The problem of using English reading strategies perceived by Thai EFL students: Implications for reading instructions

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ABSTRACT

It is recognized that reading ability is essential for Thai EFL students and English reading is perceived as a difficult task among them. To understand the difficulty experienced by the students while reading English text, this study hence aimed at investigating problems of using English reading strategies perceived by Thai EFL students as well as providing suggested reading instructions for Thai lecturers to cope with the emerging problems. This study employed a mixed-method design. The participants of the study were 412 Thai EFL students who, in this study, were also considered as Gen Z students at a large-size university in Bangkok, Thailand. The participants were asked to complete an online questionnaire on 4-point Likert's scale, which was adapted from Aebersold and Field (1997). Moreover, 10 students were recruited for two focus group interviews. The results revealed that Thai EFL students experience difficulties in using English reading strategies when they have to skip unknown words during the first reading (mean = 2.67, SD = 1.01) followed by varying reading speed rates according to the type of the reading passage (mean = 2.66, SD = 0.97), and guessing the meanings of unknown words by using the context clues (mean = 2.59, SD = 0.92) respectively. Based on both quantitative and qualitative results and personality traits of Thai Gen Z, suggested reading instructions including guided reading, improving student's vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension, technology-blended classroom and critical reading were purposed.

Introduction

In the present, English language is considered as international language and used for communication worldwide. Moreover, English language also plays an important role in educational arena. Both students and teachers employ English language to access to knowledge resources. Many countries where there is no English as their mother tongue actively promote the policy encouraging their people to learn English. In Thailand, English was made a compulsory subject for education in 1996 (Watanapokakul, 2006). It is believed that knowing English can provide people a bridge to global community where they can get advancement in life. For example, People who are equipped with English competency get more chance to get a job comparing to those who are not. They have more chance to earn higher salary and get promoted than people who are unable to use English language in their professions.

Among English skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing, the previous research (Chawwang, 2008; Liangpanit, 2018; Munsakorn, 2012; Oranpattanachai, 2010; Pangsapa, 2012) has shown that Thai students have experienced difficulties in English reading and understanding English text because they cannot apply the correct reading strategies. The research suggests that Thai students in different research contexts had different English reading problems depending on educational institution's policy, lecturers and student's behaviors. With this concern, the researchers recognize that there is a uniqueness of characteristics of students in particular context that can be a factor generating English reading problems.

Thai Gen Z students who are believed to be the challenging generation for educators because of their characteristics, demands and learning styles (Sripom, Rungswang, Sukwitthayakul & Chansri, 2019). To understand this cohort's difficulties in using English reading strategies, the researchers, therefore, investigate problem of using English reading strategies perceived by Thai Gen Z students using a questionnaire and focus groups. The results of this study, which reveal the problems of using English reading strategies will then identify some suitable reading instructions for them.

In order to investigate the problems of using English reading strategies perceived by Thai EFL students as well as providing suggested reading instructions for Thai lecturers, two objectives were set as guidelines, along with the two purposed research questions. The objectives were to investigate the problems of using English reading strategies perceived among EFL students and to provide suggested reading instructions for Thai lecturers. Two purposed research questions are stated below.

1. What are the problems of using English reading strategies perceived by Thai EFL students?

2. How do problems of using English reading strategies perceived by Thai EFL students yield reading instructions that cope with the problems?

Literature Review

Theoretical and Conceptual Background

Reading comprehension

According to Devine (1986), reading comprehension is the process to analyze, interpret and understand the writer's thoughts and ideas informed through the printed text by using reader's own syntactic, semantic, rhetorical, and prior knowledge in order to achieve the goal of reading. Moreover, to comprehend the writer's intended messages through texts, a reader essentially needs different types of reading skills to understand the texts (Krashen & Tenell, 1983).

Basically, Anderson (1999) stated that reading comprehension process consists of 3 models: bottom-up, top-down and interactive models. For the bottom-up model, the reader reads the printed letters and words to decode them from the bottom units (letters and words) to the upper units (phrases and clauses) (Carrel, 1988). For the top-down model, the reader reads the reading texts without worrying about the aforementioned bottom units and upper units but focus on using strategies such as making and adjusting prediction, hypothesis testing, activating prior knowledges, and interpretation of contextual clues (Anderson, 1999; Eskey, 1988). For the interactive model, Hedge (2000) states that it is when the reader endeavors to read the texts and decode it from the smallest units to the biggest units along with using many different knowledges while reading through the texts.

