Student A was a female student who I also observed in the *Short Stories in English* class. She was a person who always participated in the classroom, but she spoke quietly and fast. She was punctual for the class and never missed any class meetings. Student B was a male student who I observed in the *Short Stories in English* class. He was a relatively reserved person. He did not talk much in the classroom, but when he talked, he talked a lot and fast. Sometimes, he missed class meetings. I chose him because he always answered when the teacher asked questions. Sometimes, he brought up information that was not mentioned in the material to talk with the teacher. So, I think he had something that could show signs of GLL. Student C was a female student who I observed in the *Short Stories in English* class. She was very friendly to other classmates. She always participated in the classroom and she was very confident when she spoke English. Student D was a female student who I observed in the *Advanced Intercultural Communication* class. She looked like a serious person because she preferred to talk about serious things such as politics, refugees, and problems around the world. She talked only when she had ideas and wanted to ask some questions. She always participated in every class meeting. I chose her because she drove conversations in the classroom. When the teacher asked questions, and no one else answered, she was the person that always answered those questions. Student E was a male student who I observed in the *Advanced Intercultural Communication* class. He was a friendly and talkative person. He always asked and answered questions in the classroom, but he missed some class meetings. Student F was a female student who I observed in the *Advanced Intercultural Communication* class. She was a friendly and inquisitive person. She usually came up with questions to ask the teacher during class meetings. She attended all class meetings.

3.3.2 Data collection methods

In the second semester of Academic Year 2019, I collected the data by observing the participants' behaviors in the classroom, interviewing the teachers and the students. Here are the details of my data collection procedures.

3.3.2.1 Observations

The observations were conducted to answer the first research question. I began to observe the students' behaviors in the classrooms from January to February 2020. I used non-participant observations. I only sat and took notes. I did not participate in the classroom, because I did not want to interrupt the students when they thought. I took notes on everything that I found to record the target participants' learning behaviors and other learners' when their behavior was crucial to the understanding of the target participants' learning behavior. I did not try to identify the behaviors while I observed the participants' characteristics because it could have distracted or confused me. I observed as many learning behaviors as possible in order to obtain a rich and detailed corpus. Every time that I observed the participants' behavior I used an audio recorder to record the conversations that I may have missed while taking notes on other behaviors. Classroom observations allowed me to observe actual students' behaviors during interactions between students and students, and students and teachers. I was hoping to observe three consecutive class meetings (3 hours per week for each class). But some classes were canceled because of annual holidays and exam weeks. I observed the participants' behaviors over a period of a month (4 class meetings from the *Short Stories in English* course and 3 class meetings from the *Advanced Intercultural Communication* course) or 21 hours. In the *Advanced Intercultural Communication* course, the students' seats were arranged as a circle and I sat out of the circle. In the *Short Stories in English* course, the students sat facing the board in front of the classroom and I sat at the back of the classroom. From my seat, it was quite far from the participants' seats. So, the sound in the audio recorder was unclear and the noise was so loud at that times it interfered with the participants' sounds.

3.3.2.2 Teacher interviews

The teacher interviews were conducted primarily to answer the second research question and validate the data collected for the first research question.

I interviewed two teachers from each course for their reflections on the students' classroom behavior as well as their evaluation of the participants' linguistic and communicative abilities. The interviews were semi-structured and in-depth, and carried out after the observation. The teacher interviews were face-to-face and took about 25 minutes. Before the interview sessions, I told the teachers briefly about the goal of the study and the nature of the interview questions. After that, I asked permission from the teachers to audio-record during the interviews. The questions were of two types. The first type of question was to elicit the teacher's assessment of the target participants' verbal abilities. I asked them about each participant and how they rated the student in terms of grammatical competence and their ability to communicate verbally in different contexts given the tasks required in their respective subjects. The second type of question had to do with Rubin's GLL characteristics. I asked each teacher their own definition of a good language learner and the kinds of characteristics the learner should have. I later shared with them Rubin's GLL characteristics and asked whether they had noticed any of them in any of the participants. In addition to this, I asked the teachers what he and she observed in the participants' classroom behavior in terms of how they participated, interacted with their classmates and the teachers themselves, how well they performed on tasks and assessments, and how they got along with their classmates. As mentioned before, interview responses from the teachers helped to answer the second research question and validate the observation data. For ease of reporting, I refer to the *Short Stories in English* course Teacher as Teacher A and the *Advanced Intercultural Communication* course teacher as Teacher B.

3.3.2.3 Student interviews

The student interviews were also conducted after the period of observation. I interviewed six participants in order to answer the first research question because the student interviews could give more details which I could not see in the classroom. I hoped to gain in-depth details about the reasons why they displayed some characteristics or behavior. Before the interview sessions, I told the participants briefly about the study and the content of interview questions. After that, I asked permission from the participants to audio-record the interviews. The interview questions were divided into two parts. The first part asked about the students'

demographic information and the second part asked about the students' thoughts about their learning strategies and their attitude toward learning English. Some questions in the interviews were developed from some items of Oxford (1990) strategy inventory for language learning (SILL) questionnaire. I adopted some questions from the SILL questionnaire because some characteristics of Rubin's GLL model are similar to Oxford (1990) language learning strategies. For example, *willing and accurate guesser* characteristic looks like compensation strategies of Oxford (1975) and monitor other speakers' speech and their own characteristic looks like metacognitive strategies of Oxford (1975). Some of the interview questions used a stimulated-recall technique (Polio, Gass & Chapin, 2006) in which I reminded the students of certain things that took place in the classroom and asked them to reflect on those events. These are example questions: Are you afraid of speaking English? What do you do when you don't understand the lesson? Do you remember the class that learned *In the Penal Colony* and *The Dead* stories? Why didn't you answer questions in that class? The student's interviews served to cross-check my classroom observations as well as to understand the participants' decisions to do or not do certain things that might indicate GLL characteristics. The interviews were face-to-face. The average time spent on the interview was about 40 minutes. The language used in the interviews was Thai. These interviews were audio recorded. All six participants provided good cooperation in the interviews. They answered all questions in a manner I believed to be truthful because they always provided examples or explained more when I asked for reasons for each answer. Besides, they did not appear to hide anything.

3.3.3 Data analysis

In this section I show how the data were analyzed based on the data-collection methods.

3.3.3.1 Observations

The observational data from field notes were used to answer the first research question: "To what extent do the students show characteristics of good language learners in the classroom?" The observational data came from two parts: what I saw (my field notes) and what I heard (the recordings). So, to analyze them, first I examined the field notes and identified behaviors consistent with any of

Rubin's GLL characteristics and whether the identified characteristics were consistent with the SLA theories discussed along with the model in Chapter 2. The reason was to link the model, the observed characteristics, and SLA theories in order to put the findings in language learning perspectives. As for the recordings, I transcribed the contents, compared them to my field notes and repeated the analytical procedure above and compared the findings. I made a list of observed behaviors and filed them under one or more of the seven characteristics. In cases where I was not sure how to categorize the behavior in question, I put them together in one in addition to the seven ones for further analysis. It should be noted that some behaviors possessed more than one GLL characteristic. The principle I used was: to identify all applicable characteristics of a behavior. So, for example, when a student raised her hand acting very enthusiastic and visibly showing no reservation about being afraid of making any mistakes, I considered the student to be both "having a strong drive to communicate" and "willing to appear foolish"--two of Rubin's seven characteristics. Once I finished with the list, I discussed it with my thesis advisor. In the discussion we referred back to Rubin's (1975) original description and tried to resolve disagreement. When we could not reach an agreement in any case, we discarded it from the analysis. After we agreed on categorization of the behaviors, I examined the context in which they occurred and generated observations with respect to relevant language learning theories. I then discussed my observations with the advisor and compared them with student and teacher interviews.

To reiterate one of the limitations of the study, it should be noted that some characteristics of Rubin's model could not be observed in the class because my observation focused only on speaking skills and the participants' performance that appeared in the classroom. I did not focus on the participants' writing, listening, and reading skills.

3.3.3.2 Student interviews

Because the interview data served two purposes. First, I analyzed them together with the observation data in order to cross-check whether I obtained the same findings. Because the interviews took place after I analyzed the observation data, I was able to use the stimulated recall technique to jog the informants' memory and elicit their responses, which I used to compare with my interpretation of what I

saw or heard from the observation. Like the analysis of the observation data, I examined the interview responses and identified GLL characteristics based on what they said and their explanation of their actions or behaviors. Analyzing their explanations was crucial to my understanding of their behavior because several behaviors were clarified as to what exactly they thought they were doing or attempting to do and to achieve what purpose. I then mapped the characteristics identified onto Rubin's seven categories and submitted them to my advisor for validation. I was hoping to share my validated findings with the informants for their approval of our interpretation of their words or behavior, but unfortunately by the time I was finished with data analysis, I was pressured by time constraints and failed to have my findings validated by the informants. This is a serious flaw I recognize in the research. To minimize the risk of subjectivity, I went back to reexamine my findings against the data and made sure that I made claims based on the most conservative description of their views expressed in what they actually said in the recordings of the interviews, which were also validated by their teachers' reflections on the students' behavior (which I elicited from the teacher interviews).

