

## An Analysis of Thai EFL Students’ Learning Behaviors Based on Joan Rubin’s Good Language Learner Model

### การวิเคราะห์พฤติกรรมการเรียนของนักศึกษาไทยที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ ตามแนวคิดผู้เรียนที่ดีของโจน รูบิน

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#### บทคัดย่อ

บทความวิจัยนี้วิเคราะห์พฤติกรรมการเรียนของนักศึกษาไทยที่ดีในห้องเรียน และเปรียบเทียบกับความคิดเห็นของครูผู้สอนตามแนวคิดผู้เรียนภาษาที่ดีของ รูบิน กลุ่มตัวอย่างประกอบด้วยนักศึกษาระดับปริญญาตรี สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษและการสื่อสาร คณะศิลปศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยอุบลราชธานี จำนวน 6 คน โดยใช้การเลือกกลุ่มตัวอย่างแบบเจาะจง งานวิจัยเก็บข้อมูลโดยการสังเกตการณ์ในชั้นเรียนและการสัมภาษณ์ครูผู้สอน ผลการวิจัยพบว่า นักเรียนทุกคนแสดงออกถึงลักษณะดังต่อไปนี้ มีแรงผลักดันในการสื่อสาร สนใจความหมายของการใช้ภาษา และแสวงหาโอกาสในการใช้ภาษา อย่างไรก็ตาม ลักษณะบางประการที่ได้จากการสังเกตก็ไม่ตรงกันกับผลการสัมภาษณ์ครูผู้สอน

**คำสำคัญ:** พฤติกรรมการเรียนรู้ ลักษณะของผู้เรียนภาษา แนวคิดผู้เรียนภาษาที่ดี ของ รูบิน

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## Abstract

The aims of this article were to investigate good language learner characteristics in the classroom and compare the observational findings with the teachers' reflections on the students behaviors based on Rubin's good language learner model (1975). The participants recruited by purposive sampling, 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 and teacher interviews. The observational findings show that Rubin's *having a strong drive to communicate, attending to meaning and seeking opportunity to use and practice language* characteristics were common characteristics that the participants showed in the classroom. However, some characteristics have a mismatch in observational findings and teacher interview findings.

**Key words:** Learning behaviors, Language learner characteristics, Rubin's good language learner model

## Introduction

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 for a lot of students in Thailand to master English. Many studies investigated problems that influenced Thai students' English proficiency (Adamson, 2004; Noom-ura, 2013; Panthumasen, 2007, Wiriachitra, 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. Adamson (2004) found that some Thai students had problems when they learned English. The students were not active in the class, they learned in the passive way and had plagiarism on their work because they did not do it by themselves. However, the problems do not come from only the students. Teacher are one of the factors that influences Thai student English proficiency. Panthumasen (2007) states that the quality of teachers who teach English language as well as the instructions are the factors that influence student's English proficiency. Wiriyachitra (2001) found that both students and teacher are the factors that affect Thai student English proficiency. For teachers, there are many obstacles in teaching English, such as heavy teaching loads, too many students in a class, and insufficient English language skills. For students, the mains problems are lacking of opportunity to use English in their daily lives, being passive learners and being too shy to speak English with classmates.

Based on one of the authors' teaching experience, it was found that many students struggled in learning English. 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'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 and compared the findings with teachers' reflection on the students' behaviors based on Rubin's good language learner model. The research question guiding this study was to what extent do the individual students' characteristics that occur in the classroom correspond to their verbal performance evaluated by the teacher?

## Literature Review

### 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 the authors concluded details of each characteristic in the table below. Rubin (1975) only explains each characteristic but she does not give the title for each characteristic. So, one of the author gives the title for each characteristic in order to be easy to understand when mentions to each characteristic. The title for each characteristic, the author names them from Rubin's explanations.

