

# An Analysis of Factors Affecting the English Reading Comprehension of Mattayomsuksa 5 Students in Amphur Mueang, Lampang Province

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## Abstract

This research analyses the factors affecting the English reading ability of 1,827 Mattayomsuksa 5 students attending both government and private schools in city and non-city areas of Amphur Mueang, Lampang province in the 2015 academic year. Purposive sampling of 78 students was utilized, and data were collected through a questionnaire, a reading comprehension test and interviews. Multiple factors affecting reading ability were determined and divided into the three internal factors of learning preferences, motivation, and attitude, and the three external factors of teaching techniques, texts and environment. Quantitative data were analyzed with descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) and the reliability coefficient of Cronbach's alpha was also deployed.

The results reveal that all respondents believed that the selection of the texts that they read was the most important factor affecting their English reading ability. Moreover, respondents scored 'attitude' as a highly important factor, while 'environment', 'motivation', 'learning preferences' and 'teaching technique' were seen as moderately important factors. A discussion of the findings, and conclusions for the development of teaching and studying are also presented.

**Keywords:** Factors affecting English reading ability, Reading for comprehension, Mattayomsuksa 5 students, L1, L2

### บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้วิเคราะห์ปัจจัยที่มีอิทธิพลต่อความสามารถในการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อความเข้าใจของนักเรียนระดับมัธยมศึกษาปีที่ 5 ในปีการศึกษา 2558 จำนวนทั้งสิ้น 1,827 คน ทั้งจากโรงเรียนรัฐบาลและเอกชนในเขตตัวเมืองและเขตท้องถิ่น อ.เมือง จ.ลำปาง นอกจากนี้จะมีการสำรวจความคิดเห็นของนักเรียนระดับมัธยมศึกษาปีที่ 5 จากแบบสอบถาม ยังมีการเก็บข้อมูลเชิงลึก โดยการสุ่มกลุ่มตัวอย่างในการทำแบบทดสอบและการตอบแบบสัมภาษณ์ของนักเรียนทั้งสิ้น 78 คน การวิเคราะห์ปัจจัยที่มีอิทธิพลต่อความสามารถในการอ่านแบ่งออกเป็นปัจจัยภายใน 3 ด้านที่มาจากความพึงพอใจในการเรียนรู้ แรงจูงใจ และทัศนคติ และปัจจัยภายนอกอีก 3 ด้านนั่นคือ กลยุทธ์ในการสอน เนื้อหาบทอ่าน และสภาพแวดล้อมในการเรียนรู้ อีกทั้งมีการวิเคราะห์ค่าสถิติจากข้อมูลเชิงปริมาณโดยการหาค่าความถี่ ค่าร้อยละ ค่าเฉลี่ย และค่าส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน นอกจากนี้ยังมีการหาค่าความเชื่อมั่นแบบสอบถามทั้งฉบับโดยใช้วิธีสัมประสิทธิ์แอลฟาของครอนบาค

ผลของการวิจัยพบว่าผู้ตอบแบบสอบถามเชื่อว่าการเลือกเนื้อหาบทอ่านเป็นปัจจัยสำคัญที่สุดที่มีอิทธิพลต่อความสามารถในการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษ ยิ่งไปกว่านั้น ผู้ตอบแบบสอบถามได้ให้คะแนนทัศนคติในการเรียนรู้ว่าเป็นอีกหนึ่งปัจจัยที่สำคัญอย่างมากไม่แพ้กัน ในขณะที่สภาพแวดล้อม แรงจูงใจ ความพึงพอใจในการเรียนรู้ และกลยุทธ์ในการสอนถูกมองว่าเป็นปัจจัยที่สำคัญรองลงมา ซึ่งข้อสรุปดังกล่าวได้จากการอภิปรายผลการวิจัย รวมทั้งข้อเสนอแนะในการปรับปรุงและพัฒนาการเรียนการสอนอีกด้วย

**คำสำคัญ** ปัจจัยที่มีอิทธิพล ความสามารถในการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษ การอ่านเพื่อความเข้าใจ นักเรียนระดับมัธยมศึกษาปีที่ 5 ภาษาแม่ ภาษาที่สอง

## Background of the Study

Reading is a skill that is necessary for those who are seeking knowledge. More specifically, the integration of the ASEAN Community in 2016 also points to the great importance of English language ability in all sectors of life in Thailand but beyond this, reading is a skill necessary for learning; Aksaranugraha (1989) observes that the language learner who has studied English in Thailand (thus as a foreign language) has the opportunity to use the skill of reading more than the other skills and thus of all four skills, reading is the skill on which teachers focus the most. However, among much other research, Seelor (1978) and Nilagupta (1982) show that most Thai students have only a low proficiency in English reading and they conclude that the English reading ability of many Thai students was not sufficiently high for them to make use of English-language resources such as textbooks, magazines and newspapers. (Cited in Tarahorm Kongkeaw, 2014) Mingsakoon (2003) states that the four language skills are tools to achieve English language proficiency but that reading is more important than the other three skills as it is an important means of acquiring knowledge. Indeed, a wide variety of English-language printed materials are available for Thai people to read, while opportunities to speak, listen and write are not as easy to come by in daily life.