3.3.3.3 Teacher interviews

The data from the teacher interviews served two goals. They were used to answer the second research question "To what extent do such characteristics correspond to their verbal performance evaluated by the teacher?" as well as to cross-check the observation and student interview data. To answer the second research question, the teacher interview data were analyzed for the teachers' overall evaluation of the participants' both grammatical and communicative competences based on their verbal language. I looked for similarities and differences in the teachers' beliefs about competent language learners and how they perceived the participants as far as language learning is concerned. I also analyzed their interpretation of Rubin's GLL characteristics and determined whether theirs were consistent with my advisor's and mine. My analysis of their interview responses were also subjected to validation by my thesis advisor. It should be pointed out that I once again failed to return the findings to the teachers for their confirmation of accuracy. So, I did the same as what I did with the student interview data. That is, I reexamined my findings against the

data and made sure that I made observations based primarily on my audio recordings of what the teachers actually said during the interviews.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this chapter, the findings and discussions are organized into two sections based on the data-gathering methods discussed in Chapter 3.

4.1 Observations and student interviews

This section begins with a description of the physical characteristics of the classroom and its general atmosphere, which I include to give background information for the interpretation of the actual observation findings with respect to the student's behavior and the interview findings.

4.1.1 Classroom characteristics

Based on my observations, the *Advanced Intercultural Communication* course had 24 students and the *Short Stories in English* course had 37 students. The *Advanced Intercultural Communication* class was considered to be a medium class size based on the instructor's perception. The determination of class size remained debatable. Kumar (1992) states that a large class size was generally between 35 to 100 students. In contrast, some studies argued that over 40 students were considered as a large class (Harfitt, 2012; Todd, 2012). However, even in a medium or large class sizes, these courses provided opportunities to the students to participate in class discussions. In the *Advanced Intercultural Communication* course, the students' seats were arranged as a circle where the teacher was seated with them. This seating arrangement allowed everybody to see one another clearly. So, it was very easy to observe students' classroom behavior--to see the extent to which they participated and how so. In contrast, in the *Short Stories in English* course, the students sat facing the board in front of the classroom. On average, the teacher of this class occupied two spots. When he lectured, he often stood in front of the class. He rarely used a computer-based presentation for his teaching materials. So, by and large he would talk to the students about the lesson, standing right in the front. Because this course

required all class meetings to have student presentations, when the students presented the teacher sat at the back of the room. The students had a PowerPoint presentation as a tool. The students of the two courses mostly sat at the same seat and near the same classmates. The students' behaviors did not change in each class meeting. The most common activity in the classrooms was a classroom discussion which allowed the students to ask and answer questions. In the *Advanced Intercultural Communication* course, the students had to discuss contents about Thai and other cultures while the *Short Stories in English* course, the students had to discuss the English short stories from many authors around the world in many topics.

As for the general characteristics of the teachers, both of them were highly enthusiastic about teaching. The teacher of the *Advanced Intercultural Communication* course was female. She mostly spoke English, but sometimes when the students were quiet she spoke Thai in order to explain the questions or concepts. She was seated with the students as I described above, but she did not walk around the classroom. She always began the discussions with general topics such as the students' problems on their works and the current situations in Thailand. After that the teachers discussed the content. On the contrary, the teacher in the *Short Stories in English* course was male. He spoke only English. Every class meeting began with a pop quiz which was related to a topic that they would discuss in the classroom. Then the assigned groups presented the biography of the author and plot summary of a story. After that, they asked ten questions to other students. The students spent about two hours for the discussion. After that, the teacher addressed missing points and discussed important points that the students did not mention in the class discussions.

4.1.2 General classroom atmosphere

To put the findings of this study into perspective, it is important to describe some relevant information such as general characteristics of the classes observed. The most noticeable feature is the fact the both classes tended to be relatively silent even though they were discussion-based. In the section below I discuss classroom silence and how it may be related to the findings of this study.

4.1.2.1 Silence in the classroom

In general, most students in both classes tended to be silent especially in discussion activities. They seemed to be too shy to answer their teachers' questions. Based on my observations, the *Intercultural Communication* teacher often asked questions to the whole class in English, but no one answered her. So, the teacher asked the same questions by speaking Thai, but the students were still quiet. This shows that the students were probably struggling with something other than language. But I did not know exactly what the problems were because I did not ask the students this question in the interviews. Many studies have investigated factors that influenced the student's silence in the classroom (Choi, 2015; Liu, 2010; Petkova, 2015; Wilang, 2017). They found that silence was caused by a variety of reasons including anxiety and task difficulty. On student anxiety, Pichette (2009:77) states,

They tend to become uncomfortable in the presence of peers in the classroom or when faced with academic tasks; they are worried about making mistakes and losing face; and they fear criticism, negative evaluation, judgmental remarks, and so on.

It is apparent then that if the students feel anxious, they are not likely to join discussions. As a result, it would be difficult to observe whether they possess GLL characteristics or not, especially ones that can be observed to their verbal expressions. This seems to be one of the limitations of this study for relying on students' expressive skills in identifying GLL characteristics in the classroom context.

Not all classes were marked with silence, however. In lessons where the students' discussions were based on their peers' questions or prompts, the classes were livelier. That is, the students seemed to answer their peers' questions more than the teachers' questions. So, the nature of the questions may be at play. Overall, the students mostly asked comprehension questions for which the answers could be found in the materials used for the lesson. For example, in one of the *Short Stories in English* classes, the students were discussing the concept of masculinity in a short story entitled *The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber*. The group of students who presented information about this story to the entire class asked, "What happened to Macomber at the end of the story?" and "Why does Margaret kill her husband?" The answers could be easily found in the reading material itself. The class

answered these questions promptly and accurately. The teacher of this class, however, generally asked more challenging questions. On one occasion he quoted a part from Hemingway (1936) stating, "By my troth, I care not; a man can die but once; we owe God a death and let it go which way it will he that dies this year is quit for the next" (p. 25). He then went on and said, "What do you think about this quotation? Do you agree or disagree with this quotation?" The students did not answer the questions remaining in silence. This episode shows that different question types seemed to relate to the students' willingness to verbally respond. In general, the students could answer their fellow students' questions, but they could not answer the teacher's questions. The students' questions were comprehension questions, which checked whether the students were able to understand the reading materials and retain the knowledge in their memory. But the teacher questions challenged the students to think beyond the content. The students have to use critical thinking skills or higher-order thinking skills and their background knowledge to answer the questions. The students' questions were thus easier for their peers to answer than the teacher's questions. They were consistent with characteristics of display questions while the teachers' questions were more like referential ones. This finding is similar to Wu (1993), who found that students tend to answer display questions more often than referential questions.

Display questions in Wu's study and mine tended to be easy to answer as just a matter of recalling from the reading material. They thus were able to elicit responses from the students. Referential questions in Wu's study were similar to the questions that the teachers use in the present study. They served to encourage the students to think and solve the problems. Consider the following examples:

Wu's study : If you were the only child in your family, then what other advantages you may have? What points, what other good points you may have? What other advantages do you think you may have, if you were the only child in the family?

My study : What does it mean to be an ideal [sic]? What does the ideal man look like? What kind of ideal man do you like to have?

Note that these questions did not require the students to recall any knowledge retained. Instead, the students should take some time to think before answering them. This question type--referential question-- elicited relatively fewer responses.

Back in my research context, despite a great deal of silence in the backdrop when the students did answer questions. I had to be careful in my analysis. When they responded to easy, display questions (mostly by their own peers), in a prompt manner with self-confidence, I still had to keep in mind that their prompt responses, which may contain GLL characteristics, may not show any significant signs of language learning. On the other hand, when they attempted at answering referential, more challenging questions by their teachers, despite their reluctance or hesitancy, such responses may contain GLL characteristics that show interesting signs of their language learning.

Apart from anxiety and question types, I noticed that topics were related to the students' behaviors with respect to silence. Based on my observations, I found that the students participated more in some topics such as Thai politics, social and cultural identity, American culture, and masculinity. But, the students tended to be quiet on some topics such as Thainess, cultural models, colonization, and mortality. For example, in the *Advanced Intercultural Communication* class, the teacher talked about social and cultural identity which allowed the students to discuss their personal data and their thoughts. The students were more engaged in the activity. They answered the questions with confidence. Consider the following exchanges:

Teacher : I am a citizen of

Student E : Thailand

Student F : The world

Teacher : The world? Huh?

