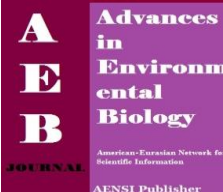




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## Effectiveness of Thai Web-Based Learning Site By Using Theoretical Acceptance Model (Tam)

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### ABSTRACT

This paper aims to study the effectiveness of the web-based learning site to learn foreign language by using Theoretical Acceptance Model (TAM) on recalling performance and motivation. The finding was analyzed based on oral test, questionnaire and interview. The results indicated that web-based learning site is one of the tools that can be count for the learners to choose for learning. However, a good web-based is referring to when the developer applied a good instructional design in order to get positive impact towards learner's performance.

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## INTRODUCTION

Learning a foreign language nowadays extremely spread in the web-based form or online learning. The emerging popularity of ICT in this global era has had many influences especially in the education sector. Education has become a very important asset in educating the young to become knowledgeable in all aspects of life. Education is no longer limited to a formal or classroom based activities. Education can be found free with the use of ICT and it is available on demand through the web. The ICT technology which is developing rapidly every year has forced and urged the education field to move forward parallel with it. One of the most popular ICT technologies is the availability of the Internet. The Internet started out as a high speed medium that helps the interaction between users from different locations for business, social and education purpose. But today, the Internet has proven to be a vital in delivering teaching and learning activities in ways we have never imagined. Today with the introduction of Web 2.0 and its applications, teaching and learning activities will once again move to a different level. The Web 2.0 tools include web based communities, hosted services, web applications, social networking sites and others. The web based is now vastly used for education purposes and can be considered as virtual learning and has attracted educators to benefit from the availability of the technology and hence apply this new form of delivery system into their teaching and learning activities.

Web based learning has spread widely with the use of the internet which emphasized on such features as collaboration, interactivity and user-generated content, seems to make it an obvious choice for a focus of discussion when it comes to looking at current trends in the use of technology in language education. Given the option provided by the availability of content and easy accessibility of web-based content, learning new content has never become easier. Learning a new language can easily be done by accessing free and paid websites. Accessibility plays an important factor in language learning and the web-based learning has made it even easier to learn a new language. Students from all over the world can learn a new language from anywhere in the world and without any contacts with a native speaker. This would not have been possible without content availability on the web.

Sayadiantechnology has a great influence to teaching process. It could assist the teachers' role in learning process. In addition, the studies on language learning through technology have mostly been of a comparative nature and have focused on the effectiveness of using new technology with more traditional ways of learning.

Learning a foreign language that begins from childhood can give a positive impact as at that age, children (5 to 7 years old) have the capability to memories things. They are able to stimulate the nervous function system if the language is repeatedly injected in their brain. Therefore, they can form language habit spontaneously and achieve competency easily. However, it does not mean that adults (18 to 25 years old) could not afford to learn another language. Actually, adults have a bigger chance to excel in a foreign language as compared to an

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adolescent, while adolescents (12 to 17 years old) are much more efficient than children. Chao states that adults thinking habits have become matured as they are capable to deal with complicated language forms because of their meta-language consciousness and common sense. Learning a foreign language voluntarily is one of the big factors to excel in the language.

Rehearsal is one of the strategies to master a language and slowly it will become a norm. The technique to memories words is by frequently repeating the mentions to increase in information stored into long term memory. Meltem said that persons learning a new vocabulary need a lot of repetition of the same item to store it in their long term memory as to ensure it is not forgotten. Nevertheless, the criterion for a medium to deliver the content also plays a vital role as well. Since the technology of Internet has already spread widely in education field, learning language also has taken a role in creating a meaningful and life long experience for language learners. The development of web sites teaching a foreign language has increase tremendously these days. Learners have the freedom to select and choose the best web site that meets their needs in achieving their objective in learning a new language. Web sites chosen should contain good instructional design principles and contain interactivity to enhance motivation to the learner.

