

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS

The data for this study was collected from 50 English major students who were enrolled in AE201: Fundamental Reading Course in the first semester of the 2003 academic year at Payap University. In the first period of the class, the subjects were asked to take a reading comprehension test and complete the questionnaire. Twenty-five students were randomly selected from 50 subjects and were interviewed after they had finished the reading comprehension test. Two formal instructors were also interviewed about the students' reading problems after they had taught them for four weeks. The percentage and mean were used to analyze the data.

The data analysis was divided into 3 parts based on the research objectives as follow:

3.1 Response to the first objective is to investigate the students' reading problems. The result was investigated through a reading comprehension test, student and instructor interviews.

Based on the results of the reading comprehension test, 88% of the students passed the reading comprehension test and 12% failed the test. Although only 6 students failed, it did not mean that they did not have any problems with reading comprehension. (see appendix B).

According to Table 1, the results show that six items caused reading problems for them. The students' problems were on item 4,5,9,12,14,15,16. When students scored below 10, it indicates the students' abilities are low on that item and that they have a problem.

Regarding the students' reading problems, the results (see Table 1) as in the table reveal that the students' reading problems were as follows:

- identifying main ideas
- drawing conclusions
- making inferences
- guessing the meanings based on contextual clues

Table 1: Question analysis

Items of test item	Number (Percentage) N= 50	Question Types
15	22 (44%)	Guessing the meaning form contextual clues
12	21 (42%)	Conclusion
16	20 (40%)	Conclusion
9	17 (34%)	Prediction
5	16 (32%)	Guessing the meaning from contextual clues
4	14 (28%)	Identifying main idea
14	13 (26%)	Guessing the meaning form contextual clues

In regard to the reading comprehension test, there were seven items that all students got wrong. Therefore, the researcher interviewed the students in order to get the reasons why they made mistakes. The reasons provided by the students are shown in Table 2.

The students had vocabulary problems in identifying main ideas, drawing conclusions, making inferences, making predictions and guessing the meaning based on contextual clues. This derived from the fact that they did not have sufficient words and the students themselves concluded that they had the same problem was a limited vocabulary. When students have vocabulary problems, it can relate to other problems such as making inferences, and drawing conclusions, etc.

Furthermore, they could not find the main idea since before they can find the main idea, they would need to understand all the contexts. But, the students have problems with words and they might not know the meaning of the key words in the texts. Additionally, they could not exploit other words to guess the meaning. Thus, they could not find the main idea. They also could not identify the keywords of the questions and they just guess the right answers. When they could not get the right meaning and mistranslated the word in each distracter, they also could not comprehend the paragraph.

In addition, the students did not know the meaning of some of the given choices, so they got the wrong interpretation of words. Therefore, it misguided them to the wrong inference because they did not understand the given choices. And, they ended up making a guess for the answer because they could not find the right answer.

Table 2: Reasons for selecting wrong answers

Item	Question Type	Reasons why the students get the wrong answer
4	Identifying main idea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -They had a vocabulary problem. - They could not make conclusion. - They guessed the answers - They could not find the main idea.
5	Guessing the meaning from contextual clues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They had a vocabulary problem. - They could not guess the meaning from the contextual clues. - The could not make inference.
9	Prediction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They had a vocabulary problem. - They drew a misguided off-topic inference. - They could not make a conclusion.
12	Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They could not make a conclusion. - They could not make inferences. - They mistranslated the choices. - They had a vocabulary problem.
14	Guessing the meaning from contextual clues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They got the wrong meaning of words. - They got the wrong inference.
15	Guessing the meaning from contextual clues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They could not make an inference. - They had a vocabulary problem.
16	Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They could not comprehend the paragraph. - They had a vocabulary problem.

Regarding the students' interview about their reading problems, the interview revealed that they have problems with guessing the meaning of words and expressions, memorizing the wrong meaning, finding main ideas, making inferences, comprehending complex sentences, and understanding the comprehension questions. It can be inferred that when the students do not know the words or expressions in sentences or texts, they actually use some reading strategies like guessing the meaning from the context. For this case, some students do not use some strategies but some do, anyway they can get the answers. They know limited words although they may not know all the words in sentences. However, they might still refuse to apply some reading strategies.