Student D : Thai

Teacher : Why do you define yourself as a citizen of the world?

Student F : Because I think everyone in the world defines themselves as Thai race, but we are still citizens of

the world. We share the same thing. We have to be responsible for the world as well.

Teacher : Ok. So, you consider yourself that whatever you do have to be responsible for, not only where you live.

This excerpt shows that three students were engaged in the conversation. Notice that Student F was very active by joining the exchanges twice. On the second turn, Student F contributed to the discussion with an elaborated response with a reason given for the answer. Students' verbal expressions like this have created an opportunity for me not only to observe whether their productions contained any GLL characteristics but also to see the context of their production. On the contrary, most students did not participate in certain topics and thus did not create an opportunity for me to observe GLL characteristics. They did not answer when class presenters or the teachers asked questions. The following excerpt is taken from my observation of the literature class. The class discussed a short story entitled *The Dead* in various types of themes such as mortality, connection, failure, politics, religion, and paralysis.

Presenter : What is the theme of "The Dead"?

Students : (Silence)

Teacher : Before saying the theme, we should state something that is lighter. Theme should be discussed at the last. Which one do you think should be the first question?

Presenter : What is the point of view of the story?

Students : (Silence)

Teacher : Is it limited or omniscient?

Students : (Silence)

Teacher : Is it limited or omniscient third person point of view?

Limited third person means the narrator can get inside only a few characters. Omniscient means the narrator can see anything and understand what almost all the characters think. Is it limited or

omniscient?

Students : (Silence)

Teacher : This question is for everyone.

Students : (Silence)

Teacher : So support your ideas with the evidence limited
or omniscient?

Students : (Silence)

This excerpt shows that the teacher tried to ask the same question many times in order to stimulate the students to speak, but none of the students answered him-- not even the participants who I considered to be good language learners. In my interview with one of the participants, I asked her why she did not answer that question that day. The student explained, 'Because I did not prepare myself before that class. I did not read this story because I hoped that I would understand the story from the presentation. But, it was not the case. I couldn't understand the story from the presentation. I had no idea how to answer the questions, so I couldn't answer (them)...' Based on the observation findings and the student interview findings, the students mostly answered questions or discussed topics for which they had background knowledge. This is not surprising as we language users would likely feel comfortable engaging ourselves in conversational exchanges on topics familiar to us and thus have some background knowledge on. This is also consistent with previous research findings as well (Carrell, 1983; McNeil, 2011; Sadighi & Zare, 2006; Tze & Chou, 2011).

Familiarity of the topic is thus one condition that is related to how much the students engaged in verbal interactions, which would in turn allow me to observe potential GLL characteristics. However, I also realized that given this condition, students would tend to be quiet and not produce verbal interactions for me to observe on topics they found unfamiliar or challenging. However, like the case of questions, unfamiliar topics that engaged verbal participation containing GLL features would be interesting to further explore, simply because they were challenging, yet engaging. In contrast, familiar, easy topics engaging the same amount of participation might not show much in a way of signs of language learning. So keeping in mind that

background knowledge on discussion topics themselves mattered in eliciting students' participation, which would allow varying degrees of observable behavior and the nature of the behavior itself helped to put my findings into perspective.

To conclude, in general most students seemed to be quiet in the classroom particularly in class discussion activities. The silence or active participation can be explained in terms of anxiety, the nature of the questions and students' background knowledge on each topic. However, sometimes the students showed signs of a good language learner in some class meetings despite a degree of silence. Acknowledging the limitations of what I could and could not observe and the context in which GLL features or lack of them occurred helped to interpret the findings. In the next sections I focus on GLL characteristics that the six participants showed in the classrooms below.

4.1.3 An overview of good language learner characteristics

This section reports the findings and discusses the concept of good language learner characteristics by Rubin (1975). Some students' behaviors were difficult to analyze and categorize in any characteristics. Some characteristics were ambiguous to define the exact actions. So, I reported and discussed only the clear behaviors that occur in the classrooms.

4.1.3.1 Having a strong drive to communicate

Based on my observations, I found that *having a strong drive to communicate* was the most common characteristic that appeared in every class meeting. All six participants showed this characteristic in every class meeting. They showed this characteristic by answering the teacher questions or sometimes they raised their hands before answering questions. These were examples of participation in the classroom. This excerpt comes from the *Short Stories in English* class where the teacher, the student A and the student B discussed questions in the *Handsomest Drowned Man in the World* short story. The major themes of this story were beauty and transformation.

Teacher : What could the dead man symbolize?

Student A : Progressiveness.

Teacher : Ok. Progressiveness or progression.

Student B : [raise a hand] I think the dead man symbolizes

Dead ideas or dead ideology.

Teacher : Dead ideology?

Student B : For example, the dead ideology leads to the development of the country.

Teacher : Yes. That's a very good point. What do the flowers at the end of the story symbolize?

Student A : Idealistic man

As seen in the above excerpt, Students A and B did not just contribute to one turn. They rejoined the conversation later. While Student A joined at a word level, Student B was seriously more engaged at the phrase and sentence levels with longer and more complex stretches of text. What this shows is Student B's desire to engage in the conversation with the teacher in a meaningful way. Given the short contribution (at a word level) Student A could be less competent or less confident to speak than Student B, but what we can see, which is as equally important, is the student's drive to communicate as well.

The excerpt below was taken from the same class meeting after they finished discussing the *Handsome Drowned Man in the World* short story. The teachers and the students discussed the new short story entitled *Before the Law*. This excerpt showed Student C's participation in the class discussion.

Teacher : Can you make the perfect thesis statement for the theme of the story?

Student C : Law should be accessible and always for everyone.

Teacher : Ok. It's good.

Student C : I think sometimes people are sacrificed to the justices just like the man who sacrificed his pressure to the door keeper because he knows that something can affect the law.

Teacher : Yes. That's a very good point.

The conversation above showed that Student C had a strong drive to communicate. Notice that at first she responded to the teacher's question with one

sentence--a thesis statement that the teacher was expecting to hear. The question appeared to be referential, which was open-ended and quite challenging. The teacher gave her positive feedback as a result. It was a compliment, not another question. She seemed to have taken the compliment as a form of encouragement for her to elaborate further in her next turn. This time she gave a reason to support her thought. Her sentence was structurally complex. I take this as evidence for her strong drive to communicate. An average student might just stop after the teacher approved his or her answer positively. Instead Student C continued with an even more elaborated opinion. What Student C did in this dialogue was conducive to language learning in that she produced linguistic output that allowed her to get feedback for the teacher. The positive feedback confirmed her ability to use the language and carry on the conversation. This sort of student-teacher dialogue is an opportunity for learners to notice their own language problems (if there are any) and potentially address them later.

The strong drive to communicate was observed on different occasions. Sometimes the characteristic occurred in the same context of communication based on one question, but some did not. But research has shown that when students engage in class activities (showing a strong drive to communicate is one way of engaging), they may be motivated by reasons other than the learning of the language. They may want good grades or praises by the teacher (Saeed & Zyngier, 2012). When considering *Having a strong drive to communicate* as a GLL characteristic, it makes me wonder if identifying the characteristic from the student's classroom behavior alone is enough to make any prediction about the students' learning outcome. I raise this question because the learners may show this characteristic in the classroom, but we do not know the real motivation for them to display this characteristic. For example, if some students always answer the teacher's questions showing eagerness to communicate with the teacher, but the answers do not come from the real interest in learning, what do we make of this form of engagement. Also if students are driven to communicate, but only with certain people, what do we make of this behavior? Some of these questions make me wonder if Rubin's description of this behavior is enough or helpful in capturing learning behavior that is conducive to language learning.

In general all six participants answered questions in class with confidence. They seemed to have no fear of making mistakes. Surprisingly, when I interviewed them about fear when speaking English, four of them said they feared speaking English. They further said that they were afraid of making mistakes speaking the language on different occasions, not just in class. Two participants said that sometimes they feared speaking with foreigners, especially people that they have never talked with foreigners before. Two participants said that they had no confidence in their English grammar, so they feared speaking outside the classroom. While it is understandable that EFL students with limited proficiency would be self-conscious in speaking. But why did these students, who were chosen for this study by virtue of their “good-learner” characteristics, still share the same fear?

In the student interviews, they were afraid of speaking English when they confronted unfamiliar situations. The interview findings in the present study and Hong-Nam and Leavell (2006) displayed similar findings. One possible explanation was that the students seemed to save their face. They felt more relaxed when they spoke in the classroom, but they did not want to talk outside the classroom because they did not want other people to make a judgement on their speech.