In 2014, Mattayomsuksa 6 students sitting the O-NET exam achieved an average score of 23.12% but it was found that scores were related to school size, with extra-large schools having the highest average scores in English and large, mid-sized, and small schools having progressively lower scores (The Educational Testing Center, 2014). Furthermore, regional differences were observed, with the northern region having the second highest average scores (19.25%) after the central region and it is therefore possible that the environment in which students live and study may affect their performance and ability in English. Similarly, when considering the literacy rates of different groups of schools in Thailand, the results of testing for reading proficiency in the PISA tests between 2000 to 2012 (OECD, 2013) reveal that more *satit* (or demonstration) schools had scores at level 5 or above than scores below level 2. On the other hand, fewer students at schools under the jurisdiction of the Department of General Education or in private schools, Bangkok Metropolitan Area schools, government vocational colleges and private vocational colleges scored at level 5 or above. Although PISA tested reading proficiency in the native language, there is some relationship between L1 and L2 reading, as discussed in much of the research. Cummins (2000, cited in Brevik, Olsen and Hellekjær, 2016) observes that “academic proficiency transfers across languages such that students who have developed literacy in their L1 will tend to make stronger progress in acquiring literacy in their second language” (p.173). Koda (2005, 2007) shows that a significant difference between reading in a native language (L1) and in a foreign language (L2) is that readers undertake L2 reading with a dual-language practice. Moreover, as cited in Brevik, Olsen and Hellekjær (2016), Bernhardt’s (2011) compensatory model of L2 reading asserts that reading variance affects other factors and that a weakness in one area might be compensated for by knowledge from another. Bernhardt also tried to rate the significance of ‘L1 literacy’ and estimates that this accounts for up to 20% of variance, ‘L2 linguistic knowledge’ accounts for another 30% and ‘undescribed variance’ describes the remaining 50%. Similarly, Jeon and Yamashita (2014) use Koda’s (2007) work on linguistic distance to explain how reading comprehension in L1 and L2 may differ in proportion to the distance between the two languages.

The work described above accords with the researcher’s own experiences in teaching English to tertiary students; very few students have advanced abilities in reading English and this affects the management of their English learning and teaching. Indeed, even students majoring in English regularly show significant problems with their reading in the language and so the researcher was interested in analyzing the factors affecting English reading ability. In the case of this research, this was with regard to Mattayomsuksa 5 students and the outcome will, it is hoped, be useful for the development of teaching and studying in this field.

## **Methodology**

### ***Research Subjects***

Population and purposive sampling were used in this study. The subjects comprised 1,827 Mattayomsuksa 5 students (enrolled in the 2015 academic year) attending both government and private schools in Amphur Mueang, Lampang province. The sampling group consisted of 78 students from those 1,827.

### ***Instruments***

Three instruments were used in the research: a questionnaire, a reading comprehension test, and interview questions. The questionnaire had three parts: (1) general information; (2) an assessment of factors affecting English reading ability based on a study of variability in reading comprehension by RAND reading study group (2002), Horiba and Fukaya's study (2015), and an investigation of multiple factors affecting English-language learners' reading abilities by Woo (2009); and (3) opinions related to other factors affecting English reading ability. In total, the questionnaire included 45 items covering the six proposed factors affecting reading ability, with the importance of each item rated by respondents on a five-point Likert scale. These factors can be divided into two main areas: those which are internal (learning preferences, motivation and attitudes) and those which are external (teaching techniques, reading texts and environments). The reading comprehension test consisted of 25 questions on five different texts, each of a different type. These text genres were: a cartoon, an academic research article, a magazine article, a post from a social network, and text from a website describing Thai customs, traditions, environment, and culture. The difficulty of the language and the structures used in the passages were selected from materials aimed at high school level and above. Thirdly, six interview questions were used to explore students' reading strategies, comprehension and the factors affecting these.

### ***The Reliability and Validity of Instruments***

To ensure the reliability of the questionnaire, the test and the interview questions, a group of three native-speaking English teachers who have been teaching at Lampang Rajabhat University in the English language program for between five and ten years and another teacher who also teaches English reading were consulted. In addition, SPSS was used to check the reliability of the questionnaire and the test through the application of Cronbach's alpha.

In addition to this, the literature review also helped to underscore the validity of the questionnaire, the test, and the interview questions. To avoid mistakes and to establish further the accuracy of the instruments, 21 Mattayomsuksa 5 pupils enrolled at Kho Kha Wittayakom School were invited to participate in a pilot study. The questions were all multiple choice so these respondents were able to answer all of them but the scores on some test items were low and following discussion with the native speaking English

teachers who helped with this research, it was decided that a number-should be deleted due to their difficulty. Thus, following the pilot, 15 questions were actually used in the research.

### ***Distribution, Collection, and Analysis of Data***

The questionnaire was sent to all Mattayomsuksa 5 students in Amphur Mueang, Lampang province. This was accomplished as follows.

1. The researchers telephoned each school and then sent each a description of the purposes and aims of the research, along with details about how it was to be conducted.

2. At each school, the researchers gave the questionnaires to a designated teacher, who was to arrange for students to complete the forms and then to collect them.

3. The researchers tested and interviewed a sample drawn from three schools. This was to collect in-depth data.

4. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) were used to analyze the data and the test scores. Following this, the interviews were analyzed and compared, and the opinions of the respondents were correlated with the outcomes.

## **Results and Discussion**

### ***Factors Affecting English Reading Comprehension***

*Table 1: Factors affecting English reading comprehension*

All factors	$\bar{x}$
Text	3.66
Attitude	3.57
Environment	3.50
Motivation	3.36
Learning preferences	3.29
Teaching techniques	3.29

N=1,827

Overall, students rated texts and attitude as the factors that highly affected their English reading ability. The remaining factors (environment, motivation, learning preferences, and teaching techniques) were considered to be moderately important.

***Internal and External Factors Affecting English Reading Comprehension****Table 2: Internal and external factors affecting English reading comprehension*

Internal factors	$\bar{x}$	External factors	$\bar{x}$
Learning preferences, motivation, and attitude	3.41	Teaching techniques, texts, and environments	3.49

N=1,827

With a rating of 3.49 compared to 3.41, students rated external factors as slightly more important than internal factors.