This study seeks to find the effect of a web site for learning a foreign language and the learners' performance to remember the vocabulary as well as their motivation to learn. Based on these grounds the current study is conducted to answer the following research question:

1. Does this website help students recall the vocabulary with correct pronunciation and tones?
2. What is the student's performance on vocabulary recalls for short term when using the website?
3. What is the student's performance on vocabulary recalls for long-term memory when using the website?
4. Does this website motivate students to learn foreign language?

#### *Literature Review:*

Learning a foreign language needs an essential way to enhance learner's performance in communication. The emergence of technology in this generation has expanded educators' ability to design and develop an effective learning environment. In recent years, learning foreign language only involves audio element but these days, a few multimedia elements have been applied. The use of web sites is an alternative tool to enhance skills for life long learning. The most important thing, the learner can use it at anytime, anywhere and get the information needed on their fingertips' [13]. The literature review shows cases some of the pertinent research which corroborates the TAM model of instructional design in web sites and the impact of multimedia elements has had in learning.

TAM model was introduced by Davis is capable to explain computer-usage behaviour. Davis and Venkatesh [2] found that TAM can be used to predict a perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) towards the website developed. TAM behavioural element explained that learners can freely use the particular product without guidance from anyone. It can be potentially useful and effective tool for developers to apply in order to ensure the products they developed is accepted by the targeted users.

Effective learning also involved external factors to influence the learners' performance. Motivation is one of the factors to attract learners' attention during learning. There are so many form of motivation that has been applied in the product to grab their intention to learn excitedly. Motivation in the product can be a test. The test which will be given scores can help to gain their motivation to give full concentration during the learning process. The motivation factors applied in TAM model can exert a stronger influence of intention to use [14].

Multimedia elements also play an important role in the learning process to develop motivation. It can attract learners to see, listen and do. It is widely acknowledged that multimedia elements such as text, audio, graphic, video and animation can attract learner attraction. In learning a language, text and audio are important elements that need to be considered. This is because the beginners need audio to listen to the pronunciation of the vocabulary clearly and text as supporting materials during learning.

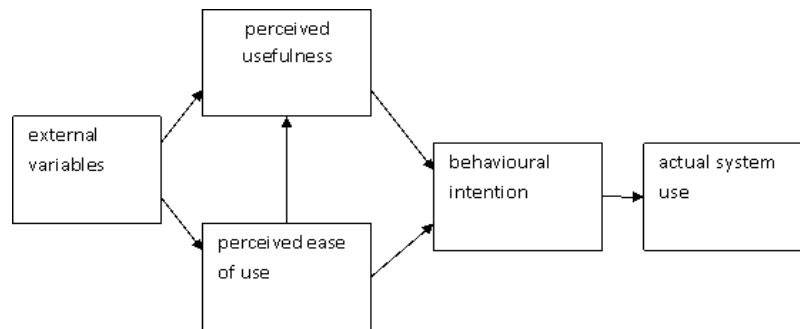
Huebener [5] states audio-visual techniques are based on the generally accepted fact that the senses reinforce each other as avenues of learning. Since language is essentially sound, the audio appeal to be the most important to used in the first of teaching. After a fairly correct pronunciation has been established, the student may be exposed to the written and printed symbols then is quite logical as far as language learning is concerned. However, other elements can also be integrated to ensure the learning is more interesting and enjoyable. Besides, the quality for each element must be in high quality to avoid dissatisfaction and retention to use the product in the future. These elements help learners' to produce vocabulary from memory.

There have been many arguments about the graphic and written elements in recalling the second language vocabulary. Jones [6] cited Plass *et.al.* explained that pictorial and written elements are may be most effective for learning where students can choose which one can be the best suits of their needs and learning preferences.

Learning foreign language need a lot of rehearsal and repetition process to ensure the new vocabulary can be store for long term memory and retrieve in the future. Baturay [1] suggests to study on the vocabulary learning and retention with varying strategies for the presentation of words and its effect on vocabulary retention in a web based environment.