4.1.3.2 Attending to meaning

The second most common GLL characteristic found in the observation was the learner’s attention to meaning. To recall good language learners pay attention not only to the grammatical forms of the target language, but also to the meaning that is derived from pragmatic or sociolinguistic factors including the context of communication, relationships between speakers, and social norms of language use. Good language learners thus know how to use language appropriately to the social context. All six participants showed this characteristic in every class meeting. They showed this characteristic by using language appropriately to the social context.

In one of the *Short Stories in English* class meetings, the teacher was discussing the notion of *capitalism* with the students. Consider the following example.

Teacher : Who do the two men work for?

Student B : A trading company.

Teacher : Ok. A trading company. And what about the trading company who does it work for?

Student B : Capitalism.

Teacher : Ok. Capitalism. Very good. What do the two men do in their free time?

Student C : Read something.

For the *Short Stories in English* course, the students and the teacher used technical terms that are suitable for the context. Because this course relied on the course reading material. So, the technical terms or ideas that used to describe something were restricted in the text. The students and the teacher mostly discussed the content in the text. So, their words or language that they used belonged to the material.

The excerpt below is the conversation between the guest speaker and Student F. The class was discussing American culture.

Guest speaker : Do you guys tip a lot?

Students : [laughing]

Guest speaker : Ok. If you do tip, how much, what percent do you tip for the average of Thai?

Student E : Twenty. Twenty baht.

Students : [laughing]

Guest speaker : Twenty baht?

Student E : Yes, for me twenty baht. It is the maximum not more than that.

Guest speaker : Oh! Wow

Guest speaker : In the US, twenty percent for tipping. Twenty baht, don't go back [laughing]

Students : [laughing]

Student F : [raise a hand] Teacher! How do they tip, separate to individual or sharing?

Guest speaker : It depends, but mostly individual.

In this excerpt, they talked about tipping in American and Thai cultures. Their language uses were informal because the overall classroom was relaxing and comfortable. It did not require formal interactions. There was no technical term. They showed their enjoyment by laughing.

In the two excerpts above, the language used in each class was suitable for the context. The teacher in *the Short Stories in English* class often used technical terms in discussions. While one guest speaker of another class tended to use informal language with the students in order to let them talk or discuss something and reduced the students' anxiety. But the teacher and the guest speaker did not mind when the students answered the questions in short answers and they seemed to be happy when the students asked the questions or initiated the conversation. Hashemi (2011) suggests that coping with stress and anxiety in language classes is one important strategy for language teaching. The author also states that making the language classroom environment less formal and more friendly could reduce students' anxiety.

Based on the interview findings, all six participants said that for communication, it was not sufficient to know only grammar and vocabulary, but we had to be concerned about the culture of the interlocutors, topics, context, and background knowledge. In addition, Student A stated, "The topic that I talk about with my best friend and my teachers are different. I can talk about every topic that I want to talk about with my friends, but I talk about academic topics with my teachers because I am concerned about appropriateness". Student B also mentioned, "I use rude words when I speak with my friends and I use polite words with the teacher that I respect". The interview findings show that the learners looked beyond grammar and vocabulary, and they attended to the language use in context, which was consistent with Rubin's claim: "It is not sufficient to pay attention to the grammar of the language or to the surface form of speech. He attends to the context of the speech act, he attends to the relationship of the participants" (1975: 47-48).

4.1.3.3 Seeking opportunity to use and practice the language

The third most commonly found characteristic in the classroom was *seeking out opportunities to use and practice the language*. Based on the observations, all six participants often asked their teachers questions in several class

meetings, and they often initiated the conversation. Sometimes, they initiated the conversation with something that they were curious about or the topics that they were interested in. The following excerpt was the question that was asked by Student C in the *Short Stories in English* class. The class was discussing the cruelty of colonialism in the story entitled *An Outpost of Progress*. She asked the question to the class presenter in order to clarify the question.

Presenter : Do you feel sympathetic with the white man or Makola?

Student C : You mean that we have to choose, right?

Presenter : Yes, you can choose one or both of them.

Given the fact that the presenter of the story was addressing the entire class, it was not necessary for Student C to respond with that clarification question. Therefore, it was likely that she was interested in the presenter's question and would like to answer it. But because she found the question to be unclear, she asked the presenter back. This shows that she was interested in communicating in English. This is crucial because on many occasions students did not necessarily respond to questions in English strictly in English. For clarification checks, in particular, students tended to opt for Thai. But Student C continued the dialogue in English. This shows that she was interested in using the target language. The reason that my study had a lot of examples from the *Short Stories in English* course was because the teacher and the students in the *Short Stories in English* course used only English, so this course had a lot of data. In contrast, the teacher and the students in the *Advanced Intercultural Communication* course mostly spoke Thai. So, the data in the *Advanced Intercultural Communication* course was limited. In addition, the amount of time that I spent on observing the *Short Stories in English* class were greater than that I spent on the *Advanced Intercultural Communication* class, which I observed three times--or 9 hours.

Student F and Student E displayed this characteristic in the *Advanced Intercultural Communication* class when the class was discussing American culture. Note that in this particular class meeting, a guest speaker who was an American gave a lecture and then a QA session afterwards. Many students participated in the class discussions. They attentively asked and answered questions.

When discussing tipping for services, Student F raised his hand and initiated the conversation with the question, “Teacher! How do they tip, separate to individual or sharing?”. Student E also initiated the conversation by asking the question, “I’m curious about why we have to pay a tip in the US?” Lively conversations took place that involved the teacher and other students as a result of these questions. Note that the questions were best characterized as genuine or referential questions, which came out of the students’ real interest in knowing the answers. Again, this can be taken as evidence for their attempt to find opportunities to use the target language. They did not just sit still and listened to the lecture. Instead, they asked questions that were related to the topic of the lecture but not already discussed. Their seeking out an opportunity to use the language results in their ability to practice it and use it to learn new things. In this case it was tipping in America.

It is worth noting that the most common form reflecting their search for opportunities to use the language was asking questions. Asking questions created interaction in the classroom and as discussed earlier in Chapter 2, interaction brings about an opportunity for language learning (Long, 1983; Namaziandost & Nasri, 2019; Pica, Young, & Doughty, 1987).

In addition, when asked if they had ever initiated a conversation in class, all six participants said that they had. Student F said, “I begin a conversation by explaining my idea with the teacher to cross check my understanding”. Student B also stated, “I usually initiate the conversation by adding some information that I know and the teacher does not mention it, I explain the information to the classmates and the teacher because I want everyone to know the facts in the story and I want to cross-check the information that I have found with the teacher”. Student E mentioned, “Sometimes, I begin the conversation when the teacher talks about the topic that I am interested in because I want to share my experience about that topic”. Besides, in their interviews all six participants said that they asked questions when they did not understand the lesson in English. Sometimes they asked the questions to clarify the questions. Besides, they asked questions when they were interested in some topics. Three out of these six participants stated that when they had questions they asked questions to the teacher directly because the teacher could explain the answers more clearly than their friends. In contrast, another three students asked questions to

their friends before asking questions to the teacher because they wanted to discuss with their friends first. If their friends did not know the answer, they would ask the questions to the teacher. Handelsman, Briggs, Sullivan and Towler (2005) state that raising hands in class and asking questions when the students do not understand the instructor shows the students' engagement in the classroom, and engagement in these cases is a sign of seeking out opportunities to use the language.

The observation and interview findings were consistent in showing the participants' engagement to the lessons by seeking opportunities to use the language in a meaningful conversation context in class. They often initiated the interactions by asking questions that served different communicative purposes.

4.1.3.4 Monitoring his own and the other speakers' speech

This characteristic often occurred in the classroom, but not all of the participants showed it. Most participants showed this characteristic in the classroom. The students showed this characteristic by correcting mistakes when they made mistakes while talking. The following example came from the *Short Stories in English* class, Student C was the presenter in that class meeting. At first she asked the question to other students in the class. After that Student B said something quietly and the teacher could not hear him. So, the teacher told Student C to explain what Student B said. While Student C was explaining what Student B said, she used the wrong pronoun. Then, she suddenly changed it to the right one.

Student C: Why does Magaret kill her husband?

Student B: [said something quietly]

Teacher : What is (Student B's name)'s point? Can you repeat?

Student C: He (changed immediately) *She* was afraid that she
lost control of her husband.

In the above excerpt, Student C monitored herself. When she made a mistake she changed suddenly. She did not ignore their mistake and she did not wait for other people to tell her.

Another example of *Monitoring his own and the other speakers' speech* came from the same class. Student C presented the short story entitled *The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber*. Student C pronounced a word incorrectly. Then the teacher gave corrective feedback by using a recast and metalinguistic feedback technique to correct the error. After that she pronounced that word correctly.