Table 1 Rubin's GLL Model (1975)

GLL Characteristics	Descriptions	SLA theory	Relevant Studies
Willing and accurate guesser	The learner stores information and uses all clues to guess the intent of communication. The learner tries out to guess the answer from what she or he knows from context and the answer is correct.	Comprehensible input	Gu & Johnson, 1996; Huang & Eslami, 2013; Mokhtar, et al., 2017; Park, 2010; Teng, 2014
Having a strong drive to communicate	The learner is willing to do many things to get his message across. The learner uses gestures or spells a word when his pronunciation is not clear or paraphrases to explain instead the word that he does not know.	Motivation	Hong & Ganapathy, 2017; Zhang, Su, & Liu, 2013; Zhao, 2012
Willing to appear foolish	The learner is willing to make mistakes in order to learn and communicate. The learner is driven by the urge to communicate despite the risk. Moreover, the learner initiates the conversation from their curiosity.	Risk taking concepts	Bouhenika, 2015; Hobbs, 2013; Kusumaning utri, 2012; Rueckert, 2013; Sharma, 2015

GLL characteristics	Descriptions	SLA theory	Relevant Studies
Attending to form	The learner is constantly looking for patterns in the language. He attends to the form in a particular way, constantly analyzing, categorizing, and synthesizing.	Noticing hypothesis	Bouffard & Sarkar, 2008; Lyster, 2004
Seeking opportunity to use and practice language	The learner seeks out opportunities to use the language by looking for native speakers. He initiates conversations with the teacher or other students in the target language.	Interaction hypothesis	Ellis, Tanaka & Yamazaki, 1994; Gass& Varonis, 1994; Loschky, 1994.
Monitoring his own and other speakers' speech	The learner 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	Noticing hypothesis	Mackey & Philip, 1998; McDonough, 2005; Oliver & Mackey, 2003
Attending to meaning	The learner knows that in order to understand the message, it is not sufficient to pay attention to the surface form of speech. He attends to the context of the speech act, the relationship of the participants, and the rules of speaking.	Pragmatics	House, 1996; Takahashi, 2001

## Research Methods

### 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. The judgment was made by one of the authors and the teacher for each course by focusing on their verbal performance in the classroom. Student A, B, and C were selected from the *Short Stories in English* course and Student D, E, and F were selected from the *Advanced Intercultural Communication* course. Student A, C, D, and F were female. Student B and E were male. The reason that the author chose these students was because it would be almost impossible to observe all the students simultaneously. Therefore the author chose only the students that actively participated in the classroom. By focusing on a small number of selected students, the author hoped to pay attention to nuances and details in their behavior which could escape attention should the author had opted to observe the entire class.

### 2) Data Collection

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

#### *Observations*

The author began to observe the students' behaviors in the classrooms from January to February 2020. The author used non-participant observations. The author only sat and took notes. The author did not participate in the classroom, because she did not want to interrupt the students when they thought. The author took notes on everything that she

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. She did not try to identify the behaviors while she observed the participants' characteristics because it could have distracted or confused her. The author observed as many learning behaviors as possible in order to obtain a rich and detailed corpus. Every time that the author observed the participants' behavior she used an audio recorder to record the conversations that she may have missed while taking notes on other behaviors. Classroom observations allowed the author to observe actual students' behaviors during interactions between students and students as well as students and teachers. The author 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 exams. The author 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 the author sat out of the circle. In the *Short Stories in English* course, the students sat facing the board in front of the classroom and the author sat at the back of the classroom. From the author's seat 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.

### ***Teacher Interviews***

The author 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, the author told the teachers briefly about the goal of the study and the nature of the interview questions. After that, the author asked permission from the teachers to audio-record 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. The author 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. The author asked each teacher their own definition of a good language learner and the kinds of characteristics the learner should have. The author 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, the author 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 research question and validate the observation data. For ease of reporting, the author refers to the *Short Stories in English* course Teacher as Teacher A and the *Advanced Intercultural Communication* course teacher as Teacher B.

### 3) Data Analysis

#### *Observations*

The observational data came from two parts: what one of the authors saw (the field notes) and what the author heard (the recordings). So, to analyze them, first the author 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. 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, the author transcribed the contents, compared them to the field notes and repeated the analytical procedure and compared the findings. This helped to cross-check the categorization. It should be noted that some behaviors possessed more than one GLL characteristic. The principle the author 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, the author considered the student to be both "having a strong drive to communicate" and "Willing to appear foolish"--two of Rubin's seven characteristics.

### ***Teacher Interviews***

To answer the research question, the teacher interview data was analyzed for the teachers' overall evaluation of the participants' both grammatical and communicative competences based on their verbal language. The data from the two teachers were analyzed based on the Rubin's GLL model. Then, the author 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.