*Table 2.1: Correlations*

	Internal Factors	External Factors
Internal Factors	1	.849**
Pearson Correlation		
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	1681	1612
External Factors	.849**	1
Pearson Correlation		
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	1612	1737

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

There was a very strong positive correlation (0.849) between the two groups of factors and this was significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Thus, as one group tended to be rated higher or lower, there was a strong tendency for the other to be rated in the same direction.

***Data Analysis of Textual Factors****Table 3: Text types affecting English reading comprehension*

Texts (Reading passages)	$\bar{x}$	S.D.
Illustrated texts	3.80	.936
Texts of a suitable length	3.74	.936
Texts on an interesting topic	3.73	.898
Texts which are well organized and designed	3.69	.921
Texts which are in accord with the student's schemata or background knowledge	3.57	.892

<b>Texts (Reading passages)</b>	$\bar{x}$	<b>S.D.</b>
Texts with simple grammar and structure	3.56	.914
Texts which are connected with the student's life or previous life, environment, culture, tradition or lifestyle	3.54	.849
<b>Overall</b>	3.66	

N=1,827

Overall, students rated the texts themselves as the most important of all the factors (3.66). When considering each type of text, the students rated all of the seven items as very important.

*Table 4: Attitudes affecting English reading ability*

<b>Attitude</b>	$\bar{x}$	<b>S.D.</b>
Desire to know about other cultures, traditions and lifestyles from reading	3.73	.892
Pride in oneself for being able to read in another language	3.68	.966
A desire to know about the text being read	3.66	.870
Enjoyment of reading	3.64	.878
A preference for a teaching technique	3.47	.888
Confidence in reading greater than other skills	3.25	.908
<b>Overall</b>	3.57	

N=1,827

As can be seen from Table 4, when each attitude was considered, the students rated four as being highly important and the other two as moderately important factors.

*Table 5: Environment affecting English reading ability*

<b>Environment (surroundings, society and cultures where the reader lives)</b>	$\bar{x}$	<b>S.D.</b>
Being encouraged to read in English by one's school	3.70	.898
The importance which society places on reading in English	3.62	.897
Being in an environment which encourages a student to be able to read in English	3.61	.907
Being encouraged to read in English by one's family	3.49	.963
Living in the same environment as native speakers	3.45	.998
Living in an environment which resembles that of native speakers	3.36	.990

<b>Environment (surroundings, society and cultures where the reader lives)</b>	$\bar{x}$	<b>S.D.</b>
Living in an environment which is different to that of native speakers	3.29	.993
<b>Overall</b>	3.50	

N=1,827

Table 5 shows that overall, students rated environments as a moderately important factor (3.50). Regarding the individual items, the students rated three as highly important and the remainder as moderately important.

*Table 6: Motivations affecting English reading ability*

<b>Motivation</b>	$\bar{x}$	<b>S.D.</b>
A requirement to succeed in a future career	3.96	1.024
An interest in reading the text	3.54	.887
A desire to gain more knowledge	3.47	.858
A requirement to relate to or be involved with native speakers	3.41	1.079
A love of reading	3.32	.887
Gaining better scores on a test	3.24	.905
Being praised or winning an award	3.00	1.000
Planning to study abroad	2.94	1.316
<b>Overall</b>	3.36	

N=1,827

In line with Table 6, it was expected that being able to read English for use in a future career (3.96) was going to be a greater motivation than an interest in reading texts or a desire to gain more knowledge.

*Table 7: Learning preferences affecting English reading ability*

<b>Learning Preferences</b>	$\bar{x}$	<b>S.D.</b>
Using pictures	3.62	.865
Finding keywords	3.49	.887
Reading frequently	3.35	.890
Finding the main ideas	3.20	.855
Questioning to review a schema	3.18	.888
Using knowledge of grammar and structure	3.11	.896
Using speed reading techniques	3.10	.823
<b>Overall</b>	3.29	

N=1,827



Table 7 shows that respondents rated learning preferences (3.29) together with teaching technique as the least important factors. Using pictures was rated as important, while the remaining six items were rated as moderately important.

*Table 8: Teaching techniques affecting English reading ability*

<b>Teaching Techniques (Applying teachers' techniques to students' own reading)</b>	$\bar{x}$	S.D.
Guessing words from the context	3.55	.838
Identifying the major and minor details in a text	3.36	.863
Guessing words from roots and affixes	3.36	.902
Identifying facts and opinions in a text	3.29	.834
Summarizing a text and producing an outline of it	3.29	.856
Skimming the text before reading it	3.28	.885
Identifying a purpose for reading	3.26	.791
Analyzing the grammar and structure to predict the tone of the text	3.24	.862
Building student awareness of reading strategies	3.24	.828
Asking questions before, during and after reading	3.08	.879
Overall	3.29	

N=1,827

It can be seen that overall, students rated teaching techniques the joint least important factor (3.29) alongside learning preferences.

### *Scores for the Reading Comprehension Test*

*Table 9 Test scores of sampled students*

Types of reading passage	Min	Max	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Percent
Website related to Thai environment, lifestyle and culture	0	3	1.58	0.987	52.56
Social media post	0	3	1.33	.989	44.44
Academic text	0	3	1.31	.842	43.59
Magazine article	0	3	1.13	.917	37.61
Cartoon	0	3	1.06	.795	35.47
Total	1	13	6.41	2.756	42.74

n=78

The reading test was based on five different types of texts and understanding of each text was tested on five questions. For each text, students were asked about the author's purposes and attitudes, and about supporting details. They also had to summarize,

draw inferences, provide references, and demonstrate understanding of vocabulary. Each question was in the form of a four-way multiple choice. Initially, there were 25 items on the test; questions 1 to 5 were on the cartoon, 6 to 10 were on the academic text, 11 to 15 were on the magazine article, 16 to 20 were on the social media post, and 21 to 25 were on the website article about the Thai environment, lifestyle and culture.

