

Effects of Extensive Reading on Developing Grade 7 Students' English Reading Comprehension and Learning Retention

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Abstract

This research aimed to: 1) compare students' reading comprehension achievement before and after learning through extensive reading to develop reading comprehension for grade 7 students; 2) investigate students' satisfaction toward learning through extensive reading to develop reading comprehension; and 3) investigate the retention of grade 7 students to reading comprehension by using extensive reading approach. The samples were 26 of grade 7 students who took the Fundamental English Course (E21101) in the first semester of the academic year 2021 at Ban Nongtakrong School under Buriram Primary Educational Area Service Office 3 selected by using purposive sampling technique. The research instruments were lesson plans, English reading tests, and satisfaction questionnaire. The statistics used to analyze the collected data were percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The hypothesis was tested by dependent samples t-test with the statistical significant set at .05 level. The findings were as follows:

1. The grade 7 students' reading comprehension post-test mean score was higher than the pre-test mean score with statistically significant difference at .05 level.

2. The grade 7 students' satisfaction toward reading after learning through the extensive reading approach in overall was at the most satisfactory.

3. The grade 7 students had the retention after learning English reading comprehension through the extensive reading approach.

The findings can be significant for teachers and students to develop effective teaching and learning regarding reading comprehension through the extensive reading approach in the EFL settings.

Keywords: Reading Comprehension, Extensive Reading, Satisfaction, Retention

Introduction

English is the second most widely used language in the world after Chinese, but it far outranks the latter as an international language.

Knowing how to communicate in English is essential for just about anyone seeking to succeed in countless fields from business to academia (Arinya, 2019).

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In Thailand, English is used as a Foreign Language (EFL). It has become an important role in Thai education for more than a century (Graddol. 2006). English is used in Thailand as a compulsory subject in schools and in higher education institutions (Wongsothorn; Hiranburana, and Chinnawongs. 2003). English has increasingly been used and viewed as an important skill for Thai urban middle classes (Simpson and Thammasathien. 2007), while the access to English language education in rural or poorer communities is limited (Hayes. 2010; Kosonen. 2008).

English has four main skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Each skill has importance for learners in different facets of communications. Reading is one of skills appears in several materials such as books, magazines, newspapers, internet and so on. Reading plays an important role for EFL learners since it is the tool to get knowledge and access new technology. In addition, reading becomes an essential instrument to enhance the potential people and the channel of learning so people read more know more. Reading is useful for language acquisition.

Reading comprehension has always played a crucial role in EFL classroom. Reading skill is one of the English skills used for high school and pre-university learners to pass entrance examination to get seat in universities. However, reading comprehension is included in EFL materials, textbooks and courses in several levels (school and university) and almost in all areas, both general and particular (Khansir and Gholami Dashti, 2014). In order to improve students in reading comprehension, reading strategies can help

students understand the text they and improve their comprehension, therefore, the researcher has looked for an effective approach to enhance the students' reading comprehension, to be suitable for the students in the 21st century and that students can choose many channels in learning reading and improve their reading comprehension.

Extensive reading approach is one of strategies employed to enhance reading skill for students. Extensive reading (ER) is "reading in quantity in order to gain a general understanding of what is read, to develop good reading habits, to build knowledge of vocabulary and structure, and to encourage a liking for reading" (Richards and Schmidt, 2002, p 139 -149). Extensive reading is an approach of teaching that helps students to become better at the skill of reading rather than reading to study the language itself. This shows that the immediate focus of extensive reading is on the content being read, rather than on language skills (Extensive Reading Foundation Guide. 2011).

Because of the benefits of extensive reading mentioned earlier, the researcher as one of the teachers at Ban Nongtakrong School where is located in Lahansai District, Buriram Province and it is the expansion school under Buriram Primary Educational Area Service Office 3 believes that extensive reading will help the students at grade 7 students at Ban Nongtakrong School improve their English reading comprehension For this reason, the researcher employs extensive reading approach to improve students' reading comprehension and this approach will encourage students to have a positive thought in reading and become bookworm eventually.