Reading strategies

"Reading strategies refer to those specific actions which readers employ before, during and after reading in order to understand most efficiently what they read" (Pimsarn, 2012, p. 63). The readers then adjust their reading behaviors according to reading strategies in order to understand the difficult texts (Koda, 2005). Paris et al (1991, p. 609) provide six characteristics of reading strategies as follow:

i. Strategies allow readers to elaborate, organize, and evaluate information derived from the text.
ii. The acquisition of reading strategies coincides and overlaps with the development of multiple cognitive strategies to enhance attention, memory, communication and learning.
iii. Strategies are personal cognitive tools that can be used selectively and flexibly.
iv. Strategic reading reflects metacognition and motivation because readers need to have both knowledge and disposition to use strategies.
v. Strategies that foster reading and thinking can be taught directly by teachers.
vi. Strategic reading can enhance learning throughout the curriculum.

To elaborate, Aebersold and Field (1997) refined the set of reading strategy skills that can be used to improve students' reading comprehension:

i. Reading the title to infer what information might follow
ii. Paying attention to the general idea of the passage
iii. Guessing the meanings of unknown words by using the context
iv. Varying reading rates according to the type of the passage
v. Skipping unknown words during the first reading
vi. Underlining or marking important points of what was read
vii. Trying to relate prior knowledge and experiences to the passage
viii. Re-reading texts in order to make sure that important information was not missed
ix. Reading over each sentence quickly for main ideas; then, going back and reading carefully for details
x. Paying attention to key words in sentences

xi.	Trying to understand what has been read by using imagination
xii.	Guessing the meanings of unknown words through word roots and/or affixes (prefix, suffix, infix)
xiii.	Using different reading strategies according to the type of passage
xiv.	Noticing punctuation and using it as an aid to reading
xv.	Guessing the meaning of unknown words by considering the syntax of the sentences
xvi.	Separating important from unimportant information
xvii.	Finding out the writer's intention
xviii.	Keeping the purpose of reading in mind
xix.	Summing up or noting down the content

Research in English Reading in Thai EFL classroom

Since English has been widely recognized as an important language for education, previous research has confirmed that English reading is essentially demanded in Thai EFL classroom. Harnseithanon (2002) surveyed his third-year marketing student at a college in Thailand to explore the effectiveness of reading strategies on English reading comprehension. The results revealed that students tend to have positive attitudes toward reading strategies and they employed reading strategies for their reading comprehension effectively. Khunnawut (2003) conducted a research exploring reading strategies among first-year engineering students at a university in Thailand. The findings showed that students usually employed reading strategies while reading English materials. The students used reading strategies in (1) learning words, (2) learning difficult sentence structure, (3) reading passages, (4) remembering content, (5) reading alone outside the classroom, and (6) other reading tasks requiring strategies. Paesaroje (2004) carried out a research investigating reading strategies employed by students of English for Communication at a Bangkok university. The result showed that all students mainly used reading strategies, but male students were likely to use reading strategies more often than female students. Prommak (2005) conducted a questionnaire-based study about the reading strategies of first-year Business English students at a university in Thailand. The study revealed that the students employed many reading strategies while there were reading English material. The most frequently used strategy is "looking up the meanings of unknown words and/or usage from an English-Thai dictionary."