Student C: The woman often says that he is a coward

[/'kɒ.vɜːd/]

Teacher : Coward [/'kəʊ.əd/] (recast)

Student C: Coward [/'kəʊ.əd/]

Teacher : Coward [/'kəʊ.əd/] Think of "coward" like a "cow"
[/'kəʊ/] and then says "word" [/'wɜːd/]
(metalinguistic feedback)

Another example was taken from Student B, who monitored a classmate's language and gave corrective feedback to the presenter as she was presenting Ernest Hemingway's biography. The presenter gave a wrong way of expression for a year. Then student B pronounced the correct pronunciation.

Presenter : In 1918 [one-nine-one-eight], Hemingway
went overseas.

Student B : 1918 [nineteen-eighteen] (recast)

Presenter : 1918 [nineteen-eighteen], Hemingway went
overseas.

My impression is that this behavior occurred quite often, but it was difficult to see it clearly. Sometimes the students may correct their mistakes by practicing pronouncing some words. But the distance between my seat and the participant's seat was quite long. So, I could not see their behaviors and their voice clearly.

However, I interviewed the students about monitoring themselves and others. All participants said that they often monitored themselves by looking for their mistakes in the classroom or in their written works. Sometimes they found their mistakes on their own, but sometimes their teachers gave them feedback. After they

noticed their mistakes they remembered the mistakes and tried not to make those mistakes again. This excerpt below is an example taken from an interview with Student E.

I : Do you notice your own mistakes by yourself?

Student E: Yes, I usually make mistakes in word stress and pronunciation.

I : In general, do you notice your own mistakes by yourself or other people tell you?

Student E: Sometimes by myself, mostly the teacher tells me.

I : Have you noticed your friends' mistakes? What did you do?

Student E: Yes, when I found my friends pronouncing [sic] incorrectly, I told them in an indirect way. For example, I used a dictionary on my phone and then I opened a page with the pronunciation and gave it to my friends.

Other participants gave similar accounts to that of Student E. They could notice their mistakes by themselves, but most of the time the teachers told them. The mistakes that they discussed in the interviews included using wrong words, using words in appropriate contexts, and problems with stress and pronunciation. From the observations and the student interview findings, the findings show that the participants monitored themselves and their peers. They noticed their own mistakes and their peers' mistakes. Sometimes the students got the corrective feedback from the teachers or their friends. After that they noticed and corrected the mistakes, and the same mistakes often did not occur again. This means that they had an uptake on the feedback received from their teacher or their own search. According to the interviews, corrective feedback took different forms which promote noticing such as recast, explicit correction, clarification, and repetition (Mackey & Philip, 1998; McDonough, 2005; Oliver & Mackey, 2003).

4.1.3.5 Attending to form

Based on the observations, this characteristic was similar to *Monitoring his own and the other speakers' speech* characteristic. This characteristic often occurred in the classroom, but not all of the participants showed it. I found this characteristic when the students spoke some words incorrectly and the teachers gave the feedback to them then after they noticed they immediately corrected their own mistake.

In the *Short Stories in English* class, Student C presented a story and she made a grammatical error. Then the teacher gave feedback by using a recast technique to correct the student's error and she noticed and corrected the error by saying that word again in the correct form. Consider the following excerpt.

Student C: One thing that Macomber (male) doesn't like about
her beautiful wife is that...

Teacher : His (Recast)

Student C: His beautiful wife is that the woman often says that
he is a coward.

As the excerpt has shown, Student C paid attention to the teacher's recast and corrected her possessive pronoun. One may wonder if this is a good example of a student monitoring her own language. I would argue that at the very least once the teacher did the recast with only one one-syllable word, if she had not paid attention to it, she would not have tried to repeat it. In addition to this, her repetition of the teacher's form was also correct.

In the *Advanced Intercultural Communication* class, the class discussed cultural identity. The student E was expressing his thoughts about their age.

Student E: You know based on my experience, most people
around me treat me like I am older.

Teacher : But, do you really believe that you act like forty?

Student E: Yes. I still believe that because people around me
respect me even though the people who are older
than me still respect me. I don't know why, but OK,
it's OK. And when people look at me like I am

younger, I feel *unsecure*.

Teacher : *Insecure* (Recast)

Student E: *Insecure*, I feel uncomfortable.

In this excerpt, Student E paid his attention with the teacher's recast when he used the prefix incorrectly. He changed immediately when he received the corrective feedback.

Based on the interviews, all six participants said that they always paid attention to the form of language. The common thing that they paid attention to was grammatical errors and mispronunciation. Three participants said that they noticed grammatical errors and mispronunciation by themselves and three participants said that the teacher told them their grammatical errors or gave recast to them, but when they knew their mistakes, they did not ignore those mistakes. They fixed them immediately. Student D said, "I could not ignore grammatical errors and mispronunciation, especially mispronunciation. If I ignored mispronunciation, it showed my irresponsibility for the language use". Student A and Student D stated that the mistakes that happened when they talked came from their ignorance while student E said that the mistakes that occurred when he spoke came from his forgetfulness. Besides, Student B, Student C, and Student F mentioned that the mistakes that occurred when they spoke came from both their ignorance and their forgetfulness.

These students' behaviors were evidence supporting the noticing hypothesis (Schmidt, 1995) because the students had to notice corrective feedback from the teachers before they quickly corrected them. Note that recast was the common corrective feedback that the teachers used (Fu & Nassaji, 2016; Loewen & Philp, 2006; Panova & Lyster, 2002; Sheen, 2004).

4.1.3.6 Willing and accurate guesser

This characteristic sometimes occurred in class but was quite difficult to observe because it was not easy to identify whether students produced language output by guessing or not. Based on my observations, the participants showed this characteristic only a few times, and not all of them showed this characteristic. The following excerpt is an example of *Willing and accurate guesser*, which comes from the *Short Stories in English* class. Student C showed this

characteristic by using the word “I think” to show that she was not sure about her answer, but she was able to show evidence to support it.

- Presenter : What is the point of view in the story?
- Student : I think *omniscient* because the narrator knows everything of the character: being and action.
- Teacher : Ok. Can you show me at least two passages where the narrator gets inside the mind of two characters?
- Students : *Limited*.
- Teacher : Let's debate with evidence. Is it *omniscient* or *limited*?
- Student C : I think it is *omniscient*. The evidence is in the middle of Page 685 that shows clearly what is in the mind of two white men.
- Teacher : Ok. It is very clear. So, can you conclude that is it *omniscient* or *limited*?
- Students : *Omniscient*.

Another example was taken from the same class, the class was discussing colonialism in *An Outpost of Progress* story. The teacher asked for the meaning of the word ‘savage’ and some students answered the teacher's question as shown below.

- Teacher : What does the word “savage” mean?
- Student B: Violent
- Teacher : Ok. Violent or wild.
- Student A: Bloodthirsty (speaking softly)
- Teacher : Bloodthirsty, right? Ok.

Student A was saying the word “Bloodthirsty” quietly as if to whisper to herself. This suggested that she was not confident about the answer and was probably guessing. But fortunately, as the teacher’s response has shown, her guess was correct.

I interviewed student C about her guess. She said, "I guess the answers from the context and other elements for guessing. Sometimes when I am not sure of my answers, I just answer the question with my idea. I don't care if the answers are wrong. But I learn from my mistakes." By using the word "my idea", Student C essentially referred to her existing knowledge, which could help her guess. Guessing was not just individual students' strategies, the teacher also encouraged the students to guess words that they did not know before by using their knowledge and all clues in the context to answer the question. This was not surprising as the *Short Stories in English* class relied heavily on reading. But encouraging students to guess was a short-cut in their learning of new vocabulary words in reading texts, which tended to be long and full of literary styles of writing. Some studies found that guessing was helpful in the teaching of reading (Lafford, 1987; Liu & Wen, 2010; Rahmalia, Gani, & Daud, 2019). What the teacher was doing in the class was reinforcing a pedagogical implication of language learning research.

Unlike Student C, Student B said, "I answer from my understanding every time, and I don't guess the answers. I think I am perfectly good at using grammar. I don't fear to speak English. My friends tell me that you are the person who speaks English more fluently than anybody that I have ever known in this country. So, I do not make mistakes in the classroom. It seems that Student B was proud of his English abilities. He was not afraid of speaking English. He had a lot of pride and self-confidence. This may have made him not interested in learning and participating in the classroom. In addition, the interview shows he was not proud of being a student in English and Communication program. He said he did not receive any knowledge from this program because he knew everything in English.

The case of Student B is very interesting. He seems to possess many of Rubin's GLL characteristics and he speaks English very fluently. But he seems to lack social skills. Based on my observations, he did not show respect to the teacher at all. For example, he used his phone doing things unrelated to the lesson at hand while the teacher was talking. Once the teacher gave him a quiz on a story he was supposed to read beforehand. He had not the story. So, he walked out from the classroom, looked up the story on the internet and read it without asking the teacher permission. The teacher found out and punished him by giving him zero. Moreover,

the interview with the teacher and the student himself showed that he did not submit assignments because he did not want to. So, Student B's behaviors make me curious as to whether we could characterize him as a good language learner.