Drawing conclusion, making inferences, making predictions and identifying main ideas are the problems which occur with this reading class. Each skill relates together. The students think that they cannot comprehend the sentence or text without knowing all the meaning of words. Every time they get the problem with vocabulary, they cannot find the answer for each skill. For example, the students read the whole text and they should find the main idea and also predictions. But, they do not know some key words nor try to use reading strategies. So, they might not comprehend the texts and get the answers. That is the vocabulary problem.

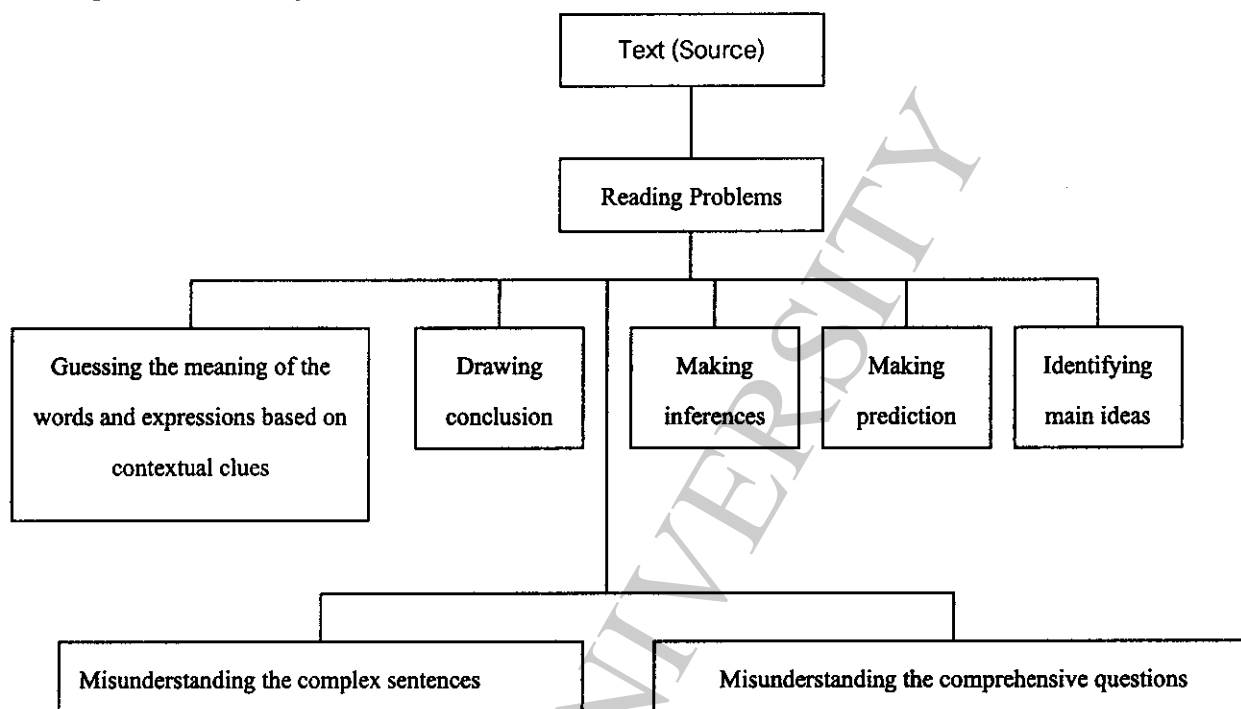
In addition, misunderstanding complex sentences is still a problem for English major students although they have taken more than 4 courses for English major. It was observed that these students can comprehend only simple sentences and get only surface meaning. Sometimes, they also get the wrong meaning so it affects their understanding. They cannot separate complex sentences from simple sentences. It indicates that Thai students' linguistic competence is not high.

When they misunderstand the sentence, it can lead them to the misguided questions.