### **Findings and Discussions**

The research findings and discussions are organized into three sections: the good language learner characteristics based on observations, **Teachers' reflections on characteristics of good language learners**, and similarities and differences between observation findings and teacher interview findings.

### 1) The Good Language Learner Characteristics Based on Observations

The following table reports on the observational findings of the presence and absence of the GLL characteristics in the learners.

**Table 2 Observation of GLL characteristics in participants' classroom behavior**

Course	Short Stories in English			Advanced intercultural communication		
Students	A	B	C	D	E	F
GLL Characteristics						
Willing and accurate guesser	/	X	/	/	/	/
Having a strong drive to communicate	/	/	/	/	/	/
Willing to appear foolish	X	/	/	X	X	X
Attending to form	X	/	/	X	/	X
Seeking opportunity to use and	/	/	/	/	/	/

practice language						
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Course	Short Stories in English			Advanced Intercultural Communication		
Students	A	B	C	D	E	F
GLL Characteristics						
Monitoring his own and other speakers' speech	/	/	/	X	/	X
Attending to meaning	/	/	/	/	/	/

From table 1, the findings show that the student C had all characteristics of Rubin's GLL model while other students missed some characteristics. In the next sections, the authors reported the behaviors of the students that represented each characteristic.

#### ***Willing and Accurate Guesser***

Five out of six participants showed this characteristic, only Student B did not show 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*.

Willing to guess covers both content and language. 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.

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 shortcut 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; Rahmalia, Gani, & Daud, 2019).

### ***Having a Strong Drive to Communicate***

All 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. 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 pressure to the door keeper because he knows that something can affect the law.

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 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).

### ***Willing to Appear Foolish***

This characteristic was rare when the author was observing the classes. It was also difficult to identify behaviors associated with willingness to appear foolish in the first place. The best the author 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. The author 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 discussing Shakespeare's passage 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 time 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 died and I will go to God. So, God is a 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 did not mind that his answers would be wrong and 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.

### ***Attending to Form***

The author found that only Student B, Student C, and Student E showed this characteristic in the classroom. The author 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 *Advanced Intercultural Communication* class, the class was discussing cultural identity. Student E was expressing his thought about his age.

Student E: You know based on my experience, most people around me, they 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 to the teacher's recast when he used the prefix incorrectly. He changed immediately when he received the corrective feedback. Student E's behavior was evidence supporting the noticing hypothesis (Schmidt, 1995) because he noticed corrective feedback from the teachers before he quickly corrected them. Besides, the corrective feedback also played an important role in focus on form. Note that recast was the common corrective feedback that the teachers used (Fu & Nassaji, 2016; Loewen & Philp, 2006; Panova & Lyster, 2002; Sheen, 1994).

#### *Seeking Opportunity to Use and Practice Language*

All six participants showed this characteristic. They showed this characteristic by asking the questions to the teacher 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.

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 yet 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 the tipping practice in the US.

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, interaction brings about an opportunity for language learning (Namaziandost, Nasri, & Esfahani, 2019; Pica, Young, & Doughty, 1987).

### ***Monitoring His Own and Other Speakers' Speech***

Four out of six participants showed this characteristic in the classroom. This characteristic looked like *Attend to form* characteristic that the students paid attention when they made a mistake while they talked. The following example came from the *Short Stories in English* class, when Student C answered the teacher's question and she used pronoun incorrectly. Then she immediately corrected herself by switching to use another form of pronoun.

Student C: Why does Magaret kill her husband?  
Student B: [said something quietly]  
Teacher : What is Student B point?  
Can you repeat?  
Student C: He (change immediately) *She* was afraid that  
she lost control of her husband.

In the above excerpt, it appeared that Student C was monitoring her own speech. When she made mistake she changed suddenly. She did not ignore their mistake and she did not wait for other people to tell her.

Another example was taken from when Student B gave the corrective feedback to the presenter as she was presenting Ernest

Hemingway's biography. The presenter read the year in English incorrectly. Student B provided a more appropriate way to read the year.

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

Student B: 1918 [nineteen eighteen] (recast)

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

From the observations, 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 fixed the mistakes, and the same mistakes often did not occur again. This means that they had an uptake on the feedback they had received from their teacher or their own search.