After piloting the test, only 15 items were found to be suitable because 10 questions had to be removed because their difficulty led to low scores. Two questions were excluded for each text, these being questions 1, 2, 8, 10, 11, 12, 18, 20, 23 and 24. Questions 1 and 2 asked students to draw an inference, 3, 4 and 5 asked for summaries and details, 6, 7 and 9 tested for main ideas and details, 8 and 10 assessed ability to identify details and to show critical thinking skills, 11 and 12 asked about main ideas and the vocabulary used for general or proper nouns, 13 to 15 asked about vocabulary, details and summaries, 16, 17, and 19 tested understanding of the author's purpose, inferences and details (using logical thinking), 18 and 20 (both excluded) asked about vocabulary and the author's attitude, 21, 22 and 25 posed questions about details and using context clues and background knowledge to understand vocabulary, and 23 and 24 (both also excluded) assessed understanding of details and references.

### ***Interview Questions***

*Table 10: The figures of passage selection affect reading performance and comprehension in the perception of sampled students*

<b><i>Types of reading passages</i></b>	<b><i>1. Which passage did students understand the most and why was this?</i></b>	<b><i>2. Which passage did students understand the least and why was this?</i></b>	<b><i>5. If students could choose to answer question on any of the five passages in the test, which passage would they choose and why?</i></b>	<b><i>6. If students could choose to read one of the five passages without being tested on it, which passage would they choose and why?</i></b>	<b><i>Total</i></b>
1. Website related to Thai environment, lifestyle and culture	53	2	39	17	111
2. Social Media post	26	2	31	37	96
3. Academic text	1	40	3	6	50
4. Cartoon	5	22	5	14	46
5. Magazine article	0	13	0	5	18
<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b><i>85*</i></b>	<b><i>79*</i></b>	<b><i>78</i></b>	<b><i>79*</i></b>	<b><i>321</i></b>

*n=78*

*\*The respondents answered more than one type of passages for some questions and some respondents did not give any specific passage to the questions.*

Following table 10, most respondents answered the first question that they understood the passage the most from the website related to the Thai environment, lifestyle and culture because the text discussed a Thai tradition that they had studied and so they were able to use a pre-existing schemata to help understand the meaning of the text. The text also described an annual Thai tradition and so students had experienced this in person.

Many students also agreed that the passage from social media was the second easiest passage to read and that it was understandable because it contained no difficult vocabulary or grammar. It was also printed in big, clear letters which made it easy to read. Moreover, much of the content was predictable from context clues and pre-existing schemata. The cartoon was more active and this made the reading passage more interesting, especially since it was short and used simple vocabulary.

Most answered the second question that they understood the passage the least from the academic text. Different reasons were given but these included the fact that the vocabulary was too difficult, the text was unillustrated, the grammar was complicated, the text was too long, students were not interested in the content, they lacked background knowledge, and the text contained too many details which made it too boring and so weak readers were demotivated. In addition, the questions on the text were complicated and contained difficult vocabulary.

Most students answered the fifth question that this would be the passage from the website on the Thai environment, lifestyle and culture if they could choose to answer question on any of the five passages in the test. Various reasons were given:

- The text was connected to Thailand.
- It was possible to use pre-existing schemata to predict meanings and content.
- The text contained simple vocabulary with a familiar story and this made it easier to understand.
- The story had been frequently taught and this made comprehension easier and quicker.
- It was possible to find and summarize the main idea.
- The text described a Thai tradition so it was easy to translate and to understand.

Many students answered that the passage taken from social media would also be preferred on a test. They also provide many logical reasons as follows:

- It was possible to guess the vocabulary from pictures.
- Some vocabulary was familiar from multiple media sources.
- The text was short and the content was easy to understand. Students were also attracted by the inclusion of a well-known cartoon character.
- Pictures made the text more interesting and helped to convey meaning.
- The text contained no complicated grammar or vocabulary.

For the sixth question, most students reported that they would read the passage from the social media post if they could choose to read one of the five passages without being tested on it. There are a range of descriptions.

- It was a short text and the illustrations made it more enjoyable to read.
- It contained easy and familiar vocabulary, which made it more understandable.
- The fact that it was illustrated with a popular cartoon character made it more appealing.
- This text was easier to read and to summarize because respondents have their own pre-existing schemata.
- It was possible to read the text rapidly and to see the meaning clearly.
- It was a short text so it was easy to grasp the main idea.

In addition, a large number of students chose to read the passage from the website related to Thai environment, lifestyle and culture if they could choose without being tested on it. Students reported that they already had a schema that they could bring to this text and thought that this text was more understandable than the rest. Moreover, the content was enjoyable and was related to Thai people. Also, the vocabulary that was used was familiar and this made it easy to understand.

*Table 11: The amount of interviewees responded to comprehension question of yes and no with reasons included*

<b>Interview question no. 3</b>	<b>(Yes) Better understanding</b>	<b>(No) Not understanding</b>
Did test questions lead to better reading comprehension and if so how?	62 students	16 students

n=78

The third question asked whether and how test questions lead to comprehension. Not surprisingly the majority of students (62 out of 78) answered ‘yes’ to this, giving an interesting range of explanations for their answers. These included: having been asked a question, they could then grasp the main idea of the passage; they found it easier to review the contents of the text after reading the questions; the questions gave clues which helped students answer more easily; because the test was in the form of multiple choice, the questions contained the correct answer; the respondents were able better to analyze and re-frame the contents by processing their prior knowledge while reading the questions; and questions helped respondents to better understand the writer’s purpose, the texts main idea and the meaning of the vocabulary.