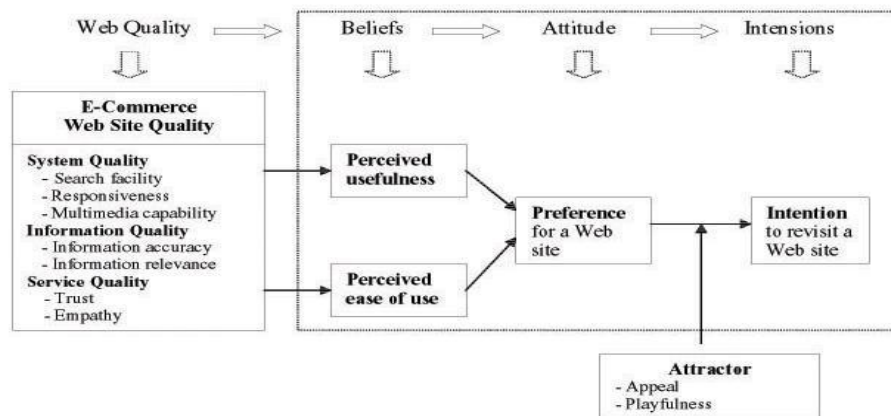
*Technology Acceptance Model (TAM):*

Technology spreads fast in today's era and it needs to be investigated further before it can be accepted in teaching and learning activities. To achieve this intention, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) seems suitable to measure or predict the user's acceptance of the technology. TAM was introduced first by Davis in 1986 to explain the user's behavior.



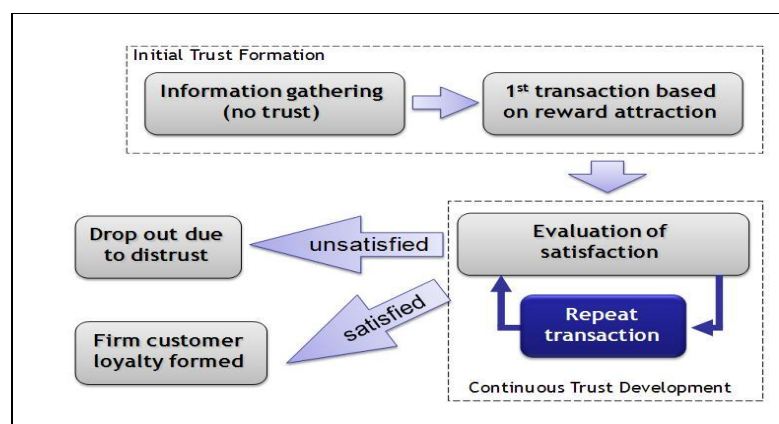
**Fig. 1:** The Technology Acceptance Model

Figure 1 presents TAM which consists of sequence of belief, attitude, intention and behaviour.



**Fig. 2:** The Technology Acceptance Model (web site view)

Figure 2 presents the web site perspective i.e. the external variables influenced in this model are the web quality itself like the system, information and service quality. These factors will construct the beliefs among users (perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use), attitude towards using the web and the intention to revisit the web site. The attractor role is also to give influence to the user's intention to view the web site again. This statement can be simplified by the figure below.



**Fig. 3:** Schematics of the trust development life cycle

Davis [2] has defined 'perceived usefulness' (PU) as the degree to which a person believes that using certain systems would enhance his or her job performance, while as, 'perceived ease of use' (PEOU) is the

degree of which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of physical and mental efforts. From the PU definition, user gives full trust on the web site to help to improve or enhance his or her performance on language learning. PEOU's definition explains that user can use the web site with enjoyment and it is easy to use and the user themselves are capable to control the site freely.

TAM is more suitable for web site development to ensure users will keep visiting the sites and feel comfortable to access its components. For language learning web site, TAM is most compatible for developing the web site for it has the purpose to attract students to keep on learning and be satisfied with their outcomes.