Although university-level students are able to specify many types of reading strategies and agree that reading strategies help them in reading comprehension, a surprisingly small number of them were able to employ reading strategies in their reading successfully. (Anderson, 1991; Block, 1986; Harnseithanon, 2002). For example, a study conducted by Pangsapa (2012) who explored reading problems and strategies of Thai editorial staff revealed that that most of the participants (82%) did not know words meaning together with technical terms, idioms, and jargons. Furthermore, some of participants (37%) forgot sentence structures. Some of participants (27%) lack of concentration. The other problems are laziness, spending less time to read, lacking background knowledges, not interesting to read, not confident, and feeling difficulty. Moreover, Chawwang (2008) investigated English reading problems among science and art students. English reading problems concerning sentence structure, vocabulary, reading comprehension were the major concerns. The results show that only 30% of students gave correct answers. That means most of them (70% of both science and art students) had problems in three areas. Both science and art students had low level in English reading ability. Furthermore, Liangpanit (2018) also explored the needs and problems of English reading for Thai graduate students. His study found that there were three main problems in English reading including vocabulary, grammatical rules and low motivation. During the interview, the graduate students stated that guessing the meanings of unknown words was the most difficult in English reading. They also added that background knowledge and knowing technical words were significant factors in facilitating them understand reading text.

Regarding the English reading problems found in the previous studies, they varied depending on the context of research areas and group of students. This means that investigating English reading problems should be conducted in different contexts and group of students or in the same context and group of students but different period of time.

Research Methodology

This study was conducted using a mixed-method design to investigate the problems of using English reading strategies perceived by Thai undergraduates. The participants, data collection and data analysis are elaborated below.

Participants

The total number of students in the university is approximately 20,000. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), as from the number it can be represented by the sample of 377 participants. Thereby, the participants in this study were 412 undergraduates as there were randomly recruited. The participants were asked to complete the questionnaire given online via Google Form.

Instruments

Questionnaire

To survey the EFL students' problems of using English reading strategies, a questionnaire consisting of 22 items was used as a data collection in this study. The questionnaire was adapted from Aebersold and Field (1997) and divided into two main parts: *personal*

information and problems of English reading strategies. The 22 items in the questionnaire were evaluated by 3 experts for content validity and were consequently put into a Google Form. The participants were required to evaluate their level of agreement based on 4-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree).

Focus group interview

After the quantitative results of the study were retrieved, two groups of 5 volunteer students joined in the focus groups led by the researchers. The respondents were recruited from different faculties to make sure that they were different in terms of background. They were encouraged to share their opinions and perceptions about their problems in English readings and the results we had interpreted from the questionnaire. The focus group took half an hour for each group and was recorded.

Data analysis

In order to interpret the findings, the data were collected and calculated in Microsoft Excel. Scores of items were calculated for average score. Descriptive statistics were used to find average sum for each item reflecting students' problems of English reading in EFL classroom.

Results

General information of participants

After the questionnaire was administered to 412 undergraduates, the general information of participants including gender, year of study and faculty is shown below.

Gender

As shown in Table 1, of the questionnaire respondents, 277 were females (67%), 123 were males (30%), and 12 were identified as LGBTQ (3%)

Table 1: Gender of participants

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	277	67
Male	123	30
LGBTQ	12	3
Total	412	100

Year of study

From 412 respondents, most of them were 1st year students (125 persons, 30%), followed by 2nd year students (111 persons, 27%), 4th year students (94 persons, 23%), and 3rd year students (82 persons, 20%). The results are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Year of study of participants

Year of study	Frequency	Percentage
First	125	30
Second	111	27
Third	82	20
Fourth	94	23
Total	412	100

Faculty

From 412 participants, most of them were from Faculty of Liberal Arts (223 persons, 54%), followed by Faculty of Engineering (90 persons, 22%), Faculty of Science (61 persons, 15%), Faculty of Administration and Management (25 persons, 6%), Faculty of Industrial Education and Technology (4 persons, 1%), Faculty of Architecture (2 persons, 0.5%), Faculty of Information Technology (2 persons, 0.5%), Faculty of Medicine (2 persons, 0.5%), College of Nanotechnology (1 person, 0.2%), International Academy of Aviation Industry (1 person, 0.2%), and College of Advanced Manufacturing Innovation (1 person, 0.2%). The result shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Faculty of participants

Faculty	Frequency	Percentage
1. Faculty of Engineering	90	22
2. Faculty of Architecture	2	0.5
3. Faculty of Science	61	15
4. Faculty of Industrial Education and Technology	4	1
5. Faculty of Information Technology	2	0.5
6. Faculty of Administration and Management	25	6
7. Faculty of Liberal Arts	223	54
8. College of Nanotechnology	1	0.2
9. International Academy of Aviation Industry	1	0.2
10. College of Advanced Manufacturing Innovation	1	0.2
11. Faculty of Medicine	2	0.5
Total	**412**	**100**