So while other participants claimed they were risk takers and thus were not self-conscious about making mistakes and appearing foolish in front of other people. Student B demonstrated an opposite personality trait of not wanting to guess. This was not from the lack of self-confidence, however. It was from a sense of pride and excessive self-confidence. Student B's reflection on his own ability begs an investigation into whether this was a form of narcissism (Rhodewalt & Morf, 1998).

4.1.3.7 Willing to appear foolish

This characteristic was rare when I was observing the classes. It was also difficult to identify behaviors associated with willingness to appear foolish in the first place. The best I could do was taking notes of some students' behaviors that seemed to be likely to show this characteristic. For example, some participants answered the teacher's questions, and the answers were wrong. But they kept asking the questions. I found that only Student B and Student C showed this characteristic by answering the teacher's questions, and the answers were wrong. But they kept answering the questions. The following excerpt was taken from the *Short Stories in English* class. The class was discussed about the quotes by William Shakespeare in the *Short Happy Life of Francis* story.

Teacher : "By my troth, I care not; a man can die but once; we owe God a death and let it go which way it will he that dies this year is quit for the next" What does it mean?

Students : (Silence)

Teacher : What does it mean? Troth means face right? By my face, I care not; a man can die but once. OK. Let unpack sentence by sentence. I care not, I don't care right? A man can die but once meaning?

Student B: Can die once.

Teacher : No, How many times can we die?

Students : One.

Teacher : OK. One time. A man can die but once; we owe God a death, meaning?

Student B: We all die eventually.

Teacher : What about God?

Student B: Can I say that our life belongs to God.

Teacher : OK. Our life belongs to God after I die and I will go to God. So, God is the kind of the one who takes my life back.

In the excerpt above, it showed that Student B answered the question several times. At first his answer was not exactly what the teacher was trying to get at. But he kept the dialogue with the teacher until his final response was well accepted by the teacher. This showed that he was not afraid of making mistakes. This characteristic could be characterized as risk-taking (Dehbozorgi, 2012). However, it should be noted that his lack of fear was not about language itself, it was about communication of his thoughts. Student B was confident in his English abilities. Such confidence showed in his interaction with the teacher as part of the learning of the content. Therefore, the notion of *Willing to appear foolish* can actually be applied to learning in general, not necessarily just to language learning. And this is what I think I have observed here.

The interview findings showed that all six participants stated that they answered the teacher questions without fear of making mistakes. When they made mistakes, they tried to learn from their mistakes. Moreover, they said they motivated themselves by watching the content that youtubers created on Youtube channels especially English-speaking Youtubers. According to them, those youtubers were the people who inspired them to speak fluently and naturally.

To conclude, *Having a strong drive to communicate* was the most commonly occurring characteristic in every class meeting. The participants showed this characteristic by engaging in conversations started by the teacher's or their own. The second most common characteristic in the classroom was *Attending to meaning*. The students showed efforts to use language appropriately to the context. *Seeking opportunity to use the language, Monitoring his own and other speakers'*

speech and Attending to form were also found but less common in the classroom. *Willing and accurate guesser* and *Willing to appear foolish* rarely occurred. In the next section, I will report and discuss the teachers' reflections on the participants' behaviors in the classroom based on Rubin's seven good language learner characteristics.

4.2 Teacher interviews

The findings from teacher interviews serve to cross check and compare with the observation findings and the student interview findings. The teacher interview findings were primarily used to answer the second research question "To what extent do such characteristics correspond to their verbal performance evaluated by the teacher?" To answer the question, it is necessary to first discuss the teachers' perceptions of GLL characteristics based on their own understanding and then their evaluations of the target participants based on the model. To put the teachers' reflections on students' behavior, it is important to give background to those reflections. So, like in the previous section, I start with a description of the teachers' views on their classroom atmosphere and the nature of their students.

4.2.1 General perceptions of the classrooms

Both teachers gave similar accounts about their respective class. They said that the class was generally quiet. This was consistent with my observation findings. Both teachers thought that the students' personality could influence their classroom or learning behavior. They thought that most students in their class were introverted. Personality traits seem to be related to language learning (Hakim, 2015; Marashi & Dibah, 2013; Naiman, Frohlick, Stern, & Todesco, 1978; Swain and Burnaby, 1976; Suliman, 2014). Introverted students seem to avoid interaction in English classes and are unwilling to speak or join collaborative activities because they are afraid of making mistakes in speaking (Suliman, 2014). Teacher B (*Intercultural communication* course) said, "The students in this class do not participate because of their nature. Most of them are not talkative students, and they do not want to talk in the class. At first, I thought they were struggling in English. So, I tried to speak Thai and let them discuss the questions in Thai. Even to easy questions about their experience, they still do not answer. So, I think silence comes from the student's

nature and the chemistry of the classroom (relationship between students and students).” So, based on the teacher interviews, the classroom atmosphere was not that lively partly because the students were more like introverts.

4.2.2 Teachers’ reflections on characteristics of good language learners

Both teachers agreed that willing to make mistakes was a desirable trait for a good language learner. The teachers believed that good learners should not be afraid of making mistakes in order to learn the language. The teacher A said, “I think the good language learner should have three characteristics. First, they should not fear speaking because if they make mistakes when speaking, the teacher can help them fix the problems or give suggestions on the mistakes. After the students notice their mistakes, they learn from them and acquire something from the mistakes. Second, they should always practice and use all of English skills. The last characteristic is they have critical thinking skills in order to think beyond the surface of language.”. In addition, the teacher B also thinks willing to make mistakes is one of the important characteristics of a good language learner. Moreover, she said that the attitude of the students is the most important thing to become a good language learner. Teacher B said, “I think attitude is the most important thing because if they have a good attitude, they are willing to learn the language.”

4.2.2.1 An overview of GLL characteristics

In this section, I report the teacher interview findings in the good language learner characteristic that the students show in the classroom. Both teachers said that *Having a strong drive to communicate* occurred the most in the classroom. All participants always participated in the classroom by answering their questions. These findings correspond with my observation findings. The teachers explained that discussion is the main teaching activity of their respective courses, so they were not surprised that answering questions was a common behavior that occurred in the classroom. Bridges (1979) suggests that discussions contribute to students’ understanding of a topic by providing opportunities to discuss or criticize the traditional concepts. In addition, *Seeking opportunity to use and practice the language*, and *Attending to meaning* were the characteristic that occurred in every class meeting, but there were differences in terms of frequency that two characteristics occurred in the classroom.

In the present study, both teachers agreed that other characteristics occurred in the classroom sometimes and did not occur in every class meeting. They included *Willing and accurate guesser*, *Willing to appear foolish*, and *Monitoring his own and other speakers' speech*. The *Advanced Intercultural Communication* teacher stated that she rarely noticed *Attending to form* in the classroom. She suggested examining this characteristic in the students' written works. Given this, my observation findings have been validated.

4.2.2.2 Individual student characteristics on good language learner model

The following table reports on the teachers' assessment of the presence and absence of the GLL characteristics in the learners.

Table 1 Teacher assessment of GLL characteristics in individual participants

Course	Short Stories in English			Advanced intercultural communication		
Participants	Student A	Student B	Student C	Student D	Student E	Student F
GLL characteristics						
Willing and accurate guesser	/	X	/	/	/	/
Having a strong drive to communicate	/	/	/	/	/	/
Willing to appear foolish	/	X	/	X	/	X
Attending to form	/	/	/	X	/	X

Table 1 Teacher assessment of GLL characteristics in individual participants
(Continued)

Course	Short Stories in English			Advanced intercultural communication		
Participants	Student A	Student B	Student C	Student D	Student E	Student F
GLL characteristics						
Seeking opportunity to use and practice language	/	/	/	/	/	/
Monitoring his own and other speakers' speech	/	/	/	/	X	X
Attending to meaning	/	/	/	/	/	/

The findings show that both teachers thought the participants possessed the characteristics of *Having a strong drive to communicate*, *Attending to meaning* and *Seeking opportunity to use and practice language* in the classroom, which are consistent with the observation findings. Some aspects of the teachers' reflections were inconsistent with the observation finding. Teacher A (*Short Stories in English*) found that Student B did not show the *Willing to appear foolish* characteristic while I found him to have it. Teacher A explained that Student B did not show this characteristic because he spoke with self-confidence whether he was answering questions or discussing topics. He did not hesitate to answer the questions. So, he did not appear foolish in the classroom. This is a methodological concern of which I take note.

In addition, I asked both teachers to reflect on the individual participants' characteristics which they thought helped in language learning.