As each particular problem dealt with vocabulary problem, the students got an obstacle with words. They cannot overcome these problems. In reality, the teachers should rely more on the reading strategies in order to overcome these problems. Moreover, the students themselves should try to develop themselves as interactive readers. This means they should know how to develop their cognitive skills. Especially, as Thai students studying English reading, they should change their behavior in thinking. Teachers ask only simple questions and that the answers appear obvious in the text. So, they might not be developed fully in cognitive process and critical thinking. Then, the problem might occur when they have to answer the comprehensive questions that require more critical thinking in order to get correct answers.

In conclusion, the map below illustrates clearly the reading problems of the sample students.

Figure 4: Reading Problems



The two instructors were interviewed after the students had finished the exam. The instructors answered two questions: what are the students' reading problems and what may be the solutions to the problems.

The first teacher revealed that their students got in to trouble with vocabulary problems such as guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words, making inferences and applying reading strategies. The students' vocabulary was limited, so they did not know the meaning of certain words. Then, when they read texts, the vocabulary caused them problems, and they could not comprehend texts, either. In addition, they could not make inferences and that was due to the lack of

vocabulary. They also expect that they have to know all the words then they can comprehend texts. Lastly, they could not apply the reading strategies in the texts because they had not practiced using them sufficiently.

In summary, the teacher applied a variety of techniques in practicing the reading strategies. For instance, the teacher employed the strategies given in a text. She taught the contextual clues and she also taught about prefixes and suffixes so that the students could know how to guess the meaning. After these techniques were taught, if the students still could not comprehend them, the teacher would explain them more and give more examples of them instead of translation until the students got the meaning and understood the text.

The second teacher mentioned that the major problem of reading is vocabularies are. The students could not guess the meaning from the contextual clues. According to this teacher, another problem that the students had was in finding main ideas. Moreover, the students misunderstood that they could comprehend texts only when they knew all the words in sentences. Thus, the teacher selected his own teaching styles and reading techniques to overcome these problems.

One solution for this particular problem (vocabulary) was that the teacher gave an individual sentence with the words that the students did not know in the sentences. He also took a passage and then took out some words. Finally, they had to use an educated guess so that they could get the meaning. The other solution was doing a vocabulary list: the students had to select the words from the authentic materials that they did not know the meaning of, and they also had to

make sentences with these words. The teacher mentioned that when the students did the vocabulary list, they should also write and read their own sentences.

So, they did the same thing repeatedly and then they learned a lot of words. That is the way of learning by doing. The solution for finding the main ideas was given by the teacher as he introduces the strategies to them by asking them to look for the answers either in the first paragraph and the conclusion or the key words and titles. Practicing is usually a way that can help students develop habits of employing reading strategies.

3.2 According to the second research objective which is to survey the students' reading strategies, the data was analyzed based on the questionnaire used in the part of reading strategies .

As shown in the table 3, the subjects thought about the information in English and in Thai at high level (mean = 3.68), and they also translated from English to Thai when they read with a high frequency of time (mean = 3.92). It can be concluded that the transference of the native language into English occurred when they read English texts. This means that when they read English texts, their thinking process would transfer from the native language, and then translate from their native language into English. In addition, the mean of 4.42 indicates that the subjects often used the re-reading strategy when they read difficult texts. They also used reading- aloud, a strategy that is indicated by the mean of 3.56. It can be inferred that, Thai students re-read the texts many times in order to get themselves involved in the texts and comprehend the texts. They also use reading – aloud strategy. Furthermore, it indicated that Thai students knew how to use dictionary in order to get the meaning. But they might not typically apply other reading

strategies except for the one which is guessing the meaning from the contextual clues.

Furthermore, the subjects consistently used a dictionary as an aid for reading (mean = 4.48) and they often visualized information to help them remember what they have read (mean = 3.94). However, the mean of 3.48 reveals that the subjects sometimes took notes and they sometimes used tables, figures, and pictures in the text to increase their understanding (mean = 2.86). This result indicated that each student had their own techniques or strategies to help them remember what they had read. However, taking notes was the main strategy that the students usually applied in reading and it was beneficial for them.

