

Chapter V

Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendations

Conclusion

The objective of this study was to investigate reading abilities and reading strategies of second-year Payap University students. The 100 subjects were stratified randomly selected from five different faculties: Humanities, Social Science, Science, Business, and Accountancy Finance and Banking. Three instruments used were the reading comprehension test, the questionnaire, and the interview. The reading comprehension test was used to measure students' reading abilities in the scope of the four reading comprehension skills. They were identifying main ideas, making inferences, making predictions, and drawing conclusions. The questionnaire was used to investigate reading strategies the students used while doing the reading comprehension test. The interview was used to investigate the proper reading strategies the students used in obtaining the correct or the best answers. The 100 samples were asked to take the reading comprehension test, and the questionnaire was given to them to complete immediately after they finished taking the test. The thirty subjects randomly

selected from the 100 subjects were interviewed. The percentage, mode, and mean were used to analyze the data.

The findings revealed that the students' reading abilities was 44.04 percent of the total scores, and students' reading abilities on identifying main ideas, making inferences, making predictions, and drawing conclusions was 46.00, 47.50, 42.30, and 40.30 percent of the total scores. Regarding reading strategies obtained from the questionnaire, students used all of the fifteen reading strategies. Six of the fifteen reading strategies were found to be used frequently, and eight of the fifteen reading strategies were found to be used sometimes. From the interview, the number of students who totally used proper reading strategies was 35.14 percent. The number of students who partially used proper reading strategies was 41.43 percent. The number of students who simply used random guessing was 23.33 percent. The mean of percentage of totally used proper reading strategies to enhance the four reading comprehension skills was ranged from 29.44 to 47.67 percent.

Discussion

The results of this study strongly support the indication that reading strategies affect reading abilities. The students' reading abilities measured by the reading comprehension test is 44.04 percent of the total scores. Besides, students' reading abilities on each reading comprehension skill is also below 50 percent. This is considered poor. This finding is consistent with the previous research on the quality of reading abilities constructed by Sutta (1994) with

first-year graduate students at Kasetsart University who did not reach the 80 percent criterion. This is also confirmed with Sitamui (1992) who investigates English linguistics competence of Mathayom Suksa 6 (Upper Secondary Level) students in schools under the Jurisdiction of the General Education Department. The finding revealed that the students' linguistic competence was 48.75 percent.

Regarding reading strategies, students use all the fifteen reading strategies given in the questionnaire. Six of the fifteen reading strategies are found to be used frequently, and eight of the fifteen reading strategies are found to be used sometimes. This means students know how to use reading strategies, but they do not use those reading strategies frequently. If the eight of the fifteen were used frequently, their reading abilities would be higher. This is consistent with the previous research done by Pinkerd (1995) on the quality of the reading abilities and the number of reading strategies used by three Thai graduate and three Thai undergraduate students. The findings show that graduate students use higher numbers of reading strategies and obtain higher comprehension scores when comparing with undergraduate students who use smaller numbers of reading strategies and obtain lower comprehension scores. According to the interview, the numbers of students who know how to use proper reading strategies is low. This means that the students are not provided the opportunity of practicing using reading strategies in a long term until these reading strategies become their automatic reading skills. This is confirmed by Carrell's (1998) idea that reading strategies will become more efficient when they are used and applied automatically as skills.

To respond to the results of this study, teachers should be aware of students' reading abilities. If students' reading abilities are poor, the teachers should provide long-term instructions and regular practice on using reading strategies in different types of texts. Moreover, the teachers should encourage students to use these reading strategies on an ongoing basis so that they may become more effective readers.

Recommendations

Recommendations for further research

1. Further research should take into consideration other variables that may affect students' reading abilities and reading strategies, such as the numbers of English reading courses taken and the English language background of the students.
2. Instructors should keep up with the research on reading abilities and reading strategies in order to improve their instructions based on current information in the field.
3. Instructors should encourage students to use reading strategies in their reading comprehension in different types of texts.