The Development of an Instructional Model for Thai Reading Comprehension Ability for Prathom Suksa 4 Students

Thabthim Suriyasupapong*, Sudjai Srijamon*, Supaporn Prasarnphanich*

*Faculty of Education, Khon Kaen University, Khon Kaen, 40002, Thailand

Abstract

This research was aimed at building and developing an instruction model that enhances Thai reading comprehension for Grade 4 students using comics books and to compare Thai subject achievement of the students taught by this instruction model with students taught by conventional instruction. The sample group comprised students of Prathom Suksa 4 (Grade 4) of Demonstration School, Khon Kaen University, Primary Section (Modindang) during the first semester of academic year 2011. The experimental study was applied with the 80 students divided in 40 in the experimental group and 40 in the control group. Research instruments included lesson plans for the instruction model of Thai reading comprehension using cartoon books, Thai teaching plans based on Grade 4 Teacher’s Manual, and a Thai language achievement test. The statistics used was t-test computed by SPSS/PC program. The statistics significance was set at .05 level. Following is the conclusion of the study:

1. The instruction model for Thai reading comprehension lessons was built from the principles and theories of Thai reading comprehension, synthesized into a model with the following steps in the lessons: (1) teaching difficult words in the cartoon pictures, (2) studying the story from the cartoon pictures, (3) reading the cartoon for comprehension, and (4) applying the skill in reading comprehension.

2. The achievement of Grade 4 students learned by the instruction model for Thai reading comprehension was significantly higher than students learned by the conventional instruction at .05 level.

Keywords: Building and developing an instruction model for Thai reading comprehension using comics books

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +668-9617-5518; fax: +66-43-343019
E-mail address: Suriyasupapong@yahoo.com
1. Introduction

Part 4 in the 1999 National Education Act which has been effective since August 20, 1999 states that instruction has to be based on the principle that every learner is capable to learn and develop himself and that learners are the most important component in instruction. Learners must be promoted to grow naturally to their utmost potentiality. Education must focus on knowledge, moral, and learning process. Clause 4, Section 23 of the Act emphasizes correct use of Thai language. Section 24 states that institutions and relevant departments are to arrange activities in teaching and learning that are correlated to the interest and aptitude of learners. Learners should be able to train in thinking, practicing, acting. They should be trained to read, love to read and be eager to acquire knowledge at all time (Ministry of Education, 1999). The 2011 Foundation Education Curriculum stipulates learners’ quality in reading comprehension during the first level of grades 1 to 3. Students at this level should be able to read and understand what they read. In the second level, grades 4-6, they should understand the main idea, distinguish between fact and opinion, analyze, interpret, and draw conclusion (Ministry of Education, 2011). Reading is therefore an important skill and a tool for acquiring knowledge, holding occupation, and applying in daily life. Reading is a key to clarification of matters, events, and problems. It is a skill that expands experiences, a useful way in using one’s free time, and an entertainment that brings happiness. Reading is therefore necessary and important for one’s living. Loving to read is a good basis for learners in further education and knowledge building. School instruction of all subjects requires reading as a tool (Ministry of Education, 1999). In addition, reading is always important to our life since it enables us to perceive, experience, and enjoy ourselves. This is useful for living in the present situation because reading is a skill that can be used in education, occupation, and daily life (Puttarat Thasa, 2011). Reading is a skill for transferring, analyzing words and meanings, understanding stories, interpreting, and opinionating (Lado, 1977). People in social development, economy, politics and governing circles are able to understand and build good relationships with people everywhere in the world (Sunantha Mansethawit, 2002) because they possess good reading skills that help improve one’s quality of life (Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development, 2000). Reading for main ideas is the most important basis for knowledge acquisition. It can form thinking and imagination better than any media. If learners are not able to find the main idea, or they can read but do not understand correctly, there is no use even though a lot of good literature has been produced. Reading for main ideas therefore focuses on the content and the element of the reading (Waewmayura Muannin, 1998). The core foundation curriculum 2008 stipulates learners completing Grade 3 to be able to pronounce words, rhymes, statements, short stories, and simple poems correctly and fluently. They should be able to understand the meaning of words and content read, pose reasoning questions, ordering the event, concluding knowledge and idea from the reading and be able to read literature and prose for application in daily life (Ministry of Education, 2008). Studies of problems of Thai learners reading Thai show that most learners are not able to conclude main ideas from the text read and hence are not successful in reading (Suwanat Baikularb, 1992). Report on quality assurance of foundation education (NT) of Grade 3 in 2010 of the Office of Primary Education Service Area 3 in Thai language subject shows that Grade 3 Thai language instruction of Ban Bo Takrong Nonfai Samakkee School achieved an average of 42.16% (Office of Primary Education Service Area 3, 2010). Hence, the researchers designed this instruction model that would encourage interest and Thai reading comprehension using pictures as a media and trained learners to organize the events in the story (Somporn Watanasiri, 1995). The design of activities using comics to increase reading skill resulted in a cartoon instruction model appropriate to the context, learners’ knowledge, ability, and experiences. Moreover, cartoon pictures are colorful and therefore can release tension in reading. They are simple to read anytime and anywhere, enabling learners to acquire new words and help them to understand the subject content more. Students are more interested to learn and increase their reading skills (Khwanmuang Panmapaet, 2010). Besides stimulating interest, cartoons assist in explaining concrete knowledge, build impression, and make memories linger, building up capacity in reading (Suchart Thesanta, 1999). Cartoons are used to convey subject content as a media (Tawan Matjarat and Pornprot Jetsuwan, 2004). Cartoon reading, in addition, enables
reasonable language use and builds creativeness (Ketkanok Chumpadit, 1997). Therefore, the researchers brought cartoon or comics as a media for teaching reading comprehension to Grade 4 students. Thai language content based on the primary curriculum was incorporated in the design. The aim was to improve instruction of Thai reading of this level.