The findings on the problems of using English reading strategies perceived by Thai EFL students

To address the research questions of this study, the problems of using English reading strategies perceived by Thai EFL students were analyzed by using descriptive statistics. The findings consisting of 19 items are demonstrated as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Problems of using English reading strategies perceived by Thai EFL students

Problem of English reading perceived by Thai EFL students	Mean	SD	Rank	Level of Agreements
1. I have a problem reading the title and make prediction about the content.	2.14	0.87	17	Low
2. I have a problem finding the main ideas of the reading passage.	2.44	0.93	8	Low
3. I have a problem guessing the meanings of unknown words by using the context clues.	2.59	0.92	3	High
4. I have a problem varying reading speed rates according to the type of the reading passage.	2.66	0.97	2	High
5. I have a problem skipping unknown words during the first reading.	2.67	1.01	1	High
6. I have a problem underlining or marking the important points while reading.	2.16	0.94	16	Low
7. I have a problem trying to relate prior background knowledge and experiences to the reading passage.	2.24	0.93	14	Low
8. I have a problem re-reading texts in order to make sure that the important information is not missed.	2.22	0.98	15	Low
9. I have a problem reading over each sentence quickly for main ideas, and reread for details.	2.33	0.95	12	Low
10. I have a problem finding key words in sentences.	2.28	0.92	13	Low
11. I have a problem using imagination to understand what I am reading.	1.93	0.93	19	Low
12. I have a problem guessing the meanings of the unknown words through word roots and/or affixes (prefix, suffix).	2.53	1.05	5	High
13. I have a problem using different reading strategies according to the types of the reading passage.	2.57	0.93	4	High
14. I have a problem noticing punctuations and using them to help while reading.	1.96	0.92	18	Low
15. I have a problem guessing the meaning of the unknown words based on the sentence structures.	2.48	0.94	7	Low
16. I have a problem separating important from unimportant information.	2.36	0.94	11	Low
17. I have a problem finding out the writer's intention.	2.49	0.95	6	Low
18. I have a problem keeping the purpose of reading in mind.	2.36	0.93	10	Low
19. I have a problem summarizing or taking notes of the main ideas	2.41	0.96	9	Low
Total	**2.36**	**0.95**		**Low**

Note: 1.00-1.75 Very Low; 1.76-2.50 Low; 2.51-3.25 High; 3.26-4.00 Very High

From the Table 4, the results show the problems of using English reading strategies perceived by Thai EFL students. The descriptive statistics for the overall problems of using English reading strategies of Thai EFL students demonstrate that the level of agreement was low (mean = 2.40, SD = 0.95) for the overall problems. This implies that Thai EFL students find English reading not much difficult especially when they have to use imagination to understand what they are reading (mean = 1.93, SD = 0.93) and notice punctuations and use them to help while reading (mean = 1.96, SD = 0.92). On the other hand, Thai EFL students also have some English reading problems at the high level when they have to skip unknown words during the first reading (mean = 2.67, SD = 1.01), vary reading speed rates according to the type of the reading passage (mean = 2.66, SD = 0.97), guess the meanings of unknown words by using the context clues (mean = 2.59, SD = 0.92), use different reading strategies according to the types of the reading passage (mean = 2.57, SD = 0.93), and guess the meanings of the unknown words through word roots and/or affixes (mean = 2.53, SD = 1.05) respectively.

In addition, there were some comments about English reading problems perceived by Thai EFL students collected below:

"I have problem in finding the main idea of the reading passage especially academic articles which have a lot of jargons. It causes me don't understand the main idea of the passage."

"The problem which I found while reading English is unknown words and some of them can be both noun and verb."

"Most of problems while reading English passage are about unknown words so that make me have to stop reading and find the meanings."

"I have a problem about remembering difficult vocabularies. I can't remember."

Findings of focus-group interview

Opinions on English reading problems

To them, there was a consensus that English reading was difficult because they were unfamiliar with the language especially in the testing room where they were under the time constrain. Time limitation and length of reading passages were considered as the challenging factors to distract them from their attentive reading as shown in Excerpt 1 and 2.