Purposes of the Study

1) To compare students' reading comprehension achievement before and after learning through extensive reading to develop reading comprehension for grade 7 students.

2) To investigate students' satisfaction toward learning through extensive reading to develop reading comprehension.

3) To investigate the retention of grade 7 students to reading comprehension by using extensive reading approach.

Methodology

1. Population and Samples

The population of this research consisted of 120 grade 7 students of the academic year 2021 from the 9 schools of Samrong-mai school cluster, Lahansai District, Buriram Province under Buriram Primary Educational Area Service Office 3.

The samples in this research composed of 26 grade 7 students who studied the Fundamental English Course (E21101) in the first semester of the academic year 2021 at Ban Nongtakrong School, Lahansai District, Buriram Province under Buriram Primary Educational Area Service Office 3. They were selected by purposive sampling technique because this class consisted of a mix of low, moderate and high proficiency students. The samples were grouped based on English Reading Course achievement test score in the previous academic year 2019. The reason to group the samples using previous score of on English Reading Course in the academic year 2019 because the researcher found students' scores on English Reading Course were low than it should be.

2. Research Instruments

2.1 Six lesson plans for teaching extensive reading to develop comprehension for grade 7 students who will study the Fundamental English Course (E21101) at Ban Nongtakrong School in the first semester of the academic year 2021. Each lesson plan will totally last 3 hours. The whole lesson plan will be totally 18 hours.

2.2 The English reading test through extensive reading for grade 7 students conducted by the researcher of 10 items for multiple choice, 5 true or false, 5 matching items and 10 vocabulary quizzes. The whole English reading tests were totally 30 items.

2.3 Reading materials were short stories employed as reading instruments to gather data concerning the students' reading comprehension through extensive reading.

2.4 A set of questionnaires of students' satisfaction toward English reading was designed to collect the data from the students after learning reading through extensive reading.

3. Data Collection

3.1 To start the research, the students were asked to do the pre-test which consisted of 30 multiple-choices in 1 hour.

3.2 The students were informed the objectives of this research and the procedure of the eight-week extensive reading. Since the short-story length was not very long and students would possibly finish reading each short story in one week.

3.3 Regarding to the development of students' English reading comprehension using the extensive reading approach, the students required to read short stories that they voted eight stories, and three hours per each story.



3.4 After reading each short story, students did the mini-test in order to check their comprehension of the text.

3.5 After attending English reading comprehension using the extensive reading approach, the post-test was used to evaluate the samples' English reading comprehension for 1 hour.

3.6 The samples were asked to fill out the questionnaires focusing on their satisfaction after being taught reading comprehension toward the extensive reading approach.

3.7 Fourteen days after the posttest, the researcher let students do the delayed post-test. They spent approximately 1 hour doing the test.

Data Analysis

1. The Data Obtained from the Pre-test and Post-test

According to the evaluation of the samples about their English reading comprehension before and after being taught through the extensive reading approach, the researcher analyzed the pre-test and post-test to compute and find out the percentage (%), mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation (S.D.).

The researcher used the dependent samples t-test to compare the difference between the pre-test and the post-test mean scores to find out a significant difference set at .05 level.

2. The Data Obtained from the Satisfaction Questionnaire

The evaluation of students' satisfaction was calculated for the mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation (S.D.). The following will be the criteria for levels for analysis of each question (Srisa-ard. 2002: 99-103):

3. Participants' Additional Opinion Data

This section was the open-ended questions that the researcher required the participants to give more opinions and suggestions about learning English reading comprehension toward the extensive reading approach. The researcher used the content analysis technique to detect the satisfaction and reaction of participants.

Findings

1. Research Question One: Does the extensive reading help increase students' reading comprehension achievement?

This section reports the results of the analysis of the quantitative data from English reading test employed in this research to compare students' reading comprehension before and after learning through the extensive reading approach. Pre-test scores (30 scores) and post-test scores (30 scores) were compared to find out the statistically significant difference as shown in Table 1, respectively.