Moreover, the mean of 3.84 indicates that the subjects often underline and circle information to help them remember it. Only some of the students often asked teachers and friends to explain the information when they did not understand it. This might mean that they preferred someone to help them rather than to figure it out by themselves. According to this significant number, it can be summarized that English major students knew all the reading strategies. They also apply them in reading. However, each student did not apply the same strategies with the same text. Students' reading strategies also depended on their reading styles. But one problem might occur when they did not know what the appropriate strategy to apply is. However, it is the teachers' responsibility to teach the students what the reading strategies are and how they can be used in different situations. Once they know when to use these reading strategies, it can help them apply these strategies with appropriateness.

Additionally, the subjects often use guessing techniques with the text (mean = 4.20) and with vocabulary and phrases (mean = 3.90). Also, the mean of 3.70 indicates that they often use their background knowledge in order to help them understand the text.

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Table 3: Reading Strategies

	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I look up unfamiliar words and expressions in the dictionary.	4.48	.91	High
I re-read difficult passage more than one time.	4.42	.81	High
I try to guess what the content of the text is about when I read.	4.20	.70	High
I try to picture or imagine information to help me remember what I read.	3.94	.94	High
When reading, I translate from English into my native language.	3.92	.88	High
When I read, I guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases from the context.	3.90	.89	High
I underline or circle information to help me remember it.	3.84	1.06	High
I think about what I know to help me understand what I read.			
When reading, I think about information in both English and my mother tongue.	3.68	.89	High
If a passage is difficult, I may even read it aloud to help me understand what I am reading.	3.56	1.11	High
I take notes while reading to help me understand what I am reading.	3.48	.93	Moderate
I use tables, figures, and pictures available in the text to increase my understanding.	2.86	1.13	Moderate

3.3 The third objective is to recommend changes in the reading course and the data was collected from a questionnaire based on the students' needs, preferred reading topics and students' expectation of the course.

The questionnaire surveyed the students' needs with regard to the factors that affected their reading performance.

The first part of the questionnaire inquired about the demographic data. The results revealed that there were more female students than male students.

Table 4 revealed that the high percentage of second- year students in this class can be explained by the fact that they enrolled in the course according to their planned programs as this course is for second – year students. Furthermore, the third - year students were those who had repeated this course; they either failed or dropped the course in the past. The low percentage was on as “other,” which means that they were students who transferred from other majors to the English major.

Table 4: Student's Status

Year	Number (Percentage)
2 nd	36 (72%)
3 rd	12 (24%)
Other Years	2 (4%)
Total	50 (100%)

Based on Table 5, it was found that all of the students studied in a Thai language arts program when they were in high school. It indicated that they still wanted to study in the same program as in the past and they also took advantage of the previous study.

Table 5: Program

	Number (Percentage)
Arts	30 (60%)
Science	8 (16%)
Math	6 (12%)
Others	6 (12%)
Total	50 (100%)

The second part of the questionnaire is concerned with the students' needs. There are five categories in this part, which are: methodology of teaching, teaching styles and teacher's roles, and methods of evaluation.

According to Table 6, it is evident that they needed teachers to speak English all the time in class (mean = 4.24) except when they gave instruction. They should speak Thai in explaining the instruction and grammar (mean = 4.34). Suggestion based on this data is to avoid the reading problems that occur in the classroom, the students expect the teachers to explain the grammatical rules by speaking Thai. Teaching in Thai language can help them understand better and when they do not understand, they can ask the teachers in Thai. However, it does not mean that teachers should speak Thai all the time. They also like their teachers to speak English when doing other activities like conversation.

Referring to doing classroom activities, the results revealed that the subjects preferred to work in small groups (mean = 3.96), to work in pairs (mean = 3.92) and to work individually (mean = 3.58). The students want to learn from their friends, learn by themselves, and exchange their ideas. Thus, they prefer working in small groups, in pairs and individually.

Table 6: Methodology of Teaching

Statement	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I prefer my teacher to use Thai as the language of instruction such as grammar explanation.	4.34	.69	Strongly Agree
I prefer my teacher to speak English all the time.	4.24	.62	Strongly Agree
I prefer my teacher to divide students into small groups to perform class activities.	3.96	.64	Agree
I prefer my teacher to assign pair work to perform class activities.	3.92	.72	Agree
I prefer my teacher to assign an individual work in class.	3.58	.78	Agree

As in table 7, the analysis of data reveals that the subjects agreed that they wanted their teachers to encourage them by giving praise (mean = 3.66). The mean of 4.04 indicates that they also agreed that being given extra points was one of the factors that would encourage them to study. In contrast, the subjects disagreed that their teachers should encourage them by giving presents (mean = 3.22). Additionally, the mean of 2.90 shows that the students disagreed that their teachers should control the class, but the subjects preferred to select their own reading topics (mean = 4.08).

Referring to this result, it was found that Thai students not only prefer to get extra points from the teachers but also love to receive praises in order to stimulate them in

participating in the class. Based on this result, it indicates that teachers also have the authority in class as they can encourage students by motivating them. However, the result showed that the students themselves prefer to take up roles in the class in decision making for reading topic selection. This also means that they want to move towards the learner-centered curriculum. So, teachers should begin to change the curriculum in order to match with the students' needs. The point here is that making some adjustment can help teachers design an appropriate curriculum for the students.

Table 7: Teaching Styles and Teachers' Roles

	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I prefer to have a choice about reading topics.	4.08	.81	Agree
I prefer my teacher to encourage students by giving extra points.	4.04	.78	Agree
I prefer my teacher to encourage students by giving praises.	3.66	1.00	Agree
I prefer my teacher to encourage students by giving presents.	3.22	.91	Disagree
I prefer my teacher to control class all the time by making decisions for them.	2.90	.74	Disagree

Table 8 shows that the subjects disagreed that they prefer their teachers giving points to students who actively participated in the classroom (mean = 3.33).

On the other hand, the mean of 3.96 indicates that the subjects preferred to have quizzes at the end of each lesson. This showed that having quizzes after finishing each lesson is the way they prefer their assessment to be. It is the way that can also help students to remember what they have studied and they cannot be confused with lessons.

Table 8: Method of Evaluation

	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I prefer to have quizzes after finishing each lesson.	3.96	.99	Agree
I prefer my teacher to give points to the students who actively participate in class.	3.33	.90	Disagree

In regard to reading topics, the subjects were interested in the teenager related field that was presented as a high percentage as in table 9. Teenagers are interested in fashion, entertainment, or any topics that are related to their daily lives. All these topics can encourage the students to pay more attention in the reading class and also be familiar with the authentic texts. Furthermore, their interests were on entertainment topics, current news, and environmental topics. In contradiction, the lowest percentage of the reading topics was the educational topic.

Table 9: Reading Topics

	Frequency of Yes	Percent of Yes	Frequency of No	Percent of No	Interpretation
Teenager	45	90%	5	10%	Yes
Entertainment	39	78%	11	22%	Yes
Current News	34	68%	16	32%	Yes
Environment	30	60%	20	40%	Yes
Science	9	18%	41	82%	No
Business	6	12%	44	88%	No
Education	5	10%	45	90%	No

Table 10 shows that the subjects expected to practice English, and 90% of them needed to apply English in their daily lives. This percentage presented that the students have a high ambition in studying English reading. They practice more and more to be good at English reading. They also practice reading skills in order to get themselves involved in the authentic materials. 86% of the students studied English so that they could further their studies, while 80% of them wanted to gain experience in reading skills. The lowest percentage was the other expectations than the above items (8%).

Table 10: Students' Expectations in Studying the Reading Course

	Frequency of Yes	Percent of Yes	Frequency of No	Percent of No	Interpretation
Practicing English	46	92%	4	8%	Yes
Applying in their daily lives	45	90%	5	10%	Yes
Continuing further study	43	86%	7	14%	Yes
Getting experiences	40	80%	10	20%	Yes
Others	4	8%	46	92%	No