### ***Attend to Meaning***

All six participants showed this characteristic in every class meeting. They showed this characteristic by using language appropriately to the social context.

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

Guest speaker: Ok. If you do tip, how much what percent do you tip for 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. In the US, twenty percent f

or tipping. Twenty baht, don't go back.

Students: [laughing]

In this excerpt, they talked about tipping in American and Thai cultures. Their language uses were informal because the overall atmosphere of the classroom were relaxed and comfortable. It did not require formal context. There was no a technical term. They showed their enjoyment by laughing. The guest speaker tended to use informal language with the students in order to let them talk or discuss something and reduce students' anxiety. The guest speaker did not mind when the students answered in short answers and he seemed to be happy when the students asked questions. Hashemi (2011) suggests that coping with stress and anxiety in language classes is one of the important strategies for language teaching. The author also states that making the language classroom environment less formal and friendlier can reduce the student's anxiety.

## 2) Teachers' reflections on characteristics of good language learners

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

Table 3 Teachers' assessment of the GLL characteristics in Individual participants

Course	Short Stories in English			Advanced Intercultural Communication		
Students	A	B	C	D	E	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
Seeking opportunity to use and practice language	/	/	/	/	/	/

Course	Short Stories in English			Advanced intercultural communication		
Students	A	B	C	D	E	F
<hr/> GLL characteristics						
Monitoring his own and other speakers' speech	/	/	/	/	X	X
Attending to meaning	/	/	/	/	/	/

The findings show that both teachers thought the all six participants possessed the characteristics of *having a strong drive to communicate, seeking opportunity to use and practice language and attending to meaning* characteristics in the classroom.

Based on teacher interviews, Teacher A reflected Student A, Student B, and Student C that Student B did not have *willing and accurate guesser* because he had his own ideas. He did not guess when

he answered. He always answered from his knowledge and idea. If he did not have any ideas, he did not answer questions. For *willing to appear foolish* characteristic, it looked like student b did not have the first characteristic because he spoke English very well and he knew a lot of vocabulary. So, he was very confident when he talked. For *attending to form* characteristic, all three students had this characteristic when they spoke, their answers were organized and logical and they had the evidences to support their answers. For *attending to meaning* characteristic, all three students had this characteristic because it was the nature of the *Short Stories in English* course that let the students investigate the issues in each story and discussed the issues that each story provided.

For Teacher B, she reflected the behaviors of Student D, E, and F. All three students had *willing and accurate guesser*, but Student E showed a lower degree of accuracy than the other two students. For *having a strong drive to communicate* characteristic, all three students also had this characteristic. For student A, her English proficiency was very high, so she could get a message across better than two students. For student F, when she could not express her idea in English, she switched to Thai. For *willing to appear foolish* characteristic, only Student F had this characteristic because when she was not sure in something, she asked the teacher without hesitation or concern that she could be judged by her classmates. For *attending to form*, the student E had this characteristic. When he spoke incorrectly, he repeated the mistake in the correct form. For *monitoring his own and other speakers' speech*, I found that the student D gave the feedback to her friends when they pronounced incorrectly.

### 3) Similarities and Differences between Observation Findings and the Teacher Interview Findings

From the findings above, it shows that *willing and accurate guesser, having a strong drive to communicate, seeking opportunity to use and practice language, and attending to meaning* characteristics have the similar findings in both observations and teacher interviews but for *willing to appear foolish, attending to form, and monitoring his own and other speakers' speech* characteristics, there are differences in observation findings and teacher interview findings. There are two explanations. First, the length of observation is shorter than the length of all class meetings. So, some students' behaviors are missing from the observation session. The second explanation is the teachers may not have seen some students' behaviors because the teachers had to pay attention to and monitor all the students in the classroom which are the large numbers; moreover, the teachers had to control the classroom and manage the contents for the class, so some student's behaviors were missing from their observations.

To sum up, many characteristics are similar in observations and teacher interviews. Nevertheless, there are some characteristics that display differences in observations and teacher interviews. However, the observations and teacher interviews do not guarantee that if the students do not show some characteristic in the classroom.

## Conclusion

The study attempted to examine Rubin's (1975) GLL model by exploring signs of good language learners of English major students through their classroom behavior. The data was 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.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

Given the findings in this study, if any research would like to use Rubin's model, she or he should 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.

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