Table 12: The interview results of strategies use before, during and after reading in question no.4.1, 4.2 and 4.3

Q4.1 The strategy uses <u>before</u> reading	No. of items chosen	Q4.2 The strategy uses <u>during</u> reading	No. of items chosen	Q4.3 The strategy uses <u>after</u> reading	No. of items chosen
1. Using one's prior knowledge to predict the text	56	1. Guessing the meaning of words from context	46	1. Identifying major and minor details in the text	37
2. Summarizing the text	15	2. Identifying the major and minor details of the text	29	2. Summarizing the text	27
3. Setting a purpose for reading	9	3. Guessing the meanings of words from roots and affixes	15	3. Verifying the strategies used after reading	17
4. Setting questions before reading the text	8	4. Skimming the text	8	4. Identifying facts and opinions	7
		5. Analyzing the text's grammar and structure to predict its tone	7	5. A strategy of questioning after reading passage	6
		6. Questioning oneself when reading the passage	6		
		7. Summarizing the text	6		
		8. Identifying facts and opinions in the text	2		
Total of strategy uses before reading	88**	Total of strategy uses during reading	119**	Total of strategy uses after reading	94**

n=78

\*\*Some respondents used more than one strategy before, during and after reading

The fourth question asked whether students knew what they should do to help them understand the passage before, during, and after reading it. Four strategies were reported for use before reading. Eight strategies to use during reading were described in the table and finally four post-reading comprehension strategies were identified. It was found that predicting the text from prior knowledge was the most commonly chosen strategy for use before reading. While reading, guessing the meaning of words from context clues was the most common strategy, although identifying the major and minor details in the text was also popular, as was guessing word meanings from roots and affixes. Other strategies were less popular. After reading, identifying the major and minor details of the text was also the most popular strategy.

Many students also summarized the text and verified their own strategies after reading. Some students reported the use of other strategies including: finding keywords; rereading if the text was not understood; looking at any accompanying pictures; trying to understand the topic before reading; finding an interesting text to read or skim; studying

new vocabulary to build one’s own fluency; using one’s own prior-knowledge (or schemata); predicting what the text would contain; answering the questions that had been posed before reading; finding vocabulary that related to and clarified the text; and finding unclear points and then translating them.

**Discussion**

This study attempts to answer which factors affect English reading ability for comprehension of Mattayomsuksa 5 students from Amphur Mueang, Lampang Province. Therefore, the results, discussion and recommendation are provided to give the research more empirical evidence.

<b>Results</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
Texts and attitudes were rated by respondents as important factors.	Students regard these as having affected their understanding of English reading in general. Indeed, if a reader finds a text boring, this will clearly affect his or her attitude.	Research on the factors affecting English reading comprehension will help teachers to be better able to adapt their teaching techniques or text selection to students’ understanding of their own reasons for improving their reading.
The results of the survey of students’ perceptions	The mean scores of each factor might influence the sequence of activities in the classroom and this would be to the advantage of the learner.	The results reflect only the reported beliefs of these students and so these factors should be further tested in real classes and then evaluated since this would help to make the results more concrete and the follow-up research to this might then be to put these findings into practice.
	<p>A teacher might select illustrated texts of a suitable length on an interesting topic that will be useful in students’ future careers and then encourage students to combine techniques for guessing word meanings, and identifying major and minor details and facts and opinions.</p> <p>This might increase students’ interest and enjoyment in finding out about other cultures, traditions and lifestyles through reading. In addition, finding keywords and reading frequently may also be techniques that better match students’ preferences as regards the encouragement they receive and the expectations of their family, school and society.</p>	
The passage on the website that was on the	Teachers can utilize the background knowledge of students by	

<b>Results</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
<p>topic of the Thai environment, lifestyle and culture was the most preferred</p>	<p>using authentic materials written by foreigners about the history, customs and culture of Thailand.</p> <p>In this case, students may have prior knowledge of the topic (which they may have read about or studied in Thai before reading about it in English) and so the students should more easily understand vocabulary in the text. Given this familiarity with the topic, they may more easily understand the entire text.</p>	
<p>Students achieved their lowest test scores on questions about the cartoon.</p>	<p>The cartoon used in the test was one which had been taken from a daily English-language (but not Thailand-based) newspaper. The target audience for this was thus both older and of a different nationality to the students and so the cartoon contained many references which required the reader to draw inferences. This was chosen because there was no alternative cartoon available that was suitable for the level of the students taking the test.</p> <p>In the case of this research, the second interview question asked students which passage they understood the least, and some answered that this was the cartoon because, among other reasons, they said that they lacked the necessary background knowledge and that cartoons may contain unknown, difficult and complicated vocabulary, and this made the writer's purpose unclear.</p>	<p>Based on a comparison of the questionnaires, the test results and the interviews, the category of texts with pictures needs to be further investigated by testing with a different cartoon. Instead of a cartoon from a newspaper, the cartoon could be taken from an elementary or primary school children's book.</p> <p>To further research this, a comparison of responses to these two sources could be analyzed and the impact of this change on learners' comprehension assessed. This study could investigate the extent to which the cartoon/text was appropriate to the students' level and how far the content should be related to students' background knowledge.</p>
<p>Texts related to students' current or previous living environment, culture, tradition, and lifestyle were rated the least important of the factors, but students also scored highest on these passages in the test.</p>	<p>In their interviews, the first question asked which passage students understood the most and they answered that it was that which related to their background knowledge.</p> <p>The students gave many reasons for the ease they had in answering, including the fact that the texts related to Thai annual traditions so this was all familiar material which had been taught and studied previously. Students could also guess the meanings of</p>	