#### ARCS Model:

This model was coined by Keller and it promotes and sustains motivation in the learning process. 'Motivation' can be defined as magnitude and direction of behaviour and is influenced by the internal and external characteristics. Keller designed this model to incorporate the individual external and internal behaviour in the instructional design. Based on the model, there are three sections of influence in instructional designs. They are motivational design, learning design and reinforcement-contingency design [7].

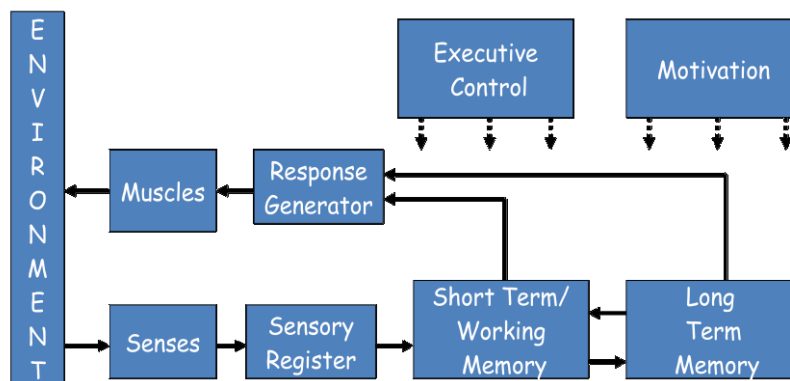
In Keller's Motivational Theory, there are four categories that need to be considered: attention, relevance, confidence and satisfaction (ARCS). The first part is *Attention*. In this part, interest plays an important role. Interest refers to whether the learners' curiosity is aroused and this arousal is sustained appropriately over time.

*Relevance* refers to the learners' perception of personal need satisfaction in relative to the instruction or highly design goal is perceived to be related to the instructional activity. Familiarity is one aspect in relevance section that could make the learners adapt and be comfortable with in a learning situation.

*Confidence* element refers to perceived likelihood of success and the extent to which success is under learners' control. They can explore the lesson freely. Lastly is *satisfaction* refers to the combination of extrinsic rewards and intrinsic motivation.

#### Information Processing Theory:

Information processing theory is often used in cognitive learning. This theory describes the process of learning in series; how the learner accepts the information and retrieves it back. In other words, the information processing theory could be defined as the transformation of information through storage of memory. In this study, learning a language has been described in the framework of an information processing model where this theory involves a few stages on how the learner can recall the vocabulary through their memory [9].



**Fig. 4:** Information Processing Model of Learning and Memory

There are a few stages in this theory that will explain the theory; starting from the receiving of information and retrieving it back. Figure 4 summarizes the information which comes from the environment will go through to the learner's senses (the information is converted into electrochemical message) and send to the brain through sensory register. After that, the information that has been paid will enter the working memory known as the short term memory. Short term memory has limit space to store the information due time constraint. There are two arrows exist between short term and long term memories i.e. the short term memory is capable to perform in long term memory storage by recoding and rehearsal which is controlled by the executive control. Normally, the information that encode into the long term memory are information that remembered for more than a short period of time. The long term memory is where the information has been stored and is available for retrieval anytime on demand. The characteristics of information stored in long term memory are meaningful, related organization and unlimited capacity. Besides, there are factors which influence long term memory storage like prior knowledge, expectancies regarding to the goal and strategies that we have learned to use in approaching a particular content. The next stage is retrieval and response generator. The relevant information in the long term

memory will be retrieved and integrated with the new information. The response generator determined the response and sends it to the muscles, nerves and glands to act into the environment.

This theory has shown the flow of information and memory working. For this study, the researcher wants to measure the learners' performance in recalling the vocabulary of a foreign language. The learners need to have high ability to remember and recall the words. As mentioned before, to store the information into the long term memory, a rehearsal and repetition process needs to be applied. Rehearsal and repetition can help learners to enhance their memory. This process occurs a few times until the information is encoded and stored in long term memory. Once learner starts to learn the lesson in this web site, they will pay attention to the audio and ensure the pronunciation is correct by playing it frequently. This is one example to show that the rehearsal and repetition process happened. Sweet [11], repetition process is able to form the associations and retaining the information in the memory, however, attention can give a big influence to the memory. Learners who are really interested to learn the language will master the lesson quickly because of their excitement to continue the next lesson and so on.