Teacher A stated that he thought all three students (Students A-C) had studied reading materials before coming to class because they always participated well in the classroom. All three students got good scores from every pop quiz. To him Student C was the best in terms of participation. She was a person with good logical thinking skills. When she answered questions, she had a good structure of argument. She also backed her statement with evidence to support her idea. The teacher ended with a remark that it was a good thing in language learning. As for his general opinions about each student, he said that Student A always participated in the classroom. She tried to contribute ideas and always asked and answered questions in the classroom. Student B was a special case. He was very good in English but had concentration problems. He further observed that Student B had trouble with concentration and maintained attention in particular things. If he had some points to discuss, he would discuss with the classmates.

According to Teacher B, all three students (Students D-F) always participated in the class discussions. She noted that Student D understood things better than the other two students. She always participated in class by asking and answering questions. Moreover, she initiated the conversations and negotiated for meaning with questions. She often found topics to discuss in the classroom. Student D was good at English, but at the early stage of this course she did not engage herself and participate much in class activities. She said that she talked with Student D about these behavioral problems. After that, she changed her behaviors. She began to participate in class activities and right now she has become one of the best students in this class. The teacher's view on Student F was that his English was not perfect, but he always participated in the classroom and had a strong drive to learn. She further remarked that he knew how to answer questions in order to get good scores. Sometimes she thought his answers did not come from his genuine stance or belief but, he answered to please her--the teacher.

Based on the teacher interview findings, all six participants always participated in the classroom. But they were different in their learning styles. Learning styles thus affected the participation of the learners (Alghasham, 2012; Caspi, Chajut, Saporta & Beyth-Marom, 2006; Cheng & Chau, 2014; Yunfe & Carol, 2002).

In conclusion, in terms of general perceptions of the classrooms, the observation findings and the teacher interview findings showed the similar findings. *Having a strong drive to communicate* was the characteristic that occurred the most in the classroom. In addition, in terms of individual learner characteristics, the observation findings were consistent with the teacher interview findings except *Willing to appear foolish* because I found Student B had this characteristic in the observations, but Teacher A did not agree with the observation findings.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This study attempted to examine Rubin's (1975) GLL model by exploring signs of good language learners of English major students through their classroom behavior. Data were collected from observations, teacher interviews and student interviews. In general, the findings obtained from the observation findings showed that *Having a strong drive to communicate* was the most commonly occurring characteristic in every class meeting and all participants showed this characteristic. The participants showed this characteristic by engaging in conversations started by the teacher's or their own. The observation findings were also supported by the teacher interview findings. However, there are some inconsistencies that raise methodological concerns.

5.1 Limitations of this study

This study focused on observing only student characteristics in the classroom, especially the oral skills, they do not necessarily show the same characteristics in other learning contexts. As a case study, the research only focused on a small number of the students. In addition, there were limitations in the methods of collecting the data and the lack of rigorous triangulation methods, as discussed in an earlier chapter. More serious than the limitations above is the challenge of using Rubin's model as an analytical framework. There are some problems in applying the model in a classroom analysis of learning behavior. The first problem is that Rubin (1975) does not define exact learning behaviors for each characteristic. I had to interpret and identify representative behaviors for each characteristic by myself. This could be problematic as different researchers wishing to adopt this model might have different views on what exact behaviors can be regarded as what characteristics. The second problem is there is no concrete instrument to measure Rubin's good language learner characteristics, unlike Oxford's language learning strategies. In Oxford's language learning strategies, there is the instrument which is called 'Strategy Inventory for

Language Learning (SILL)' questionnaire. It is not surprising why Oxford's language learning strategies are very popular. Many researchers have used Oxford's language learning strategies as a conceptual framework for an investigation of good learner characteristics. Another problem is that certain characteristics cannot be easily observed through classroom discussions and thus evaluating students' behavior against the model's criteria can be challenging. The last problem is that there are no criteria or the description for measuring the level or degree of good language learner characteristics. This warrants a question like: Do learners have to possess all characteristics in the model in order to be considered good language learners? If they possess all characteristics, is it the case that each characteristic has to genuinely come from their interest in learning or is it acceptable even when they pretend to show the characteristics to please the teachers? So, if we want to describe the characteristics of the good language learner, it is important to consider whether the model is well described or not. The other option is to apply more than one model to characterize good language learners.

5.2 Suggestions for further research

Given the findings in this study, if any research would like to use Rubin's model, she or he should examine each characteristic in detail. But it would be more feasible to focus on particular characteristics in order to get a corpus rich in details. Further study might benefit from employing observations over a long period of time, preferably in a longitudinal design over a semester or so. In addition, employing more than one observer will definitely be helpful in collecting a rich corpus. But after all, based on the findings in this study, another model, which is theoretically well-described may be put to test in order to generate findings to compare with those of this study.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Sample of student interview questions in Thai

A. Sample of student interview questions in Thai

Demographic information

1. คุณรู้สึกพอใจกับผลการเรียนที่ผ่านมาหรือไม่ เพราะเหตุใด
2. คุณชอบวิชาในลักษณะไหนมากที่สุด ลองยกตัวอย่างรายวิชาได้ไหมคะ เหตุใดจึงชอบวิชานั้นคะ
3. คุณไม่ชอบวิชาในลักษณะไหนมากที่สุด ลองยกตัวอย่างรายวิชาได้ไหมคะ เหตุใดจึงไม่ชอบวิชานั้นคะ
4. เหตุใดคุณจึงเลือกที่จะเรียนวิชา special topics/ short stories คะ
5. คุณคิดว่าในวิชานี้คุณตั้งใจเรียนอย่างเต็มที่หรือยังคะ
6. คุณพอใจในคะแนนการสอบเก็บคะแนนที่ผ่านมาในวิชานี้ไหมคะ
7. คุณสะดวกที่จะบอกเกร็ดเลี้ยวรวมของทุกเทอมที่ผ่านมาไหมคะ

Rubin's GLL model

The good language learner is a willing and accurate guesser.

1. คุณเคยไม่เข้าใจคำศัพท์บางคำในขณะที่สนทนาบ้างไหม ถ้าเคยคุณทำอะไร ลองยกตัวอย่างได้ไหมคะ แล้วการสนทนาดำเนินต่อไปไหมคะ
2. ถ้าคุณไม่เข้าใจสิ่งที่คู่สนทนาพูดมาคุณกล้าที่จะเดาหรือไม่ เพราะเหตุใด หรือคุณจะใช้วิธีอื่นๆคะ อธิบายให้ฟังหน่อยคะ
3. โดยปกติแล้วคุณตอบคำถามเมื่อใด เมื่อครูเรียกชื่อหรือคุณอาสาที่ตอบคำถามเองคะ
4. คุณเคยถูกอาจารย์เรียกชื่อเพื่อตอบคำถามหรือไม่ ถ้าคุณไม่มั่นใจในคำตอบ คุณกล้าจะเดาหรือไม่ ถ้ากล้าคุณมีตัวช่วยอะไรในการเดา/ ถ้าไม่ทำไม่คุณถึงไม่กล้า ลองยกตัวอย่างเหตุการณ์ที่จำได้ให้ฟังได้ไหมคะ
5. ถ้าไม่กล้าคุณมีวิธีที่จะช่วยให้คุณกล้าที่จะตอบหรือไม่ อย่างไร คุณคิดว่าวิธีนั้นจะช่วยให้คุณกล้ามากขึ้นไหมคะ

The good language learner has a strong drive to communicate.

1. คุณเคยเจอเหตุการณ์ที่ในขณะที่สนทนาเป็นภาษาอังกฤษแล้วคุณคิดคำศัพท์ภาษาอังกฤษที่คุณจะพูดไม่ออกคุณไหมคะ ถ้าเคยคุณทำอะไรคะ ลองอธิบายเหตุการณ์นั้นให้ฟังได้ไหมคะ

2. คุณเคยใช้คำศัพท์อื่นที่มีความหมายเดียวกันแทนคำศัพท์ที่คุณคิดไม่ออกหรือไม่ ลองยกตัวอย่างได้ไหมคะ
3. คุณเคยใช้ท่าทางแทนคำศัพท์ที่คุณคิดไม่ออกหรือไม่ ลองยกตัวอย่างได้ไหมคะ
4. คุณเคยใช้การอธิบายแทนการใช้การใช้คำศัพท์ที่คุณคิดไม่ออกหรือไม่ ลองยกตัวอย่างได้ไหมคะ

The good language learner is a willing to appear foolish.