Table 1: Comparison of the Difference between Pre-test and Post-test Mean Scores

| Learning Achievement | n | Total Scores | \bar{x} | S.D. | t |
|----------------------|----|--------------|-----------|------|--------|
| Pre-test | 26 | 285 | 10.96 | 1.61 | 24.68* |
| Post-test | 26 | 652 | 25.08 | 1.76 | |

*Significant difference at .05

As shown in Table 1, it indicates that the students who learned English reading comprehension through the extensive reading approach had higher reading comprehension had higher learning achievement on post-test mean scores (\bar{x} = 25.08) than the pre-test mean scores (\bar{x} = 10.96) at the .05 level of the statistically significant difference ($t = 24.68$).

2. Research Question Two: Does the extensive reading improve the students' satisfaction through reading comprehension?

This section reports the results of the analysis of the quantitative data from the questionnaire used in this study to find out the students' satisfaction after learning reading comprehension through the extensive reading approach. The results were shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Students' Satisfaction after Learning Reading Comprehension through the Extensive Reading Approach

| No. | Statements | \bar{x} | S.D. | Level |
|--------------------|--|-------------|-------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | The extensive reading improves my reading comprehension skills. | 4.77 | 0.42 | The Highest Satisfactory |
| 2 | The extensive reading helps me learn new words. | 4.65 | 0.68 | The Highest Satisfactory |
| 3 | The number of books is enough for the extensive reading approach. | 4.50 | 0.75 | Higher Satisfactory |
| 4 | The level of difficulty of each book appropriates students' level | 4.62 | 0.68 | The Highest Satisfactory |
| 5 | The extensive reading approach helps me understand better the reading from your regular class text book. | 4.73 | 0.59 | The Highest Satisfactory |
| 6 | The extensive reading approach is useful because it helps me learning English while learning about thing that you enjoy. | 4.54 | 0.75 | The Highest Satisfactory |
| 7 | The extensive reading helps me get a better a grade because it makes me a better reader. | 4.58 | 0.69 | The Highest Satisfactory |
| 8 | The extensive reading makes me better at reading speed and comprehension. | 4.62 | 0.74 | The Highest Satisfactory |
| 9 | The extensive reading approach should be added in every semester. | 4.73 | 0.52 | The Highest Satisfactory |
| 10 | I have a positive attitude through learning English reading comprehension after learning through the extensive reading approach. | 4.69 | 0.61 | The Highest Satisfactory |
| Grand Total | | 4.64 | 0.58 | The Highest Satisfactory |



As shown in Table 2, it indicates that grade 7 students were the highest satisfactory with English reading comprehension through the extensive reading approach in overall ($\bar{X} = 4.64$, S.D. = 0.58). It is noticeable that the three highest mean score were no. 1 “The extensive reading improves my reading comprehension skills.” ($\bar{X}=4.77$, S.D. = 0.42), followed by no. 9 “The extensive reading approach should be added in every semester.” ($\bar{X} = 4.73$, S.D. = 0.52), and no. 10 “I have a positive attitude through learning English reading comprehension after learning through the

extensive reading approach. ($\bar{X}= 4.69$, S.D. = 0.61), respectively.

3. Research Question Three: Does the extensive reading sustain students’ retention through reading comprehension?

This section reports the students’ retention of English reading comprehension through the extension reading approach. The researcher used the post-test and delayed post-test scores from the English test were compared by using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results were shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Comparison of the Experimental Group’s Scores Obtained from the Post-test and the Delayed Post-test (n = 26)

| Learning Achievement | n | Total Scores | \bar{X} | S.D. | t |
|----------------------|----|--------------|-----------|------|------|
| Post-test | 26 | 652 | 25.08 | 1.76 | .703 |
| Delayed Post-test | 26 | 650 | 25.00 | 1.50 | |

As Shown in Table 3, the mean score of the delayed post-test ($\bar{X} = 25.00$, S.D.=1.50) was lower than the post-test ($\bar{X} = 25.08$, S.D. = 1.76). In this research, the result indicated that the English test scores of the students’ English reading comprehension through the extensive reading were not different between the post-test and the delayed post-test scores that means students had retention for English reading comprehension through the extensive reading approach.