#### *Methodology:*

This study intends to find out the ability of learners to memorize the vocabulary in the Thai language. The learning website was actually developed for business purposes. Thai language was chosen due to its unique tones which are different from other language. Mastering Thai language helps businessmen to strengthen their relationship with Thai people for business purposes. The website can be retrieved through <http://www.its4thai.com/>. The courses available in this website are conversation, reading and writing and vocabulary. This website is useful in this study as the researcher can use the free lesson of conversation and vocabulary courses which is available anytime and is suitable for everyone. Both courses contain five lessons for the participant to cover within two weeks. The lessons for vocabulary include:

- Lesson 1: Counting to ten
- Lesson 2: Counting to a million
- Lesson 3: Twelve colours
- Lesson 4: Pronouns
- Lesson 5: Weekday and time periods
- \*Review lesson 1-5

And the lessons for conversations are:

- Lesson 1: Hello and thank you
- Lesson 2: First sentences
- Lesson 3: Where do you come from
- Lesson 4: Can you speak Thai language?
- Lesson 5: Vocabulary- counting to ten (can skip)
- \*Review lesson 1-5

This website is able to record users' activities in percentage form for each part in each lesson (every lesson is including vocabulary, sentences and listening). It also can record the last day where the user have played or learn the lesson. This application can help users to check and update their learning process every time they log into this website. Each lesson is divided into five sub menus (lesson, media, review, practice and listening). The Lesson menu is a description of the lesson which includes grammar notes and word list that users are going to learn. The media menu contains lessons in pdf files for the user to download. In review, practice and listening, the contents are in flash format with interesting multimedia element applied. The instruction of the application always appears before the user clicks the start button. So that users will know what they are going to do during the learning.

The interface is also interactive where users can replay the audio, navigates the previous or next words and so on. The quality of picture and audio are very good and users can listen to the correct pronunciation and tones for each word. For the design aspect, the website has a strategy to attract users' attention where the developer applied a few types of interesting application like drag and drop, click the answer and the enforcement like scores.

#### *Data Collection Method and Instruments:*

A short briefing was conducted before participants started using this learning website tool. They were briefed on how to sign in, login and logout of the lesson involved for this study. They can accessed the web site in one week duration of time and learn by themselves without any help from Thai native speaker. After one week, an oral test was conducted by a native speaker. The questions are exactly from the lessons. The oral test is conducted individually by the evaluator who is a native speaker. In this test, the evaluator asked individual

students to listen carefully to the words he said and translate it in Thai language. The test is divided into five elements of vocabulary (numbers, colours, days, pronouns and conversation). Each element contains 5 to 10 vocabulary that the student has to translate into Thai language. The score for each corrected word are three points which includes vocabulary, pronunciation and tones. The results were then recorded. A questionnaire of motivation towards this website was later distributed at the end of the session. The questionnaire was designed and pilot tested for reliability. The result showed a value of Cronbach's Alpha of 0.88.

Two week later, a retest for the oral test was conducted to measure the students' performances on their long term memory. The same participants were later called in but they were never told that there will be a retest to avoid them from doing and revisions or preparation work for the second retest. An interview was conducted to solicit their opinions, suggestions and experiences in using the language learning web site.

In order to measure oral test results, descriptive statistics were used to show the number of students can retrieve the words with correct vocabulary, pronunciation and tones. The data of questionnaire was analysed to see the influence of TAM model and motivation factors during learning process using this website. Qualitative data for the interview was analyzed. An interview was conducted with three learners who have higher, medium and low score in vocabulary retention.

