

The study of Reading Comprehension ability of 3rd year English for international Communication students, Rajamangala University of Technology Issan, Sakon Nakhon Campus

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Abstract

This study aims to study and investigate the ability in reading comprehension of 3rd years English for International communication (EIC) students of Rajamangala University of Technology Issan, Sakon Nakhon Campus. There are 30 participants from the 3rd year students involved in this study and divided into 2 groups regarding their GPA as follows: Intermediate proficiency students (n=11) is between 2.00-3.00 and High proficiency students (n=19) is between 3.01-4.00.

The instrument of this study is reading comprehension test that are selected from British Council and divided into 2 tests as follows: (1) Basic reading comprehension test and (2) Intermediate reading comprehension test. The data collection of students' reading comprehension ability scores is analyzed by using Mean (\bar{X}) and standard Deviation (S.D) from Spss program.

From the result of this study show that the ability of reading comprehension of intermediate proficiency students on basic reading comprehension test is 84% (the mean score is 42.4), which different from high proficiency students on basic reading comprehension test which is 94% (the mean score is 47.5). Both groups achieve the excellent level. The intermediate proficiency students on intermediate reading comprehension test is 52% (the mean score is 26), it is slightly different with high proficiency student on intermediate reading comprehension test which is 54% (the mean score is 27). Both groups achieve the average level.

Keywords: Reading Comprehension, Intermediate proficiency Students, High proficiency Students, Basic reading comprehension test, intermediate reading comprehension test.

1. Introduction

Reading is one of the four necessary important language skills for those leaning English as a second language (ESL/EFL), for academic success, and for professional

development. Thai university EFL students need to read textbooks, article, or magazines written in English to acquire knowledge and gather information for both their careers and their academic studies. The ability to comprehend descriptive texts which make up the bulk of their foreign language reading materials is, therefore, very important for all of them. (1).

In addition, reading is fundamentally important for success. It opens the door to personal freedom or shuts the door to opportunity. Learning to read is a means to an end. If children have difficulty leaning to read early, how can they be expected to excel in other subjects as well? The best prevention of reading difficulties, therefore, is early intervention strategies at the pre-school/kindergarten level. Instead of heated debates on which approach is best suited for early reading success, educators should be discussing the most efficient method that produces the best results (2).

Thai educators investigated the reading ability of Thai EFL students and found that most Thai university EFL students especially those who are not English majors, have medium to low English reading ability. (3) It is also found that Thai students lack specific reading strategies to generate inference that aid the understanding of text, articles, and magazines.

Several causes have been identified in regard to the Thai university EFL students' poor English reading problem. These include a lack of reading resources, a lack of strong reading culture, a lack of reading strategy knowledge, and teacher' use of unsuccessful teaching methods. (4). Teaching methods from Primary School up to and including Universities need to be reviewed regularly.

Reading comprehension is a skill that is critical in the educational success of all individuals. Without adequate reading comprehension skill, students can struggle in many subject areas. Reading comprehension is an important skill needed for all areas of school. Subjects, other than reading or literature, where comprehension skill are very important include science, social studies math and Thai medicine. (5).

Reading comprehension is "the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language" (6). This process of interaction and involvement with the text is a function of both reader and text variables that take place within a larger social context (7). When successful, the product of reading comprehension is a coherent mental representation of a text's meaning that is integrated with the reader's prior knowledge. This product is often referred to as a mental model (8) or a situation model (9) and is considered to be the basis for learning from text. The nature of the model, that is the ideas and the links connecting those ideas, defines what has been learned.

Reading comprehension is a complex skill: it requires the successful development and orchestration of a variety of lower- and higher-level processes and skills (10). As a consequence, there are a number of sources for potential comprehension failure and these sources can vary depending on the skill level and age of the reader (11). Theories and models of reading comprehension are necessary to make sense of this complexity.

In addition to reading comprehension, more topics of relevance have been identified. Students need to be prepared for university entrance exams and university itself when

students reach university, reading standards are higher and more difficult, and vast in amount compared to high school level.