1. คุณรู้สึกกลัวที่จะพูดภาษาอังกฤษหรือไม่ ถ้าใช่ เพราะเหตุใดคุณจึงกลัวการพูดภาษาอังกฤษ
2. (ถ้า)คุณกลัวที่จะพูด คุณจะทำอะไรเพื่อเอาชนะความกลัวนั้น
3. คุณกระตุ้นตัวเองอย่างไรให้กล้าที่จะพูดภาษาอังกฤษ แล้วสิ่งที่คุณใช้กระตุ้นได้ผลไหมคะ
4. เคยได้รับ feedback จากคนอื่นไหมคะ
5. คุณรู้สึกอย่างไรเมื่อได้รับ feedback จากผู้อื่น
6. เมื่อคุณไม่เข้าใจหรือมีคำถาม คุณทำอะไร คุณเคยถามประเด็นที่สงสัยหรือไม่ (ถามอาจารย์ทันที ถามเพื่อน ถามอาจารย์นอกห้องเรียน หาข้อมูลด้วยตัวเอง)
7. คุณเคยนำคำศัพท์ใหม่ๆ ที่เพิ่งเรียนรู้มาใช้ในการสนทนาหรือไม่ ถ้าใช่/ไม่ใช่ เหตุใดคุณจึงใช้/ไม่ใช่ ส่วนมากนำไปใช้ในการพูดหรือการเขียนคะ

The good language learner attends to form.

1. คุณเคยพยายามที่จะเปรียบเทียบโครงสร้างภาษาอังกฤษกับภาษาไทยหรือไม่ เพราะเหตุใด คุณเห็นความต่างหรือความเหมือนอะไรบ้างคะ ลองยกตัวอย่างให้ฟังได้ไหมคะ
2. คุณคิดว่าคุณเก่งเรื่องการใช้ไวยากรณ์หรือไม่ โดยปกติแล้วคุณใช้โครงสร้างที่ซับซ้อนหรือโครงสร้างที่ง่ายในการพูดคะ แล้วในงานเขียนล่ะคะ แตกต่างหรือเหมือนกันกับการพูด
3. คุณคิดว่าการรู้หลักไวยากรณ์ภาษาอังกฤษจะทำให้คุณพูดภาษาอังกฤษเก่งหรือไม่ เพราะเหตุใด คุณคิดว่ามีปัจจัยอื่นๆที่ต้องคำนึงอีกไหมคะ

The good language learner seeks opportunity to use and practice language.

1. คุณเคยฝึกใช้ภาษาอังกฤษกับเพื่อน, อาจารย์หรือชาวต่างชาติหรือไม่ ปกติแล้วฝึกในหรือนอกห้องเรียนคะ
2. คุณเคยหาเวลาว่างเพื่อฝึกการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษหรือไม่ ฝึกอย่างไร
3. คุณเคยหาโอกาสเพื่อที่จะได้ใช้ภาษาอังกฤษหรือไม่ ในสถานการณ์ไหน จงยกตัวอย่าง
4. ในหลักสูตรนี้ มีวิชาใดบ้างที่มีการเรียนการสอนที่ได้พูดคุยและอภิปรายใน Facebook บ้างคะ
5. ในวิชาที่เปิดให้พูดคุยแลกเปลี่ยนใน Facebook คุณเคยไปตั้งโพสต์เองเพื่อถามหรือเพื่อให้เพื่อนแสดงความคิดเห็นหรือไม่
6. คุณเคยเข้าไปมีส่วนร่วมเช่นถามตอบในกลุ่มหรือไม่
7. คุณเข้าไปมีส่วนร่วมแสดงความคิดเห็นในกลุ่ม Facebook บ่อยแค่ไหนคะ
8. คุณเข้าไปตั้งโพสต์เองในกลุ่ม Facebook บ่อยแค่ไหนคะ
9. อาจารย์ได้ให้คำแนะนำการเข้าไปมีส่วนร่วมในกลุ่ม Facebook ไหมคะ
10. ถ้าอาจารย์ไม่บังคับหรือไม่มีการให้คำแนะนำ คุณยังจะเข้าไปมีส่วนร่วมในกลุ่ม Facebook ไหมคะ
11. คุณคิดว่าคุณประสบความสำเร็จในการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษหรือไม่ ถ้าใช่ทักษะไหนที่คุณคิดว่าคุณทำได้ดีที่สุด เพราะเหตุใด ทักษะใดที่คุณคิดว่าควรปรับปรุงที่สุด เพราะเหตุใด
12. คุณตั้งเป้าหมายที่จะพัฒนาทักษะภาษาอังกฤษของคุณหรือไม่ เป้าหมายนั้นคืออะไรคะ
13. คุณมีเคล็ดลับหรือวิธีการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษอย่างไรให้ประสบความสำเร็จ ลองอธิบายให้ฟังหน่อยค่ะ

The good language learner monitors his own and other speakers' speech.

1. คุณเคยสังเกตเห็นข้อผิดพลาดในการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษของตัวเองหรือไม่ ลองอธิบายให้ฟังหน่อย
2. เมื่อคุณเห็นข้อผิดพลาดเหล่านั้นคุณคิดว่าข้อผิดพลาดเหล่านั้นเกิดจากความไม่รู้ของคุณหรือความประมาทเลินเล่อของคุณ
3. แล้วคุณแก้ไขข้อผิดพลาดเหล่านั้นยังไง

4. เมื่อแก้ไขข้อผิดพลาดเหล่านั้นเสร็จแล้วคุณสังเกตเห็นการเปลี่ยนแปลงที่ดีขึ้นของตัวเองหรือไม่ อธิบายให้ฟังหน่อย
5. โดยปกติแล้วคุณสังเกตเห็นข้อผิดพลาดด้วยตัวคุณเองหรือต้องให้คนอื่นบอกคะ
6. คุณเคยเห็นข้อผิดพลาดในการใช้ภาษาของเพื่อนไหม ถ้าเห็นคุณบอกเพื่อนหรือไม่อย่างไร

The good language learner attends to meaning.

1. คุณคิดว่าการสนทนาคุณรู้แค่ไวยากรณ์และคำศัพท์เพียงพอในการสนทนาหรือไม่ ถ้าใช่ ทำไมคุณถึงคิดว่าเพียงพอ / ถ้าไม่ใช่คุณคิดว่ามีอะไรอีกที่จำเป็นในการสนทนา
2. คุณคิดว่าบริบทของการสนทนา/ ความสัมพันธ์ของคุณสนทนา/ เรื่องหรือบรรยากาศในการสนทนามีผลต่อการใช้ภาษาหรือไม่ อย่างไร

APPENDIX B

Sample of teacher interview questions in Thai

B. Sample of teacher interview questions in Thai

1. ในวิชาที่อาจารย์สอนเปิดโอกาสให้นักศึกษาได้มีส่วนร่วมในการพูดคุย ถาม-ตอบ หรืออภิปรายบ้างไหมคะ ถ้ามีมาน้อยเพียงใดคะ
2. นักศึกษาทุกคนมีส่วนร่วมในห้องเรียนมาน้อยเพียงใดคะ
3. อาจารย์คิดว่านักศึกษาที่ชื่อ ผู้เรียน (A/B/C/D/E/F) มีส่วนร่วมในการพูดคุย ถาม-ตอบ หรืออภิปรายในห้องเรียนมาน้อยเพียงใดคะ นักศึกษาคนนั้นพูดคุยถามตอบสม่ำเสมอไหมคะ นักศึกษาตอบตรงประเด็นไหมคะ
4. ผู้เรียน (A/B/C/D/E/F) ส่วนมากจะรอให้อาจารย์ถามจึงตอบ หรือนักศึกษาหาโอกาสที่จะถามเองด้วยคะ
5. ในรายวิชาspecial topics/short stories มีการพูดคุย ถาม-ตอบ หรืออภิปรายในกลุ่ม Facebook ไหมคะ ถ้ามี ผู้เรียน (A/B/C/D/E/F) มีส่วนร่วมในการพูดคุย ถาม-ตอบ หรืออภิปรายในกลุ่มบ้างไหมคะ นักศึกษาคนนั้นพูดคุยถามตอบสม่ำเสมอไหมคะ นักศึกษาตอบตรงประเด็นไหมคะ
6. ในความคิดของอาจารย์ ผู้เรียนภาษาที่ดีควรมีลักษณะอย่างไรคะ
7. ตามโมเดลของ Rubin อาจารย์เห็นลักษณะใดเกิดขึ้นบ่อยที่สุดคะ
8. ถ้าตามโมเดลของ Rubin อาจารย์คิดว่า ผู้เรียน (A/B/C/D/E/F) มีลักษณะตรงกับข้อใดบ้างคะ อธิบายให้ฟังได้ไหมคะ
9. ผู้เรียน (A/B/C/D/E/F) อาจารย์เห็นลักษณะใดบ่อยที่สุดคะ
10. คะแนนสอบต่างๆของผู้เรียน (A/B/C/D/E/F) ในวิชานี้อาจารย์คิดว่านักศึกษาทำออกมาได้ดีไหมคะ

VITAE

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