#### *Findings:*

##### *The effect of website to recall the vocabulary with correct pronunciation and tones:*

After a period of one week, the learners were tested on their performance in recalling the vocabulary together with the correct pronunciation and tones. The results showed that the mean for vocabulary is higher (mean=33.15) with a standard deviation of 5.58 compared to the pronunciation and tones which are 31.30 and 27.30 respectively. The results are shown in the table below.

##### *Students' performance of vocabulary recalls long term memory from the web site:*

After two weeks, a retest was conducted to measure the long term memory among students. Results shown that the mean for the vocabulary is differs slightly from the first test (mean=30.05) followed with the pronunciation and tones where the mean are 28.10 and 26.10 respectively.

The oral tests' results for the study showed that all students got high score for the vocabulary part and slightly lower scores in the pronunciation and tones sections. The oral test was conducted twice to see the impact the web site has on students recall about the materials though on the site. It seemed that there is a slight difference in the students' scores between the short-term and long-term memory effects in recalling the vocabulary, pronunciation and tones. The result indicated the numbers of vocabulary recalls decreased for Test 2 as compared to Test1. The higher, medium and lower group categorized by representing from the three students' result of vocabulary retention. The study found out that students with long term memory for vocabulary retention was in small number as compared to first test.

##### *Students' mean score on perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, motivation element during learning and behavior intention to use the website in the future:*

**Table 1:** Students' mean score on perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, motivation element during learning and behavior intention to use the website in the future

	N	Mean
Perceived usefulness	20	4.2
Perceived ease of use	20	4.4
Motivation	20	4.1
Behavior intention to use the website in the future	20	4.3

Table 1 shows mean score for perceived usefulness is 4.2, perceived ease of use is 4.4, motivation is 4.1 and behavior intention to use the website in the future is 4.3.

##### *Students' opinion and experience towards the website:*

An interview was conducted among the students who got higher, medium and lower score for vocabulary retention. The data was collected and analyzed as follows. Table 2 shows the learners' view and experiences towards the website.

**Table 2:** Students' feedback from the interview session towards the website

No	Question	Point of view	
1.	What do you like or dislike during using this website?	<i>Like</i>	<i>Dislike</i>
		Student 1,3,4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides the users with practices.....</li> </ul> Student 2,7: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free registration.....</li> </ul> Student 5,8,9: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Color and the layout...</li> </ul>	Student 6: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>....need to purchase to use for other feature...</li> </ul>
2.	Did you encounter any difficulty during using this website? If yes, why?	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
		Student 6: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flash plugin need to be install.....</li> </ul>	8 students have no problem
3.	In your opinion, what is the best feature you found in this website and why?	Student 1,3,4,5: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The good quality of audio.....</li> </ul> Student 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simple direction given....</li> </ul> Student 6,7,8,9: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contents are well arranged...</li> </ul>	
4.	Can you give comments about the appearance of this website?	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>
		Student 1,4,5,8: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The color is attractive....</li> </ul> Student 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>....effective button...</li> </ul> Student 3,7: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easy to use...</li> </ul> Student 6: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>....organized and comprehensible.....</li> </ul>	Student 9: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A bit dull...</li> </ul>
5.	How would you describe your learning experience in using this website?	Student 1,2,3,4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>..interesting and friendly users</li> </ul> Students 5,7,8,9: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>...easy and simple...</li> </ul> Student 6: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>....the interactive component help to understand the Thai language easier and rapidly</li> </ul>	
6.	What is your general opinion towards this website?	Student 1,2,3,4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>User friendly and well organized...</li> </ul> Student 5,6: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Great and easy to access with any web browser....</li> </ul> Student 7,8,9: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easy and hussle free....</li> </ul>	
7.	Do you think that this website is capable to help non native speaker to learn Thai language and why?	YES: Student 1,3,5,8: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>.....motivated website....</li> </ul> Student 4,7,9: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>...depends on users' effort...</li> </ul> Student 2,6: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>..Clear and well arranged.....</li> </ul>	
8.	Can you suggest any improvement to the website for future use?	Student 1,2,9: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>...provide pronunciation exercises....</li> </ul> Student 3,6,7: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>..Introduce Thai alphabets in the free lesson....</li> </ul> Student 4,5,8: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upload video to enhance comprehension</li> </ul>	