As the research indicates, reading comprehension is a key element to increasing reading scores. Solving problems, preparing for college, illiteracy are very credible reasons for the improvement of reading comprehension skills.

Primarily, this study is conducted to determine the reading comprehension scores after instruction of third year students majoring English for International Communication at Rajamangala University of Technology Isan, Sakon nakhon Campus.

The purpose of this study is to determine the difference in reading scores as measured by the Reading Test. This study takes place with third year students majoring English for International Communication of Rajamangala University of Technology Isan, Sakon nakhon Campus.

The objective of the study

The objective of this study is aim to study the ability in reading comprehension of 3rd year English for International Communication students of Rajamangala University of Technology Isan Sakon nakhon Campus.

Research Hypothesis

The 3rd years English for International Communication students are able to pass reading comprehension test as they have passed the courses of Introduction reading and Academic reading in year 1 and 2.

2. Research Methodology

The purpose of this study was to investigate the ability of students' reading comprehension, and the readiness of reading comprehension for the ASEAN Economic Community. This chapter discusses the design of the study, research instruments, the data collection, and the procedures for answering the research hypothesis.

The fundamental of this study was to examine the students reading comprehension ability in order to be reading for workplace, ASEAN Economic Community, and international workplace.

In order to achieve the objective, the third-year students of English for International Communication (EIC) students were invited to participate in this research.

There were 30 participants from third year students at Rajamangala University of Technology Isan, Sakon Nakhon Campus involved in this study. The participants were divided into 2 groups regarding their GPA as follows: Intermediate proficiency Level, and High proficiency Level. They were classified by using their GPA, Intermediate proficiency level was between 2.00-3.00 and High proficiency level was between 3.01-4.00.

There was 1 instrument used in this study. That is Reading Comprehension test that consisted of 2 tests as follows

- (1) Basic reading comprehension test
- (2) Intermediate reading comprehension test

Two Reading Comprehension test were selected from British Council (<http://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org>). Because the British council divided English language skill into 4 categories, including reading skills practice, writing skills practice, listening skills practice and speaking skills practice. Researchers selected the reading skills practice; it divided into 2 groups including level A and level B. Both groups consisted of 2 parts as follows; level A1, level A2, level B1 and level B2. Researchers selected reading skills practice from level A2 as Basic reading comprehension test and selected from level B2 as Intermediate reading comprehension test.

The researcher examine the population from the first week of the semester and have to read 3 passage for each part and collect the data to analyze by using Mean (\bar{X}) Standard Deviation (S.D.) and Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC)

This study was designed with the idea of examining the students' reading comprehension ability. A quantitative method of the data analyses was employed in the study.

The pilot study was conducted to try out the research study tools. The result of the pilot study was used to shape the study and to revise procedures of data collection. Overall, the pilot study was very useful for the main study. Some problems occurred during the pilot study due to the time constraint, the difficulty which many cause the problems to the students. These problems were taken in account to consider about the reading comprehension tests.

3. Research Result

This chapter is divided into 3 main parts. The first part demonstrates about the proficiency of intermediate and high students on basic reading comprehension test. The second reveals the results of intermediate and high students' proficiency on intermediate reading comprehension. Finally, the third part reports the conclusion of students' proficiency on reading comprehension test.

3.1. the proficiency of intermediate and high students on basic reading comprehension test

The results of intermediate proficiency students and high proficiency students on basic reading comprehension test is presented in the Table 1

Table 1 The results of students on basic reading comprehension test.

Proficiency Level	Basic Level				
	Student (n)	Total	S.D	\bar{x}	100%
Intermediate	11	50	4.06	42	84
High	19	50	2.27	47	94

From the result of Table 1 the result of students on basic reading Comprehension test has showed that the high proficiency Level students have a high score more than Intermediate proficiency level which the percentile is 94 % and 84 % respectively. It show that the ability of reading of High proficiency level students have more than intermediate proficiency Level students.