Discussion

1. Comparison of the Students’ English Reading Comprehension between Post-test and Pre-test Mean Scores

The result disclosed that the students’ English reading comprehension post-test

mean scores was higher than the pre-test mean scores with statistically significant difference at .05 level. This is because the researcher reviewed the related literature, for instance, the Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (A.D. 2008), reading theories, the extensive reading approach, and a syllabus for secondary level of English subject and contents of reading for grade 7 students before construction the test. Afterwards, the tests were edited and revised by the thesis advisors. Then, the researcher enhanced the tests based on their suggestions. In addition, the tests were examined and evaluated by the experts to find out the validity. Again, the researcher enhanced the tests following to their suggestions. Furthermore, the researcher followed the steps of learning English reading comprehension through the extensive

reading. Moreover, the lessons were tried out and found the efficiency before used with the samples. For this reason, students who learned English reading comprehension through the extensive reading had higher scores of reading comprehension.

2. The Student's Satisfaction toward English Reading Comprehension after Learning through the Extensive Reading Approach

The result illustrated that students' satisfaction toward English reading comprehension after learning through the extensive reading approach as a whole were at "the highest satisfactory". This could be explained that learning English reading comprehension through the extensive reading approach made the students had more satisfactory with learning the lessons. This could be summarized that the lessons were evaluated the quality by the experts therefore the lessons have high quality, appropriate contents, and are suitable for students' level. The students gave the three highest mean score, no. 1 "The extensive reading improves my reading comprehension skills." followed by no. 9 "The extensive reading approach should be added in every semester.", and no. 10 "I have a positive attitude through learning English reading comprehension after learning through the extensive reading approach. that showed learning English Reading comprehension through the extensive reading approach can improve students' English reading comprehension. Moreover, the opinion from open-ended questions showed that most students stated that learning English reading comprehension through the extensive reading approach made them know how to start reading comprehension in various topics, enjoy the lessons, activities and

exercises a lot, satisfied with this teaching method, feel more confident and motivated in reading including be better in reading comprehension. Similarly,

3. The Students' Retention of English Reading Comprehension through the Extensive Reading Approach

The results showed that the mean score of the delayed post-test was lower than the post-test. This is could be explained that the English test scores of students' English reading comprehension through the extensive reading approach were not different between the post-test and the delayed post-test scores.

The finding of this research could be considered that fourteen days after the students finished the post-test; the delayed post-test was given to them for checking their target of reading comprehension after the treatment. They spent approximately one hour doing the test. It indicated that learning English reading comprehension through the extensive approach improve students' short-term memory. However, the students learning English reading comprehension through the extensive approach gained significantly scores. The result of the delayed post-test showed that the students retained lower scores than they obtained in the post-test. It was obvious that reading comprehension through the extensive reading approach of students fade out fourteen days after the treatment. Therefore, the result pointed out clearly that learning English reading comprehension through the extensive approach of grade 7 students could help them memorize long term-memory of their reading comprehension. This is confirmed by theory of retention from Sheu (2003) that the length of time for checking the



students' retention after learning is 14 days, because the short-term memory will become long-term memory.

Conclusion

This research aimed: 1) to compare students' reading comprehension achievement before and after learning through extensive reading to develop reading comprehension for grade 7 students; 2) to investigate students' satisfaction toward learning through extensive reading to develop reading comprehension; and 3) to investigate the retention of grade 7 students to reading comprehension by using extensive reading approach. The research hypotheses were: 1) the post-test mean score of students' English reading comprehension is higher than pre-test mean score; 2) students' satisfaction after learning English reading comprehension through the extensive approach in overall was at the highest level; and 3) there is not different between the post-test mean score and the delayed post-test mean score in English reading comprehension through the extensive reading approach.

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