Results	Discussion	Recommendation
	words and make predictions based on their prior knowledge and experience.	
The statistical analysis shows that all text types were regarded as being highly important factors in determining reading comprehension and that this was statistically significant.	<p>In comparison to other factors, texts with pictures received the highest score and when interviewed, students reported that they thought that pictures accompanying a text made them feel at ease and that illustrated texts should have less serious content; this would motivate students and improve their attitude toward reading.</p> <p>Thus, it can be inferred that students chose texts with these attitudes in mind. From this, attitude plays a significant role in influencing reading performance and this is consistent with the students' self-reported points of view, since attitude was rated by them as an important factor affecting their reading comprehension in English.</p>	

## Conclusions

This research analyzed the self-reported factors affecting the English reading abilities of Mattayomsuksa 5 students in Amphur Mueang, Lampang province. The results showed that all respondents believed that the nature of the text being read was the most important factor. Moreover, the respondents scored texts and attitude as highly important factors while environment, motivation, learning preferences and teaching techniques were thought to be moderately important factors. The study shows that the texts selected were regarded as the most significant variable in influencing students' ability to read in English and therefore the teacher should select texts that are appropriate for the students' levels and interests. However, these latter vary within a class and so the teacher should use a range of techniques to maintain students' attention and should also provide sufficient background knowledge. This is because English reading texts are mostly written from a native speaker's point of view since they are targeted at the global market of EFL students around the world. On the other hand, there are few reading texts written specifically for Thai students who are learning English and this means that students may feel that the material is not relevant to their daily lives, with a consequent effect on students' attitudes. Perhaps as a result of this, students rated the two factors of text and attitude as being important and if a teacher decides to use texts written by native speakers, the teacher must also help students bring to mind their prior knowledge before assigning reading tasks. This is to develop students' reading skills and build awareness of student's reading strategies so that they can develop their own competency in reading comprehension. However, the teacher also needs to consider how much time this will take and which activities will be suitable for eliciting students' knowledge because otherwise, these activities may eat into reading time. These are techniques that are typically used by teachers but after being repeatedly introduced to them in class, learners may feel ownership of them and in that case, it will be



natural for them to use these techniques to help carry out reading tasks successfully. Nevertheless, there are likely to be many other factors that help or hinder students' comprehension of texts and therefore a study of these should be undertaken; it is clearly very unlikely that only one or a few factors will increase students' reading abilities but rather, there will likely be many interconnected factors affecting reading comprehension.

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## Appendix

### Research Questionnaire

#### Analysis of Factors Affecting English Reading Ability for Comprehension of Mattayomsuksa 5 Students from Both City Schools and Local Schools of Amphur Mueang, Lampang Province

##### Directions

1. This research aimed to study the analysis of factors affecting English reading ability of Mattayomsuksa 5 students from both city and local schools of Amphur Mueang, Lampang Province.
2. The questionnaire composed of three parts:
  1. General information
  2. The factors affecting English reading ability for comprehension of Mattayomsuksa 5 students from both city schools and local schools of Amphur Mueang, Lampang Province
  3. Mattayomsuksa 5 students' opinions related to other factors affecting the ability of English reading comprehension
3. The obtained information is very important and beneficial; therefore, please complete the questionnaire truthfully. Your answers will not have any effect or damage to you or others.

Thank you for your participation,

Miss Sajeerat Wutthisingchai  
The leader of a research team  
The Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences  
Lampang Rajabhat University

### Part I

Directions: Put  $\surd$  in  and write in the space provided.

1. **Gender**                     male                     female
2. **School type**             government             private
3. **Study program**         Mathematics-Science  English-Social science  
 English and another foreign language, please specify .....
- Others, please specify .....
4. **Study curriculum**     Regular program     English Program     International Program
5. **How many years have students learned English?**

3-6 years     7-10 years     10-14 years     over 14 years

### 6. How many hours per week do students spend reading English?

Less than 1 hour     1-2 hours     2-3 hours     4-6 hours     7 hours up

## **PART 2 The perception about factors affecting English reading ability for comprehension of Mattayomsuksa 5 students from both city and local schools of Amphur Mueang, Lampang Province**

**Directions** Factors affecting English reading ability for comprehension referred to internal factors in learner's preferences, motivation, and attitude and external factors in teaching techniques, texts and environments of Mattayomsuksa 5 students from both city and local schools of Amphur Mueang, Lampang Province

Put  $\checkmark$  in  which best describe factors which affect your reading ability for comprehension

### **PART 2 The identification of factors affecting English reading ability in your comprehension**

Factors promoting		the level of ability in reading English comprehensibly				
		5 the highest	4 high	3 moderate	2 low	1 the lowest
<b>1.</b>	<b>Learning Preferences</b>					
1.1	Using the pictures					
1.2	Using speed reading					
1.3	Reading frequently					
1.4	Finding the keywords					
1.5	Finding the main ideas					
1.6	Questioning to review schemata					
1.7	Using grammar and structure knowledge					
<b>2.</b>	<b>Motivation</b>					
2.1	Love in reading					
2.2	An interest in the reading text					
2.3	Gaining better scores in the test					
2.4	Gaining more knowledge					
2.5	Gaining the praises/nominations/awards					
2.6	Going to study abroad					
2.7	A requirement to relate or involve with native speakers					
2.8	A requirement to succeed in future career					
<b>3.</b>	<b>Attitude</b>					
3.1	Enjoyment in reading					
3.2	Teaching technique preferences					
3.3	Confidences in reading skills more than other skills					
3.4	Pride in oneself to be able to read other languages					
3.5	Excitement of knowing other cultures, tradition and lifestyle from reading					
3.6	A requirement to know more of the reading story					
<b>4.</b>	<b>Teaching Techniques (Applying from the teachers to one's own strategies)</b>					
4.1	A technique of word-guessing from context clues					
4.2	A technique of setting the reading purposes					
4.3	A technique of skimming the text before reading					
4.4	A technique of asking questions before, during and after reading					
4.5	A technique of word-guessing from root, prefix and suffix					
4.6	A technique of grammar and structure analysis for predicting the tone of the story					
4.7	A technique of building awareness of student's reading strategies					
4.8	A technique of summarizing the outline of reading story					