Excerpt 1 *"When I heard the proctor announced "15 minutes left", I found that there were three more passages to finish and all of them contained at least one-page long. So, I had to guess blindly. I spent too much time on words or phrases I didn't know, I got stuck and I couldn't move on because I thought that if I had skipped the unknown words or phrases, I wouldn't have understood the overall meanings."*

Excerpt 2 *"I had a problem while reading English text especially with time limitation. My reading didn't go smooth; I often stopped at some unknown words, read and reread those unfamiliar words. I felt discouraged by being unable to understand the meanings of the text. Actually, I knew that I should skim the whole text for gist at the first reading, but I couldn't skip the unknown words that caused time consuming."*

All interviewees agreed with the Excerpt 1 and 2. In addition to this, guessing meanings of the unknow words seems to be a problem they mostly concerned. Most of them agreed that it didn't need to know the meanings of every word, but they believed that the words they didn't know that they eventually skipped would be key terms and help them understand the intended meanings. Excerpt 3 is exemplified for this claim.

Excerpt 3 *"When I read English text and I didn't know the meanings of some vocabularies, sometimes I felt that I read nothing. I couldn't connect the ideas together to get the whole picture or the main ideas of the text. In class, I learned how to use context clues to guess the unknown words, but the texts we learned in class, the texts we read in daily life and the texts we read in the examination room were totally different and obviously, the passages in the test were a lot harder and more complex than what we learned in the class. Therefore, the context believed to help guess meanings was too difficult to comprehend."*

Nine out of ten respondents agreed with this idea. They also added that their lecturers' reading instruction was ineffective as two respondents elaborated in Excerpt 4 and 5.

Excerpt 4 *"My lecturer taught me how to read an English text by translating from English to Thai. This made me bored."*

Excerpt 5 *"When we came to the reading part, my lecturer gave me 10-15 minutes to read by myself. After that I was asked about what I get from the text. There were some students responded to lecturer's question. At the end, the lecturer translated the whole text."*

Suggestions for reading instructions from Thai EFL students

All the respondents suggested having lecturer as facilitator during self-reading or group-reading activities. Reading strategies should be focused and explicitly implemented in the lessons. Moreover, creating reading instruction by integrating cooperative learning, games and online platforms is highly required.

Discussion

The results from the present study showed that Thai Gen Z undergraduates in EFL classroom have experienced difficulties in English reading when they 1) encounter the unknown words and hesitated to skip those words during the first reading, 2) vary reading speed rates according to the type of the reading passage, 3) guess the meanings of unknown words by using the context clues, 4) use different reading strategies according to the types of the reading passage and 5) guess the meanings of the unknown words through word roots and/or affixes. This may be because from the students' reports, they have received reading instruction following the bottom-up model of reading comprehension. The lecturers have taught students how to read by interpreting from the words to phrases and clauses. This approach, therefore, only facilitates students with huge storage of vocabularies to get through the text quickly and comprehensibly. On the other hand, students with limited number of vocabularies struggle with difficult or unknown words and progress their reading slowly. Notably, reading strategies that are considered as the important elements for reading comprehension were not explicitly introduced and taught in class. Hence, students were not able to use the strategies effectively and always recognized that knowing meanings of words only helps them understand author's intention through text. For this reason, both printed and digital dictionaries are highly needed for English reading. The use of dictionaries is normally required in English reading practices, but not in the exam room. During the test, all types of dictionaries are prohibited to use, so they have to rely on various reading strategies to finish the test under time pressure. When they cannot skip or spend too much time on the unknow words, they surely cannot finish the reading in time. This eventually makes the students become less motivated in English reading. From the students' opinions on English reading problems, we found the interesting issue to be discussed is that the level of difficulty of a text was not relevant to the level of student's competency. The students were discouraged when they couldn't understand the difficult words and sentence structures or even apply the reading strategies such as guessing meanings, skimming and scanning. As suggested by Fountas and Pinnell (1996, 1999 as cited in Kristiina Montero, Newmaster & Ledger, 2014), a text for reading activities should be at a student's instructional reading level, meaning that the student can accurately interpret 90-94% of words with excellent or satisfactory comprehension, or to challenge student's competency, a text can be one level above student's level of competency (Hickman, Pollard-Durodola & Vaughn (2004).