*Discussion and Conclusion:**Discussion:*

Majority students seems to score very high on the vocabulary items (30 items and above) but however they encounter some difficulties towards the pronunciation and tones items. Thai language is a tonal language, tones need to be clear and pronounce correctly in such a specific manner to ensure the right meaning. A slight difference in the tone will change the meaning of words. In this study, students used this language learning website for one week and go through the lessons provided. They have to memorise the vocabulary by doing it repeatedly and rehearsal them before a test which was conducted at the end of one week. After two weeks, they will have to re-seat on the same test (Test 2) to check whether or not any of the vocabularies they have learned is now stored in their long term memory. However, the results from the Test 1 and Test 2 indicated there is a slight decrease in the amount of vocabularies memorised.

Basically, from the data, majority students has an ability to memorise on the vocabulary that involves sequence like numbers and days. The recalling numbers and days showed that most of the students got high score in that category. They can remember very well because during the short term session (1 week), they are required to do a lot of repetition and rehearsal or any other strategies that they use to help them remember. This is with the hope and intention that those vocabularies will then be encoded into the long term memory storage. However, the decreasing result for the Test 2 was actually expected because during two weeks they did not do any revision instead they have to retrieve back their stored information in the memory. Students were not told that they will be a second test as to avoid them from doing revision and repetition.

In reference toward motivation to use the website, all students considered this website useful and easy to use. They claimed that the contents are well organized and an attractive appearance. Appearance plays a major role in keeping users motivated and excited to keep using the website. Most of the students described color and graphic was attractive, effective buttons and comprehensible.

The other reason that motivates users to learn language via the website is because of the existences of multimedia element such as audio and text (English transcript). This element really helped beginners in guiding them to the right pronunciation and tones. The quality of the audio must be in a good quality of sound and thus students can listen to the correct pronunciation and they can keep repeating it in their brain or as they feel needed. Users can freely click pages which has made this website easy accepted among the students for future use. Overall, this website has proven to be useful among first time users in trying to learn a new language. Free of charge and available on the internet will definitely make learning a new language very easy and affordable.

Learning foreign languages using web is one of the alternative ways for learners. The web site chosen is integrated with a good instructional design (ID) in order to enhance learners' motivation to learn a foreign language and their capability to remember the vocabulary.

The study for learning a foreign language is significant for several reasons. The world has become a global economy and many people have come to realize that learning a foreign language has a lot of advantages and will influence their life especially in communication. The Internet has also created a borderless world. Thus, communicating with others from different culture and language is becoming a norm. Short conversational phrases may help strengthened the bond of communication between individuals from different countries and different languages. The presence of free web-based language learning is becoming popular as it is sometimes free and accessible to anyone around the world.

Also learning a foreign language gives an advantage to tourists travelling in foreign land and may avoid misunderstanding between them and the natives' speakers. Tourist who takes the initiative to learn the local language may find their travels to be much easier in communicating with the native speakers and may sometimes even impress the locals for knowing a little about their language. This effort on behalf of the tourist to learn the local language may help provide a much better travelling experience where language is no longer a barrier.

In addition, learning a foreign language will also create an opportunity to learn the native's culture. Every country has its own culture and we have to respect each others customs and traditions. In other words, it can provide a whole new perspective of people's life, culture, traditions and norms which can be totally different from our own culture. When we learn a language, it automatically gives us a unique opportunity to widen our knowledge and and experience other culture.

*Conclusion:*

Web based learning site can be an alternative tool for an effective learning for anyone to learn foreign language. The result has indicated that the online website is another venue to explore for language learning and training. Good designs websites will provide the necessary learning environment at this day and age of virtual learning. Together with all the multimedia elements included in the website, language learning has never been better.



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