

การใช้เทศกาลอีสานในการจัดการเรียนรู้แบบเน้นงานปฏิบัติ
เพื่อส่งเสริมการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อความเข้าใจของนักเรียนชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ 5
Implementing Isan Festival through Task-Based Learning
to Promote Grade 5 Students' English Reading Comprehension

สุพัตรา สุภาพ^{1,*} และธนชาติ หล่อนกลาง²
Supattra Suparp^{1,*} and Thanachart Lornklang²

(Received: Jun. 21, 2023; Revised: Sep. 15, 2023; Accepted: Sep. 15, 2023)

บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยในครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อ 1) ศึกษาผลของการจัดการเรียนรู้แบบเน้นงานปฏิบัติโดยใช้เทศกาลอีสานที่มีต่อการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อความเข้าใจของนักเรียนชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ 5 และ 2) เพื่อศึกษาความพึงพอใจของนักเรียนที่มีต่อการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษด้วยการจัดการเรียนรู้แบบเน้นงานปฏิบัติโดยใช้เทศกาลอีสาน กลุ่มตัวอย่าง คือ นักเรียนชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ 5 จำนวน 29 คน โดยใช้วิธีการสุ่มแบบแบ่งกลุ่ม เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการวิจัย ได้แก่ แผนการสอน แบบทดสอบการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อความเข้าใจ และแบบสอบถามความพึงพอใจของนักเรียน สถิติที่ใช้ในการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูล ได้แก่ ค่าเฉลี่ย ส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน และสถิติที่แบบไม่อิสระ (pair-sample t-test)

ผลการวิจัยพบว่า ค่าเฉลี่ยการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อความเข้าใจของนักเรียนหลังจากเรียนด้วยการจัดการเรียนรู้แบบเน้นงานปฏิบัติโดยใช้เทศกาลอีสานสูงกว่าก่อนเรียนอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ .05 และนักเรียนมีความพึงพอใจต่อการเรียนระดับมากที่สุด แสดงให้เห็นว่าการจัดการเรียนรู้แบบเน้นงานปฏิบัติโดยใช้เทศกาลอีสาน สามารถส่งเสริมการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อความเข้าใจของนักเรียนได้

คำสำคัญ: การเรียนรู้แบบเน้นงานปฏิบัติ เทศกาลอีสาน การอ่านภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อความเข้าใจ

¹ นักศึกษาระดับปริญญาโท สาขาวิชาการสอนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏนครราชสีมา, นครราชสีมา 30000

M.A. Student in Teaching English as a Foreign Language Program, Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University, Nakhon Ratchasima 30000, Thailand

² คณะมนุษยศาสตร์และสังคมศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏนครราชสีมา, นครราชสีมา 30000

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University, Nakhon Ratchasima 30000, Thailand

*Corresponding author, e-mail: supattrasuparp05@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The research objectives of this study were: 1) to examine the effects of task-based learning focusing on the Isan festival on English reading comprehension of fifth-grade students, and 2) to study students' satisfaction towards learning English via task-based learning focusing on the Isan festival. The participants were 29 fifth-grade students, who were selected by using cluster random sampling. The instruments were the English lesson plans based on task-based learning focusing on the Isan festival, an English reading comprehension test, and a questionnaire. The data were analyzed using mean (\bar{X}), standard deviations (S.D.), and pair-sample t-test. The result of this research showed that the mean score of the post-test of the English reading comprehension of the participants who learned English using task-based learning focusing on the Isan festival was significantly higher than the pre-test at the .05 level. In addition, the participants had high satisfaction with learning English via task-based learning focusing on the Isan festival. This study confirmed that using task-based learning focusing on the Isan festival could enhance students' English reading comprehension.

Keywords: Task-based learning (TBL), Isan festival, English reading comprehension

Introduction

Reading serves as an important tool in the field of foreign language learning to recall, interpret, and perceive written or printed materials. Since new technologies and the increasing use of the internet are different in business, science, trade, and education; a higher level of proficiency in English reading is essential. Thai people require English language proficiency to be able to communicate with foreigners and to get information from reading sources (Wisaijorn, 2015, p. 1).

The English language is related to the curriculum of Thailand's educational system. In the Basic Educational Core Curriculum 2008, The Ministry of Education (2008, pp. 252-253) stated that the significance of developing the quality of English language learning and teaching procedures is not only that Thai students have to attend EFL classes in school but also students need to acquire more knowledge and experience of their own local culture. There are 4 strands that students have to learn: language for communication, language and culture, language and relationship with other

learning areas, and language and relationship with the community and the world. Strand 2, for language and culture, specified that learners should learn to obtain an appreciation of the relationship between the language and culture of native speakers. In addition, students should gain an appreciation of the similarities and differences between the language and culture of native and Thai speakers. Consequently, the students can gain benefit from a local culture that organizes knowledge and experiences in language learning.