Factors promoting		the level of ability in reading English comprehensibly				
		5 the highest	4 high	3 moderate	2 low	1 the lowest
4.9	A technique of identifying facts and opinion of reading story					
4.10	A technique of finding the major and minor details of reading story					
<b>5.</b>	<b>Texts (Reading passages)</b>					
5.1	Texts with interesting story					
5.2	Texts with pictures					
5.3	Texts with one's own schemata					
5.4	Texts with good organization and pattern for eyes comfort					
5.5	Texts with suitable amount, neither too short nor too long					
5.6	Texts related to a student's own living or previous living environment, cultures, tradition and lifestyles					
5.7	Texts with simple grammar and structures					
<b>6.</b>	<b>Environments (surrounding, society and cultures where the reader lives)</b>					
6.1	The expectation of surroundings which encourage a student to be able to read English					
6.2	The importance of reading English given by the society					
6.3	The encouragement of reading English from the family					
6.4	The encouragement of reading English from the school					
6.5	Living in the same environment with native speakers					
6.6	Living in the resembling environment with native speakers					
6.7	Living in the different environment with native speakers					

**Part III. Summary of opinions and additional comments related to factors affecting English reading ability for comprehension of Mattayomsuksa 5 students from both city schools and local schools of Amphur Mueang, Lampang Province**

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

☞ THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION ☞

**APPENDIX**

**Reading Comprehension Test**

**Analysis of Factors Affecting English Reading Ability for Comprehension of Mattayomsuksa 5 Students from Both City Schools and Local Schools of Amphur Mueang, Lampang Province**

**Directions**

1. This research aimed to study the analysis of factors affecting English reading ability of Mattayomsuksa 5 students from both city and local schools of Amphur Mueang, Lampang Province.
2. The reading test composed of five different type of texts as follows:
  1. Cartoon
  2. Academic Text
  3. Magazine

- 4. Social Media
  - 5. Website related to Thai environment, lifestyle and culture
3. The researcher distributes interview questions for students to answers after completing the test
  4. The obtained information is very important and beneficial; therefore, please complete the test with your own ability. Your answers will not have any effect or damage to you or others.

Thank you for your participation,  
Miss Sajeerat Wutthisingchai  
The leader of a research team  
The Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences  
Lampang Rajabhat University

**Part I**

**Directions:** Put  $\checkmark$  in  and write in the space provided.

1. **Gender**                     male                                     female
2. **School type**             government                     private
3. **Study program**         Mathematics-Science    English-Social science  
 English and another foreign language, please specify.....  
 Others, please specify .....
4. **Study curriculum**     Regular program         English Program         International Program
5. **How many years have students learned English?**  
 3-6 years     7-10 years     10-14 years     over 14 years
6. **How many hours per week do students spend reading English?**  
 Less than 1 hour         1-2 hours         2-3 hours         4-6 hours         7 hours up

**PART 2 An English Reading Comprehension Test**

**Directions** Please cross X at the most correct answer.

**Text Cartoon**



\*\*Source: ดวงฤดี กาญจนพันธุ์, ศศ. (2537). *ทักษะการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษฉบับรวม ม. 4-5-6*. กรุงเทพฯ: สำนักพิมพ์ภูมิปัญญา.

1. The girl is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. complaining
  - b. asking for advice
  - c. making an excuse
  - d. explaining

2. What most likely happened before this?
  - a. Her grandmother told her a story.
  - b. Her grandmother scolded her.
  - c. Her mother punished her.
  - d. Her mother gave her a hug.
3. In frame 2, the girl intends to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. forget what happened to her
  - b. improve her manners when visiting her grandmother
  - c. be more obedient from now on
  - d. let her grandmother know how she feels
4. The girl thinks that a grandmother \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. has the right to criticize any child
  - b. should not criticize her own child
  - c. should not criticize her grandchildren
  - d. has no right to criticize anyone
5. In the last frame, she is asking if the boy wants to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. visit her mother
  - b. watch a different program
  - c. disagree with her
  - d. talk to her grandmother

### Text 2 Academic Text

Researchers have found that male and female alligators go their separate ways following mating. A month after mating, the female begins building a nest – usually on dry ground – that resembles a stunted haystack. She patiently rips up plants and other vegetation and piles it in layers until satisfied, making frequent tours of inspection. She digs a shallow hole on top of the nest, lays about 40 eggs in it and carefully covers them up. Sixty-five days later the babies crack the shells. The mother may tear off the top layer of the nest, sometimes even carrying the young to the water in her mouth.

It has been discovered that temperature during the first two or three weeks of life determines the hatching's sex. An average temperature of 86 degrees Fahrenheit or less produces an all-female **clutch**; at 93 degrees or above all the young are males. Anything in between produces a mixed litter. Some mother alligators belligerently defend their nests against intruders, but others do not. Adult alligators of both sexes will usually respond with a rush to the snuffing “yurk” sound that a baby emits in distress – a trait that has often been their undoing, since hunters imitate the call.