3.2. the proficiency of intermediate and high students on Intermediate reading comprehension test

The results of intermediate proficiency students and high proficiency students intermediate reading comprehension test is presented in the Table 2

Table 2 The results of students on basic reading comprehension test.

Proficiency Level	Intermediate Level				
	Student (n)	Total	S.D	\bar{x}	100%
Intermediate	11	50	3.3	26	52
High	19	50	5.8	27	54

From the result of Table 1 the result of students on basic reading Comprehension test has showed that the high proficiency Level students have a high score more than Intermediate proficiency level which the percentile is 94 % and 84 % respectively. It show that the ability of reading of High proficiency level students have more than intermediate proficiency Level students.

3.3. the conclusion of students' proficiency on reading comprehension test.

The results of intermediate proficiency students and high proficiency students on basic reading comprehension test and intermediate reading comprehension test is presented in the Table 3

Table 3 The results of Reading Comprehension Test.

Proficiency Level	Basic Level					Intermediate Level				
	Student (n)	Total	S.D	\bar{x}	100%	Student (n)	Total	S.D	\bar{x}	100%
Intermediate	11	50	4.06	42	84	11	50	3.3	26	52

High	19	50	2.27	47	94	19	50	5.8	27	54
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The mean score of the intermediate proficiency students taking on the basic reading comprehension test is 42.4 (84%) which is at excellent level and mean score of the high proficiency students taking on the basic reading comprehension test is 47.5(94%) which is at excellent level. The mean score of the intermediate proficiency students taking on the intermediate reading comprehension test is 26(52%) which is at average level and mean score of the high proficiency students taking on the intermediate reading comprehension test is 27(54%) which is at average level.

4. Conclusion and Discussion

4.1 Discussion

Overall, the findings indicate that participants who complete the reading comprehension test improve their standard. As find in chapter 4, intermediate proficiency students on basic reading comprehension test is 84%, it is different from high proficiency students on the basic reading comprehension test which is 94%. High proficiency students score higher than intermediate proficiency students. Dorkchandra (2010) had examined to enhance English reading comprehension through a text structure Reading Strategy Call Program. Participants are divided into 2 groups as follows: medium proficiency students and low proficiency students. He agrees that the level of students is one of the prominent issues to be concern in reading comprehension test.

The intermediate proficiency students on intermediate reading comprehension test is 52%, it is slightly different from high proficiency students on intermediate reading comprehension test which is 54%. High proficiency students score higher than intermediate proficiency students. Hansen & Pearson (1983). An instructional study: Improving the inferential comprehension of good and poor fourth-grade readers. Participants are divided into 2 groups as follows: good readers and poor readers.

4.2 Conclusion

This study measures the effectiveness of the ability in reading comprehension of 3rd year English for International Communication students of Rajamangala University of Technology Isan, Sakon Nakhon Campus. The research hypothesis is that the 3rd year English for International Communication students are able to pass reading comprehension tests, as they have already finished the Introduction reading and Academic reading in year 1 and 2. There are 30 participant students from 3rd year students at Rajamangala University of Technology Isan, Sakon Nakhon Campus involved in this study. In Reading Comprehension study there are 2 tests, (1) Basic reading comprehension test and (2) Intermediate reading comprehension test. The data collection of the students' reading comprehension ability score are analyzed by using Mean (\bar{X}) Standard Deviation (S.D.)

The findings of the study reveal that, the ability of reading comprehension of intermediate proficiency students on basic reading comprehension test is 84%, it is different

with high proficiency students on the basic reading comprehension test which is 94%. Both groups achieve the excellent level. The intermediate proficiency students on intermediate reading comprehension test is 52%, it is slightly different with high proficiency students on intermediate reading comprehension test which is 54%. Both groups achieve the average level.

The findings of the study reveal that after using the reading comprehension test, high proficiency students are able to achieve better reading comprehension test more than intermediate proficiency students. Both groups are able to pass the reading comprehension test, this shows a correlation with the previous research conducted on this topic. Therefore, at the conclusion of the study, the research hypothesis is accepted.

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