A common reading comprehension difficulty of Thai students is how to read efficiently. It means not only reading words or texts clearly or fluently but also the readers have to be able to connect the meaning of the sentences in the text. Some of the children did not understand the content or meaning of what they read (Thammabowon, 2006, p. 47). They lack vocabulary knowledge and participate in groups. Furthermore, students lack the motivation to learn, and they cannot choose the topic that they are interested in.

According to the problems above, the researcher decided to use task-based learning (TBL) to promote students' English reading comprehension. A task is a work plan that involves a real-world process of language use and focuses on meaning. It can involve any of the four language skills and engages the cognitive processes (Ellis, 2003, pp. 9-10). The authentic task is one of the significant principles of task-based learning. The topic that students are interested in is important in their learning activities. TBL instructions in classroom activities are tasks that students may engage in or outside the second language classroom or in their real lives. In the reading class students have many chances to use language naturally in pairs or group work, allowing them to share ideas (Nunan, 2004, p. 10).

The researcher thinks that the use of task-based learning with the Isan festival could enhance English reading comprehension because students can use English in their daily lives, and they feel it is close to them. Isan festivals are festivals that happen in the northeast of Thailand. They are familiar with students, involve their learning experiences, can assist students in comprehending the content, and motivate students to learn more effectively because of their background knowledge-making easier.

Chaiwong (2021), Srichote (2022), and Chen and Wang (2019) confirmed that learning English via a task-based learning (TBL) approach improved students' English reading. In addition, Sornprasert and Chussanachot (2019) and Petnoosed and Palanukulwong (2021) found that culture has positive effects on reading comprehension. However, there is no study about TBL using local culture to promote English reading comprehension. Thus, this study supports TBL by using local cultural content to develop students' English reading comprehension. Consequently, this study aims to examine the effects of TBL using the Isan festival on students' English reading comprehension.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the effects of task-based learning focusing on the Isan festival on English reading comprehension of fifth-grade students.
2. To study students' satisfaction towards learning English via task-based learning focusing on the Isan festival.

Significance of the Research

1. The study's result will help the teachers modify the Isan festival as teaching material in teaching English through task-based learning to promote reading comprehension.
2. This study is a guideline for teachers to develop English reading teaching and learning for students at the primary level in the future.
3. The study's result may help teachers to adapt teaching English reading to their students and students who get the treatment will improve reading comprehension and have higher-good reading skills.

Conceptual Framework

This research is the pre-experimental; one-group pre-test and post-test design. It is expected that after students learned English via TBL focusing on the Isan festival, they would develop their reading comprehension skills and get higher scores from the post-test than the pre-test. This study followed the steps of task-based learning from

Willis (1996, pp. 56-58) who stated that there are three stages of task-based learning: pre-task, task cycle, and post-task. Following is the conceptual framework of this study.

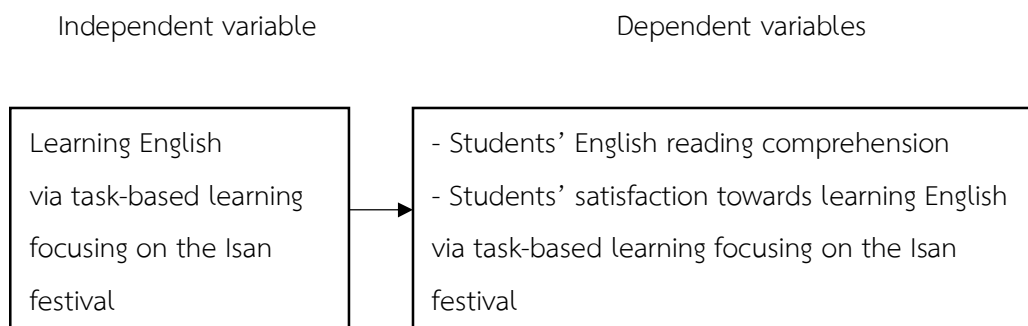


Figure 1 Conceptual framework

Research Methodology

1. Population and Samples

The population in this study was 673 fifth-grade students of the 28 medium-sized primary schools, in Muang, Chaiyaphum Primary Education Service Area Office 1 who studied an English course during the second semester of the academic year 2022. The population was arranged using mix-ability classes. The participants in this study consisted of 29 fifth-grade students at Muangnoiratsongkrow School, in Muang, Chaiyaphum Primary Education Service Area Office 1 who studied an English course during the second semester of the academic year 2022. They were selected by using cluster random sampling.

2. Instruments

2.1 The instruments used in the research procedure were the lesson plans which were designed following the TBL approach of Willis (1996). Each lesson plan lasted 5 periods or 300 minutes. The content of the Phi Ta Khon Festival or Ghost Festival and Bun Bang Fai Festival or Rocket Festival were used in this study. The main task of each lesson plan is to make a poster. Materials use in the lesson plan are video clips and pictures of the Ghost Festival and Rocket Festival from YouTube, word cards, picture cards, passages, dialogues, and activity sheets.