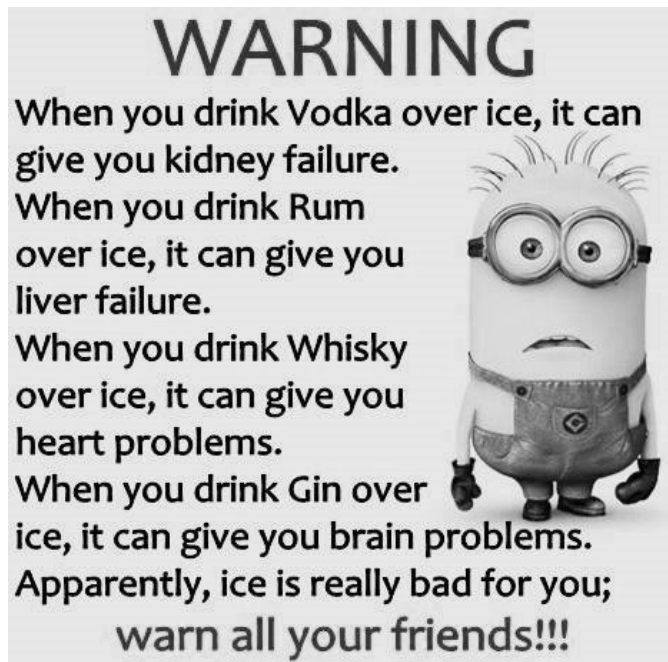
\*\*Source: เศรษฐวิทย์ (2555). *อ่านภาษาอังกฤษอย่างไรให้ได้ผล*. (พิมพ์ครั้งที่ 11). กรุงเทพฯ: โรงพิมพ์เม็ดทราย.

6. What does the passage mainly discuss?
  - a. How alligators choose their mates.
  - b. What happens after alligators mate.
  - c. How the sex of alligators is determined.
  - d. What alligators eat.
7. According to the passage, how long does it take for alligator's eggs to hatch?
  - a. 3 weeks
  - b. 1 month
  - c. 40 days
  - d. 65 days
8. When is an alligator's sex determined?



- d. go-pro to capture every sweat-dripping plank pose

#### Text 4 Social Media



\*\*Source: *Minion Quotes*. (2015, July 30). *Facebook*. Retrieved July 31, 2015 from <https://www.facebook.com/MinionQuotes?fref=ts>

16. What is the real purpose of the message?

- a. acriticize  
b. warn  
c. describe  
d. advise

17. What is truly bad for your health?

- a. ice  
b. alcohols  
c. soda  
d. juices

18. What does "failure" mean?

- a. defeat  
b. injury  
c. weakness  
d. death

19. According to the article, what give you brain problems?

- a. Vodka  
b. ice  
c. Whisky  
d. Gin

20. What is the writer's attitude toward the message?

- a. indifferent  
b. positive  
c. sarcastic  
d. confused

#### Text 5 Website related to Thai environment, lifestyle and culture

Songkran is a Thai traditional New Year which starts on April 13th every year and lasts for 3 days. In the Thai tradition, children and young people will pay respect to their elders and parents. The young pour scented or aromatic water over their elders' hands, and they in return wish them good health and happiness. This tradition of paying respect, is called "Rod Nam Dam Hua". In the afternoon, Thai Buddhists sprinkle scented water on Buddha images. After that, Thais sprinkle



scented water on, or splash water over each other. There will also be Miss Songkran beauty pageant and beautiful parade participated by locals and visitors.

\*\* Source: excerpted from the final test of English for Specific Purposes for the major of Community Development Students at Lampang Rajabhat University, November 2014.

21. What is not involved in Songkran Festival?

- a. pouring scented water
- b. paying respect
- c. sprinkling water
- d. making candles

22. What is “Rod Nam Dam Hua”?

- a. Thai Buddhist sprinkle scented water on Buddha images.
- b. Young people pour scented water over their elders’ hands.
- c. Thais sprinkle perfumed water on, or throw water over each other.
- d. A Miss Pageant will be held and a long and beautiful parade will be organized.

23. When does Songkran Festival end?

- a. April 13th
- b. April 14th
- c. April 15th
- d. April 13th to 15th every year

24. What is they (line 3) referred to?

- a. elders
- b. children
- c. young people
- d. parents

25. What is scented water?

- a. drinking water
- b. aromatic water
- c. clean water
- d. bathing water

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION**

**APPENDIX**

**Interview Questions**

1. Which passage did you understand the most and why?

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2. Which passage did you understand the least and why?

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3. Do you think doing a comprehension test after reading each passage help you better understanding of the passage and why?

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4. Before your reading, during your reading and after your reading, do you know what you have to do to understand the most in the passage?

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4.1 Before your reading, which strategies as following do you use to be able to read for comprehension the most?

- A strategy of questioning the reading passage before your reading
- A strategy of setting the reading purposes before your reading
- A strategy of predicting the reading story from your own schemata before reading
- A strategy of summarizing the outline of reading story before your reading

If you haven't use any, can you state the reason? Are there any other strategies you can use before your reading?

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4.2 During your reading, which strategies as following do you use to be able to read for comprehension the most?

- A strategy of questioning the reading passage during your reading
- A strategy of skimming the text during your reading
- A strategy of summarizing the outline of reading story during your reading
- A strategy of word-guessing from context clues during your reading
- A strategy of word-guessing from root, prefix and suffix during your reading
- A strategy of identifying facts and opinion of reading story during your reading
- A strategy of finding the major and minor details of reading story during your reading
- A strategy of grammar and structure analysis for predicting the tone of the story during your reading

If you haven't use any, can you state the reason? Are there any other strategies you can use during your reading?

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4.3 After reading, which strategies as following do you use to be able to read for comprehension the most?

- A strategy of questioning after reading passage
- A strategy of summarizing the outline after reading story
- A strategy of identifying facts and opinion after reading story
- A strategy of finding the major and minor details of reading story
- A strategy of verifying your strategy use after reading comprehension

If you haven't use any, can you state the reason? Are there any other strategies you can use after your reading?

5. If you can choose to do one of the five passages from the test, which passage will you choose and why?

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6. If you can choose to read one of the five passages without doing the test, which passage will you choose and why?

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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION**