

# การพัฒนาการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อความเข้าใจของนักเรียนไทยระดับมัธยมศึกษา โดยผสมผสานเทคโนโลยีร่วมกับการสอนภาษาแบบเน้นภาระงาน Enhancing English Reading Comprehension of Thai Secondary School Students through the Integration of Technology into Task-based Language Teaching

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## บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์ (1) เพื่อศึกษาผลของการผสมผสานเทคโนโลยีร่วมกับการสอนภาษาแบบเน้นภาระงานต่อการอ่านเพื่อความเข้าใจของนักเรียนแผนการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ-ภาษาจีน (2) เพื่อศึกษาผลของการผสมผสานเทคโนโลยีร่วมกับการสอนภาษาแบบเน้นภาระงานต่อการอ่านเพื่อความเข้าใจของนักเรียนแผนการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ-คอมพิวเตอร์ (3) เพื่อเปรียบเทียบผลของการผสมผสานเทคโนโลยีร่วมกับการสอนภาษาแบบเน้นภาระงานต่อการอ่านเพื่อความเข้าใจของนักเรียนแผนการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ-ภาษาจีน และภาษาอังกฤษ-คอมพิวเตอร์ กลุ่มตัวอย่างที่ใช้ในการวิจัย ได้แก่ นักเรียนระดับชั้นมัธยมศึกษาปีที่ 6 จำนวน 56 คน เป็นนักเรียนห้องเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ-ภาษาจีน จำนวน 28 คน และห้องเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ-คอมพิวเตอร์ จำนวน 28 คน เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการวิจัยครั้งนี้ คือ แผนการจัดการเรียนรู้ และแบบทดสอบทางการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อความเข้าใจ วิเคราะห์ข้อมูลโดยใช้ ค่าเฉลี่ย ค่าเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน การทดสอบค่าที และการหาความแปรปรวนร่วม ผลการวิจัยพบว่าค่าเฉลี่ยหลังเรียนของการอ่านเพื่อความเข้าใจของนักเรียนทั้งสองกลุ่มสูงกว่าก่อนเรียนอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ .05 และผลของการผสมผสานเทคโนโลยีร่วมกับการสอนภาษาแบบเน้นภาระงานต่อการอ่านเพื่อความเข้าใจของนักเรียนทั้งสองกลุ่มไม่แตกต่างกันอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ

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ผลการวิจัยแสดงให้เห็นว่าการวิธีสอนนี้มีประสิทธิผลที่ดีต่อการพัฒนาการอ่านเพื่อความเข้าใจ  
ของนักเรียนที่มีความรู้พื้นฐานทางภาษาอังกฤษแตกต่างกัน

**คำสำคัญ:** การพัฒนาการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษ การผสมผสานเทคโนโลยี การสอนภาษาแบบเน้นภาระงาน

### ABSTRACT

This research aimed (1) to investigate the effects of the integration of technology into Task-based language teaching (TBLT) on English reading comprehension of English-Chinese program students, (2) to investigate the effects of the integration of technology into TBLT on English reading comprehension of English-Computer program students, (3) to compare the effects of the integration of technology into TBLT on reading comprehension of Thai secondary school students in the English-Chinese program and the English-Computer program. The participants were 56 twelfth-grade students. They were divided into two experimental groups of English-Chinese program and the English-Computer program equally. The instruments in this study included lesson plans and an English reading comprehension test. Mean scores, standard deviations, t-test analysis, and the analysis of covariance were used to analyze the data. The results revealed that there were statistically significant differences in the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the students in both groups at the .05 level. Moreover, the effects of the integration of technology into TBLT on students in both groups had no statistically significant differences. This suggested that the integration of technology into TBLT had positive effects on students who had different English backgrounds.

**Keywords:** Enhancing English reading, The integration of technology,  
Task-based language teaching

### Introduction

Among all four skills, reading is considered one of the most significant (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012, p. 7). English reading has played an essential role in students obtaining information. In the information age, English has become dominant on the internet. It has exceeded all other languages as the most commonly used on the internet (Ananiadou, McNaught & Thompson, 2012, pp. 13-14). By accessing the information, students need to master English reading. It would help students to

understand the information and broaden their horizons from the written text (Widowati & Kurniasih, 2018, p. 19). English reading is also necessary for students to understand the lessons. At the academic level, textbooks and instructional materials in fields such as medicine, science, literature, and history are usually written in English. That is, English reading is needed by students (Haerazi, Juanda & Azis, 2018, p. 545). It is a necessity to achieve educational goals for students.

Unfortunately, the English reading of Thai students seems to be at an unsatisfactory level. There are some studies that discovered that Thai students had difficulty with English reading. Sattanakho and Dechsubha (2018, pp. 58-59) reported that sixth-grade students did not know how to read when faced with textbooks such as word decoding, and sentence comprehension level. Additionally, Vaisean and Phusawisot (2020, p. 27) stated that seventh-grade students faced difficulties with their English reading comprehension. Lastly, Rawengwan and Yawiloeng (2020, p. 106) conducted a study to investigate the English reading comprehension of Thai university students at Nakhorn Sawan Rajabhat University (NSRU), and the results revealed that Thai university students still had difficulties with reading comprehension because they were unable to understand the context of the written text. These results suggest that Thai students struggle with English reading and have a reading comprehension deficiency.

The problem of lower English reading ability appears to stem from an ineffective teaching approach. It could be the result of teacher-centered learning. In Thailand, teacher-centered learning is the favorite approach of teachers (Sinturat, Kosashunhanan & Lekdumrongsak, 2021, p. 23; Sittirak, 2015, pp. 31-32). Teachers play a major role in teaching and learning activities. Most believe that knowledge can be transferred from teachers to students who act as passive receivers (Ertmer, Ottenbreit, Sadik, Sendurur & Sendurur, 2012, p. 424). Consequently, this method could cause students to become passive and disengaged in classes. In addition, it also decreases students' motivation.

On the contrary, according to constructivism theory, learning is not a process of transferring knowledge from teachers to students because students learn when they are active (Suhendi & Purwarno, 2021, pp. 88-89). In this regard, teachers should adopt active learning as a key procedure in the classes. The term "active learning" is

contrasted with traditional learning. According to Chi (2021, pp. 451-452), active learning is a teaching approach that allows students to actively participate in class through discussion, communication, role plays, and other activities. One of the teaching approaches is task-based language teaching (TBLT).

TBLT is a teaching approach that puts emphasis on tasks in the learning process through authentic language in classrooms. The tasks are designed to enable students to acquire and use authentic language while doing the given tasks in order to achieve the communicative goal. The notable characteristics of this teaching method can be explained as follows: 1) TBLT emphasizes student-centered learning. It encourages students' enthusiasm and creativity while developing their abilities, fulfilling their needs, extending their interests, and expanding their experiences (Ellis, Skehan, Li, Shintani & Lambert, 2019, pp. 179-180). 2) TBLT focuses on communication. It allows students to learn the target language through interaction with their peers (Nunan, 2015, pp. 13-15). 3) TBLT uses real-world language or authenticity in classes. In the language class, authentic materials are introduced into the learning context (Nunan, 2015, pp. 13-15). The activities and tasks offer students the opportunity to use real-world language in order to achieve a pedagogical purpose specific to the class. In short, the characteristics of this method are a student-centered approach, a focus on communication, and an implementation of authentic language in the classroom.

TBLT provides students with many advantages in learning. First, it encourages students to be active learners. This approach is a student-centered approach which emphasizes learning by doing and working with peers in pairs or small groups (Richards & Rodgers, 2016, pp. 176-179). Students are required to participate in tasks and interact with their peers while performing the tasks. Secondly, it can develop language learning. TBLT offers students a variety of authentic inputs of the target language through reading and listening (Ellis et al., 2019, pp. 179-180). Students would be exposed to the target language that they need to learn and use to complete the tasks. This would lead to students' language learning. For these reasons, the implementation of TBLT to develop students' reading comprehension might be a good alternative approach for teachers.

Nowadays, in 21st-century classes, technological advancements have resulted in a paradigm shift in teaching. The use of technology in classes is not an option but a core requirement (Richards & Rodgers, 2016, pp. 339-341). Technology offers many advantages for both teachers and students. Teachers employ technology in order to create positive learning environments, particularly in active learning from the preparation to the teaching and learning process. Additionally, teachers can utilize technology to be a part of the learning activities to encourage students to learn. Furthermore, technology provides students with many advantages. It offers students unlimited resources. Students can access authentic sources of information in order to facilitate their learning (Jaelani & Uman, 2021, pp. 171-172). In addition, technology facilitates students to learn in a more enjoyable and challenging learning environment. Therefore, using technology in the classrooms would be necessary and beneficial for teachers and students.

The importance of English reading, the paradigm shift in education, and technological advancements are the crucial attributes of new developments in English language teaching and learning in Thailand in this decade. With advances in technology, the researcher integrated technology into task-based language teaching (TBLT), called the integration of technology into TBLT. Therefore, the aim of this study is to investigate the effects of the integration of technology into TBLT on students' English reading comprehension of students with different backgrounds in English-Chinese and English-Computer programs.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To investigate the effects of the integration of technology into TBLT on English reading comprehension of Thai students in the English-Chinese program.
2. To investigate the effects of the integration of technology into TBLT on English reading comprehension of Thai students in the English-Computer program.
3. To compare the effects of the integration of technology into TBLT on English reading comprehension of the English-Chinese program and English-Computer program.

## Conceptual Framework

According to Ellis et al. (2019, pp. 211-235), there are three stages of TBLT including pre-task, main task, and post-task. Additionally, technology was integrated into each stage. The conceptual framework is shown in figure 1.

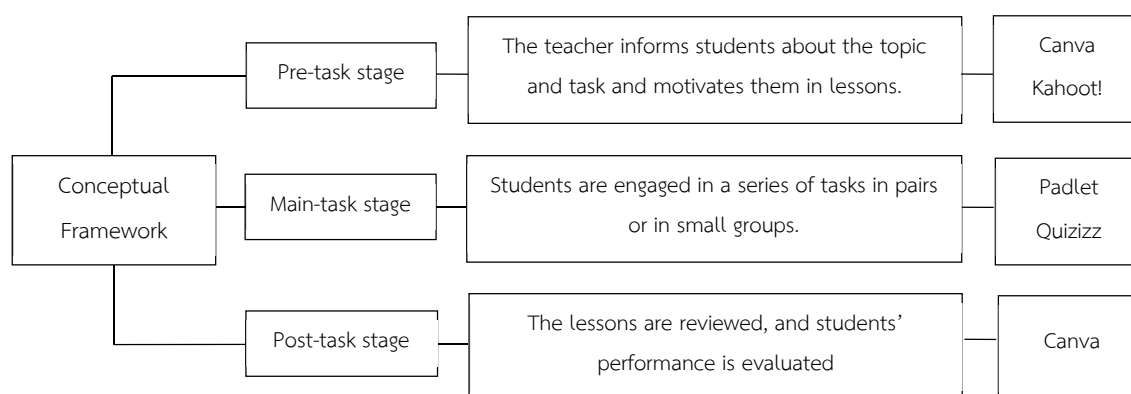


Figure 1 Conceptual framework

## Method

### 1. Population and Participants

The experiment was conducted at the public school in Bangkok. The population were 125 twelfth-grade students in the Language (English) program in the first semester of the 2022 academic year.

The reasons for choosing the population were 1) according to the school curriculum, the twelfth-grade students in the Language (English) program were required to study the reading and writing course in order to develop their reading ability. 2) the twelfth-grade students were at the most appropriate academic level to prepare themselves for further English proficiency tests. Therefore, this study supported the school curriculum and was beneficial for the students.

The participants of the study were 56 twelfth-grade students. They were selected via purposive sampling and divided into two experimental groups: English-Chinese program students and English-Computer program students. The participants were taught by using the integration of technology into TBLT.

The reasons for choosing the participants were 1) these students studied in Reading and Writing 5 course in the first semester of the 2022 academic year, and 2) they had different backgrounds, additionally, they were heterogeneous. Therefore, they were appropriate to be participants in this study.

## **2. Research Instruments**

The research instruments in this study consisted of 1) lesson plans and 2) An English reading comprehension test.

2.1 Lesson plans were designed based on three stages of TBLT proposed by Ellis et al. (2019, pp. 211-235). It consisted of three stages including pre-task, main-task, and post-task stages. Technology was integrated into each stage of teaching. The details were explained as follows: 1) In the pre-task stage, the teacher informs students about the topic and tasks and motivates them in lessons. The teacher presents the related information of the reading passage through Canva. Then, students are asked to play Kahoot! in order to motivate them. 2) In the main-task stage, students are engaged in a series of tasks in pairs or in small groups. In this stage, students are expected to discuss and share their ideas with their peers. Students can use their mobile phones or tablets while doing tasks. Padlet and Quizizz are employed in this stage. Padlet is used to facilitate students to share their ideas while reading, while Quizizz is used to assess students' understanding after reading. 3) In the post-task stage, the lessons are reviewed and students' performance is evaluated. Students are asked to evaluate their performance: find errors of their tasks and then revise them. Canva is utilized to review the lessons by creating posters, infographics, or presentations.

2.2 The test was designed to measure students' reading comprehension skills before and after the implementation of the integration of technology into TBLT. It consisted of 20 multiple-choice items covering reading for topic, reading for the main idea, reading for details, and reading for word meaning. The example of the test is shown in figure 2.

The MBTI is an assessment that identifies one's 4-letter personality type, with each letter corresponding to a specific personality preference or tendency. The MBTI Assessment comprises 93 questions and typically takes about 20-25 minutes to complete. There are no right or wrong answers on The Myers-Briggs test. Those who complete the MBTI test are asked to answer as honestly as possible, without outside interference. Those who take the indicator are asked to answer questions about how they act most of the time. The Myers-Briggs test online comprises four *dichotomies*, or four pairs of opposite personality functions, making up 16 personality types. At its core, the theory behind the MBTI test is based on the fact that the world's population is made up of these 16 different types of people—hence the 16 MBTI Personality Types.

The MBTI is a self-report inventory designed to identify a person's personality type, strengths, and preferences. The questionnaire was developed by Isabel Myers and Katherine Briggs based on their work with Carl Jung's theory of personality types. Today, the MBTI inventory is one of the most widely used psychological instruments in the world.

1. What is the main idea of this passage? (Reading for Main idea)

- a. The MBTI assessment that comprise 93 questions and takes about 20-25 minutes to complete.
- b. Myers-Briggs personality test assessment that identifies a person's personality type.
- c. A self-report inventory based on Carl Jung's theory.
- d. Who worked behind the theory of MBTI test.

2. Which sentence is NOT TRUE? (Reading for detail)

- a. MBTI was developed by Isabel Myers and Katherine Briggs.
- b. According to Carl Jung theory of personality types there are 16 types of people in the world.
- c. It takes about less than half an hour to complete the 93 questions of MBTI Assessment.
- d. The Myers-Briggs test online consists of four pairs of opposite personality functions.

3. In the article, the word *dichotomies* are closest in meaning to... (Reading for word meaning)

- a. difference
- b. characteristic
- c. personality
- d. behavior

4. What is the best topic of the paragraph 2? (Reading for topic)

- a. Self-report test
- b. Carl Jung's theory
- c. MBTI inventory
- d. MBTI was developed by Isabel Myers and Katherine

Figure 2 English reading comprehension test

To determine the validity, all instruments were validated by three specialists. The IOC values were higher than 0.67. Reliability and item facility were determined in the pilot study. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the English reading comprehension test was 0.80. Since Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was higher than 0.7, the test was considered strong enough to evaluate students' reading comprehension.

### 3. Data Collection

The participants in both groups were asked to sign the consent form and then complete the English reading comprehension pre-test. After the pre-test, they



were taught by using the integration of technology into TBLT. After instruction, the participants were asked to do the post-test.

#### 4. Data Analysis

The data from the pre-test and post-test of the English reading comprehension test were analyzed by mean scores ( $\bar{X}$ ), standard deviations (S.D.), the t-test analysis, and the analysis of covariance. The t-test analysis was used to determine whether there were any differences in the mean scores of the pre-test and the post-test. The analysis of covariance was employed to examine whether there were any differences in the effects of the integration of technology into TBLT on the English reading comprehension of the English-Chinese program students and that of the English-Computer program students.

### Results

These results were presented based on the objectives of this study.

#### 1. The effects of the integration of technology into TBLT on reading comprehension of Thai students in the English-Chinese program.

Table 1 The comparison of the Pre-test Mean Score to the Post-test Mean Score of the English-Chinese program Students.

Time	N	Mean	Max	Min	S.D.	t-value	df	p-value
Pre-test	28	11.93	15	8	1.72	12.41*	27	0.00
Post-test	28	15.14	19	12	1.75			

\*p < .05

Regarding table 1, the results also showed that there was statistically significant differences in the pre-test and post-test mean scores of English-Chinese program students ( $t = 12.41$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The pre-test mean score was 11.93 (S.D. = 1.72) while the post-test mean score was 15.14 (S.D. = 1.75). Hence, the post-test mean score was significantly higher than the pre-test mean score. The analysis of the t-test showed the positive effects of the integration of technology into TBLT on students' English reading comprehension.

## 2. The effects of the integration of technology into TBLT on reading comprehension of Thai students in the English-Computer program

Table 2 The Comparison of the Pre-test Mean Score to the Post-test Mean Score of the English-Computer program Students

Time	N	Mean	Max	Min	S.D.	t-value	df	p-value
Pre-test	28	10.04	13	7	1.75	12.93*	27	0.00
Post-test	28	13.25	16	10	1.53			

\*p < .05

Regarding table 2, the results showed that there was statistically significant differences in the pre-test and post-test mean scores of English-Computer program students ( $t = 12.93$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The pre-test mean score was 10.04 (S.D. = 1.75) while post-test mean scores was 13.25 (S.D. = 1.53). Hence, the post-test mean score was significantly higher than the pre-test mean score. The analysis of t-test showed the positive effects of the integration of technology into TBLT on students' English reading comprehension.

## 3. The Comparison of the effects of the integration of technology into TBLT on reading comprehension of the English-Chinese program students and that of the English-Computer program students.

Table 3 Unadjusted and Covariance Adjusted Descriptive Statistic

Group	Before Treatment			After Treatment (Unadjusted)		After Treatment (Adjusted)	
	N	M	S.D.	M	S.D.	M	SE
English- Chinese program students	28	11.93	1.72	15.14	1.75	14.53	0.25
English- Computer program students	28	10.04	1.75	13.35	1.53	13.86	0.25

Table 4 The Analysis of Covariance of the English-Chinese program Students and the English-Computer program Students

Source of Variance	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig
Before Treatment	69.06	1	69.06	47.15	0.00*
Between Groups	4.66	1	4.66	3.19	0.80
Error	77.62	53	1.47		

\*p < .05

According to table 4, the analysis reveals that there were no statistically significant differences  $F = 3.19$ ,  $p > .05$  in the gain of the English-Chinese program students ( $M = 14.53$ ,  $SE = 0.25$ ) and that of the English-Computer program students ( $M = 13.86$ ,  $SE = 0.25$ ). This points out that the effects of the integration of technology into TBLT on students' English reading comprehension of the English-Chinese program students and the English-Computer program students were similar.

## Discussion

The results of this study indicate that this teaching method had positive effects on the English reading comprehension of the students in both groups. The post-test mean scores were higher than the pre-test mean scores ( $t = 12.41$ ,  $p = < .05$ ;  $t = 12.93$ ,  $p = < .05$ ). There are many reasons to explain these results.

Firstly, the integration of technology into TBLT supported the students to learn reading comprehension through the use of tasks. Similar to the idea of Ellis, et al. (2019, pp. 179-180), tasks in this study helped students better understand the lessons because the tasks required students to use their linguistic knowledge and understanding in order to express the meaning. In the present study, students were asked to read the passages in groups in order to complete the given tasks. This is in line with the study of Thammineni (2012, p. 68) which found that tasks in TBLT allowed students to use their abilities to obtain information from various sources in order to complete the given tasks, and tasks also helped students improve their reading skills. This result is congruent with the study of Koolpluksee (2020, pp. 177- 178) who

implemented TBLT in an English reading class and found that the task had good effects on students' English reading comprehension. Tasks supported students in learning reading; therefore, students in both groups improved their reading comprehension

Secondly, this teaching method provided the students with an opportunity to work collaboratively which led them to improve their reading. According to Richards and Rodgers (2016, pp. 176-179), TBLT requires students to take part in group activities in order to learn and practice the target language. In this study, students were asked to complete the given tasks in pairs or in small groups where they could talk and share their ideas while reading. In line with the ideas of Gök and Michel (2021, pp. 296-297), students engaged in a series of tasks that needed to be completed independently, in pairs, or in small groups. This indicates that students had chances to interact with others and work with their peers collaboratively while learning. This led them to better understand the reading passages and improve their reading. The results of this study are consistent with the study of Bao and Du (2015, p. 297) which found that TBLT encouraged students to actively participate and work collaboratively in class with their peers who supported each other in the process on learning. It can be concluded that this teaching method supported students to work together with their peers and led to improving their reading.

Thirdly, the integration of technology into TBLT offered the students the opportunity to learn reading comprehension through the use of authentic materials. In this study, students had chances to read passages from various sources, such as newspapers, magazines, and online articles in the class. Like the ideas of Ellis et al (2019, pp. 179-180), TBLT offered students substantially more exposure to the target language via authentic materials which were useful for students to learn and understand the lessons. The authentic materials could arouse students' interest which made them participate in the class and complete the given tasks meaningfully. The results are congruent with many studies. For example, Ashrafi (2020, pp. 156-159) studied the effects of task-based language teaching on the comprehension reading of high-school students. This study revealed that authentic materials were powerful tools to improve students' comprehension since it allowed them to learn with enthusiasm. Elahi and Heidar (2021, p. 9) also found that TBLT allowed students to learn reading through

authentic materials and led to their reading improvement. It can be implied that authentic materials facilitate students to learn reading.

In addition, the results also show that there were no significant differences in the gain of the English-Chinese program students and that of the English-Computer program students ( $F = 3.19, p > .05$ ). This points out that the effects of the integration of technology into TBLT on students' English reading comprehension of the students in both groups were similar.

### Limitations and Recommendations

Regarding the findings of the present study, the potential benefits of the integration of technology into TBLT had positive effects on students' reading comprehension. With the positive effects, it may inspire more educators to consider the adoption of this teaching method in the design of their courses. The researcher suggests the following ways in which future research might build upon and strengthen the findings.

1. This study involved only students at the secondary level. It might be a good idea to investigate the effects of the integration of technology into TBLT on students at different levels or in different subjects.
2. This study was limited to only four skills of reading comprehension; it would be more interesting to apply this teaching method to other reading skills.
3. There were four technology platforms used in this study. It might be great to compare the effects of each technology platform in reading class.

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