It was also found that, there was not lecturer-student interaction during reading activities. Students were left to read by themselves and were checked their understanding after that. This finally made students bored, feel incompetent and find reading task difficult. According to Kristiina Montero, Newmaster & Ledger (2014), to assist students to establish good reading strategies and habits, lecturer should actively increase students' confidence as consumers of text by providing them with enjoyable and successful experiences in reading for meaning. This means that self-reading approach without lecturer's intervention in class may not an effective way among Thai Gen Z students.

Implications for reading instructions

After we obtained both quantitative and qualitative results, suggested reading instruction for Thai EFL student are discussed in this section. However, as explained by Chun, Dudoit, Fujihara, Gerschenson, Kennedy, Koanui, Ogata and Stearns (2016), to design the course or content and manage the classroom to meet students' needs, the characteristics and learning styles of students should be primarily concerned and investigated. Therefore, before reading instructions is suggested, the personality traits of the study's focused participants, Thai Gen Z students in EFL classroom, are firstly discussed. It is noticeable that Gen Z people are believed to obsess with technology applications and online social media (Carter, 2018; Strauss & Howe, 1991; Turner, 2015, Yadav & Rai, 2017). With this obsession, some researchers believe this becomes an influential factor shaping Gen Z people's characteristics to be entrepreneurial (Carter, 2018), innovative (Kingston, 2014), short attention span (Bejtkovský, 2016), multitasking (Bejtkovský, 2016; Turner, 2015), individual (Bejtkovský, 2016; Igel & Urquhart, 2012; Törőcsik et.al., 2014; Turner, 2015) and lack of communication skills (Kingston, 2014; Turner, 2015).

However, the set of Gen Z's characteristics mentioned earlier was contested by Sripom, Rungswang, Sukwitthayakul and Chansri (2019), who assert that studies investigating Gen Z characteristics have been widely conducted in other countries especially in the West. They also believe that Gen Z's characteristics explored in particular countries may represent personality traits within those contexts. This means that many related factors and details described by researchers in other countries may not be effectively applied for Thai Gen Z students. With this assumption, Sripom, Rungswang, Sukwitthayakul and Chansri (2019) conducted a study investigating personality traits of Thai Gen Z undergraduates to confirm their hypothesis. Based on six-personality dimensions adapted from the Big Five model of personality generated by Goldberg in 1976 (Srivastava, 2008), the results revealed that agreeableness was ranked as the highest scoring trait for the participants. According to Digman (1990) and Goldberg (1990), agreeableness signifies being friendly, caring, cooperative and tolerant. People with high agreeableness get along well with others. It can be seen that the trait perceived by Thai Gen Z students is different from Gen Z's dominant trait, technology obsession, purposed by the western scholars. However, even though tech-addiction dimension was not rated as the highest scoring trait, it was still perceived as the high trait among them. Thai Gen Z students suggest that they prefer a technology-blended classroom where they can enjoy cooperative learning through technological devices and applications.

Based on the present study's quantitative and qualitative results, and personality traits of Thai Gen Z students, the followings are some suggestions for reading instructions for Thai EFL students.

Guided reading

As Thai Gen Z students require cooperative learning by focusing on lecturer-student and student-student interaction during reading activities and reading instructions by emphasizing reading strategies, guided reading is therefore suggested. Guide reading is an important contemporary reading instructional practice (Iaquinta, 2006) that allows the teacher to, first, model strategic and fluent reading to students; then observe students as they process new text; and, finally provide supportive opportunities and constructive comments to help students develop skills and strategies they require to become independent readers (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012). Firstly, the teacher teaches elaborately about reading strategies required for each session; then let students make a group of 3-4 people; after that, students in a guided reading group read the text softly to themselves while the teacher listens and provides guidance as required. While the teacher is working with a guided reading group, the other students should be working altogether with their group members by listening friend's reading, analyzing word and sentence structure, and writing important information. Harris and Hodges (1995) insist that calling on students to read orally one after the other is outdated and must be avoided.