2. Problem Statement

Studies of Thai reading problems show that most students are not able to obtain main idea from reading texts and hence are not successful in reading.

3. Research Questions

What kind of model should be used to promote and enhance students’ progress in Thai reading comprehension?

4. Purpose of the Study

1. To build and develop an instruction model to enhance Thai reading comprehension of Prathom Suksa 4 students using cartoon books.
2. To compare the learning achievement of Thai subject of students taught by the instruction model of Thai reading comprehension of cartoon books with students taught by the regular method.

5. Research Methodology

1. The population comprised 80 Grade 4 students of the first semester of academic year 2011 at Khon Kaen University Demonstration School (Modindaeng), Khon Kaen Province.
2. The sample group consisted of 80 Grade 4 students of Demonstration School, Khon Kaen University, Primary Section (Modindang) during their 1st semester of 2011 selected by cluster sampling. The sample groups were randomly assigned into an experimental group of 40 students to be taught by the instruction model for Thai reading comprehension using cartoon comics. The control group of equal number was taught by a conventional method.
3. The contents taught in the research were 4 topics from Book 1 of Grade 4 Thai language subject.
4. The research variables are as follows:
   4.1 Dependent variables:
      - The instruction model for developing Thai reading comprehension of Grade 4 using cartoons
      - Conventional teaching of Thai reading comprehension
   4.2 Independent variables:
      - Achievement of Thai reading comprehension using cartoon books

5. Research methodology

This research applied the experimental and control groups research design and posttest after treatment.

6. Research instruments

6.1 16 lesson plans for Thai reading comprehension of Grade 4 using comics
6.2 16 lesson plans for Thai reading comprehension of Grade 4 for the control group
6.3 An achievement test of Thai subject

Data collection

Data of Thai reading comprehension of Grade 4 students using cartoon books was collected by the following steps:

1. The researchers taught the experimental group Thai reading comprehension by the instruction model using comics
2. The researchers taught the experimental group the same subject using the regular lesson plan.
3. After the treatment the two groups took the posttest and the scores were recorded.

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis followed these steps:

1. Finding the difficulty level and discriminating factors of the test
2. Finding the reliability of the test (KR 20) by computer
3. Finding the means and variance of the scores after the treatment of both the experimental and control groups using SPSS/PC+ software and comparing the scores based on t-test.

**Analytical Results**

1. The instruction model that enhanced Thai reading comprehension of Grade 4 was developed from the theories and principles of reading following these steps:
Chart showing the instruction model for Thai reading comprehension

Presentation
- Teacher stated the objectives and activities, roles and duties of students.

Teaching
- Teaching difficult words, finding meanings, guessing meanings from cartoon pictures
  - Students guessing story from pictures
  - Students organizing story from pictures
  - Giving principles of reading comprehension and setting time frame for reading
  - Distributing assignment cards for reading comprehension from cartoon story
- Practicing reading comprehension from cartoon story
  - Practicing in groups/individual based on basic activities

Conclusion
- Students posing questions

Assessment
- Students doing the test for measuring reading comprehension
6. Findings

The achievements of the experimental group and control group significantly differed at .05. The experimental group taught by the instruction model for Thai reading comprehension using comics scored higher than the control group, which correlated to the Hypothesis. (See the following Table)

Table... Number of sample (N), means (X), standard deviations (S.D), and T-values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample groups</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Probability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental group</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30.60</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>2.59*</td>
<td>.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control group</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>27.97</td>
<td>5.85</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < 2.59

7. Conclusions

Development of the instruction model using cartoons or comics to teach Thai reading comprehension for Grade 4 students was successful. Students enjoyed the lessons more, were happy and more able to read and find the main ideas from the stories than before. The achievement of the experimental group students learning by this approach was significantly higher than the control group at .05.

Recommendations

1. Recommendations for instruction and learning activities
   1.1 Writing activities are usually difficult and take time. We suggest incentives such as rewards or praising given to students who pay attention and eager to learn.
   1.2 In presenting story from pictures, teachers should use various methods for students to select interesting presentation approaches that make audience enjoy the activities according to the objectives set.

2. Recommendations for further research
   2.1 Research should be conducted on poems, for poems consist of vocabulary which are difficult and are usually boring to students. With comics, students will find poems more enjoyable.
   2.2 Research findings should be continuously extended for further development and hence the problem of reading Thai among Thai students at both primary and secondary levels would be solved.
   2.3 Studies should be conducted on critical thinking skills, synthesizing creative thinking skills using comic since students will enjoy the lessons more.
8. References