However, guided reading may be employed effectively for small-size classroom where the teacher can manage the class activities intensively, access to all students and finish the session in time.

Improving student's vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension

As Thai Gen Z students report on their limited number of vocabularies while reading an English text, some suggestions for improving student's level of vocabulary knowledge are elaborated at this section. According to National Reading Panel (2000 as cited in Kamps, Abbott, Greenwood, Arreaga-Mayer, Wills, Longstaff, Culpepper & Walton, 2007), there are specific skills students need to learn to become good readers namely phonemic awareness, phonic, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency. This idea associates with what Harper and de Jong (2004) who state that learning to read by reading aloud or sounds provides opportunities to take advantage of the more advanced cognitive skills (e.g. memory and analytical reasoning). Therefore, teachers of English-language students can provide students with support required for language development related to literacy and oral language growth, particular in the area of vocabulary and comprehension. Practices summarized by Hickman, Pollard-Durodola and Vaughn (2004) for promoting development in these areas include the following:

i. Gaining students' background knowledge in relation to story content to support comprehension and vocabulary retention.
ii. Relating the teaching of word meanings to the content area and context in which they are normally or will be used, rather than as a separate list of words and definitions. It is important to demonstrate the connections between vocabulary and the content area topic and between the words themselves through activities such as word family association and semantic mapping.
iii. Identifying vocabulary that is rich and evocative, thereby increasing student challenge and engagement with words.
iv. Encouraging discussion with students and providing elaborated responses with regard to vocabulary, structure and use.
v. Employing texts that are relevant to students' cultural context and life experiences in order to draw upon prior knowledge to promote comprehension and retention of text concepts and new vocabulary.

Technology-blended classroom

As Thai Gen Z students enjoy doing activities through technological devices and applications, available applications should be integrated in reading instruction. For example, lecturer can use Youtube to visualize the text's background and familiarize students with the topic of text, Kahoot can be also used as a tool to check students' understanding and to create enjoyable environment.

Critical reading

Since technology is dominant, and communication is globally widespread, critical reading considered as an essential skill in 21st century is highly required for students. According to Jones (2002), reading critically and reasonably not only helps students improve learning skills such as vocabulary and reading but also facilitate students to understand the text along with the thinking with reasoning and questioning mind. In addition to this, critical reading enables students to analyze the context in deeper level, therefore, they can integrate their personal experience, concepts and ideas with the text and can also help students gain confidence to provide reasonable feedbacks (Tangpinijkarn & Modehiran, 2016).The activities that reinforce the critical reading ability include separating important information (main ideas and supporting details), determining authors' purpose and tones, distinguishing between facts and opinions, drawing inference, finding context clues, and applying in real situation in order to solve problems (Tangpinijkarn & Modehiran, 2016). This means that the topic or title of the text should be controversial and debatable since it provokes students' curiosity.

Conclusions

This paper recommends that (i) If participants' faculty, year of study and gender are considered as the variables in analyzing and interpreting the data, the number of participants in terms of faculty, year of study and gender should be planned and equally distributed, (ii) to get more perspectives on the issue and to be fair to lecturer, lecturer's opinions should be collected and analyzed.

Since this study recruited the participants randomly, the number of participants in terms of faculty, year of study and gender was not equally distributed. However, these factors may not be the important issues since the present study does not employ all of them as variables in analyzing and interpreting the data. We focus on the English reading problems perceived Thai EFL students holistically.

As we mentioned earlier about the uniqueness of students' characteristics of each context, the implications for reading instructions generated in this study may be effectively implemented to students who experience difficulties or possesses the personality traits in relation to the participants of this study.

Key Terms

For the clarification of this study, the significant term used in this study has been clarified. The following terms are:

Thai EFL Students refer to Thai students who learn English as a foreign language. For this study, the focus group is undergraduate students or Gen Z students who were born between late 1990's to mid 2010's.
EFL classroom refers to the classroom where English is taught as a foreign language.
English reading refers to the process of decoding English symbols to be sound and/or getting to know the meaning.
English Reading Achievement refers to the success of reading English article which are measuring by the speed and understanding.
English reading problems refer to the problematic of achieving goal of reading English in terms of meaning, fluency, and sound of words.

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