The steps of teaching were as follows:

Pre-task activities, the teacher presented an example of a good end product and discussed the components of a poster. Next, the teacher introduced and defined the topic of the Isan Festivals and the objectives of the tasks by showing pictures and video clips. Then, the teacher encouraged students to do a pre-task. For instance, sharing their opinions, brainstorming ideas with the class, and matching words with pictures. The teacher highlighted useful words and phrases by presenting them on the board and checking students' understanding. The last step is the teacher explaining task instructions.

The task cycle consists of the task stage, planning stage, and report stage. In the task stage, the teacher divided students into groups, pairs, or individuals depending on the activities. Next, the teacher introduced tasks and types of reading tasks by giving a passage to students and discussing in groups. Then, the teacher allowed students to do the tasks such as information gap tasks, match the pictures with the sentences, and answer the questions. The main task of this experiment is to make a poster. The teacher helped and supported students in searching for information about the end product. The last step is the teacher monitored and positively encouraged students. In the planning stage, the teacher ensured the purpose of the main task (poster) is clear and helped students rehearse oral reports. In the report stage, the teacher allowed the groups of students to present their tasks and gave feedback on content and form.

Language focus consists of the analysis stage and practice stage. In the analysis stage, the teacher picked up language items from the report stage. Next, the teacher brought other useful words, phrases, and patterns to students' attention to discuss together. The last step is to ask students about features they are not clear about and review each analytical activity with the class. In the practice stage, the teacher conducted practice activities by letting students do the worksheets and discuss. In addition, the teacher selected language areas to practice with the students based on their needs and what emerged from the task and report phases.

2.2 The instruments used for data collection were the English reading comprehension test used for pre-test and post-test assessment. It had 30 items, a kind

of multiple-choice question with four alternatives. The questions asked the students to find specific information and details, find the main idea, and tell the meaning of the words. The test was tried out with 90 fifth-grade students in the same-sized school of the population. The reliability of the overall test is calculated by Kuder-Richardson-formula (KR-20). The reliability of the 30 items was 0.80. The questionnaire was used to investigate the students' satisfaction and it consisted of 10 closed questions and one open-ended question.

3. Data collection

The data were collected during the second semester of the academic year 2022. The samples were given a reading comprehension pre-test to check their background knowledge before the treatment. The researcher spent a total of four weeks developing students' English reading comprehension by using 2 task-based lesson plans. After completing the 2 lesson plans, the samples took a post-test to investigate the effects of the experiment. They also answered the questionnaire to check their satisfaction towards learning English via TBL focusing on the Isan festival.

4. Data Analysis

The researcher used the mean (\bar{X}), standard deviation (S.D.), and pair-sample t-test to analyze the data obtained from the English reading comprehension pre-test and post-test. The data from the rating scale of the questionnaire on students' satisfaction was analyzed by using mean (\bar{X}) and standard deviation (S.D.).

5. Results of research

The examination of the effects of task-based learning using on the Isan festival on English reading comprehension is presented in Table 1-2.

Table 1 The comparison of mean scores between the pre-test and post-test of fifth-grade students' English reading comprehension

Mode of Assessment	n	\bar{X}	S.D.	t	p
pre-test	29	10.48	3.18	17.536*	0.000
post-test	29	17.76	4.48		

*p < .05

As shown in Table 1, the post-test mean score of English reading comprehension of fifth-grade students was significantly higher than the pre-test mean score at the .05 level. This indicated that the student's English reading comprehension had improved after learning English via TBL focusing on the Isan festival.

The questionnaire was used to study students' satisfaction towards learning English via TBL focusing on the Isan festival. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Students' satisfaction towards learning English via task-based learning focusing on the Isan festival (n=29)

Statements	\bar{X}	S.D.	Meaning	Rank
1. The task-based learning focusing on Isan festival steps are simple to understand and I can learn step-by-step.	4.38	0.76	Agree	9
2. The vocabularies of the Isan festival are not too difficult and are appropriate for the student's level.	4.24	0.86	Agree	10

Table 2 (Cont.)

Statements	\bar{X}	S.D.	Meaning	Rank
3. Isan festival activities and tasks promote me to read and learn more English.	4.79	0.55	Strongly agree	4
4. Isan festival activities and tasks assist me to comprehend the reading passages.	4.72	0.58	Strongly agree	5
5. Isan festival encourages me to develop English reading comprehension.	4.79	0.48	Strongly agree	3
6. Task-based learning focusing on the Isan festival offers me knowledge, enjoyment, and interesting topics.	4.93	0.25	Strongly agree	1
7. I can evaluate my reading comprehension after learning English via task-based learning focusing on the Isan festival.	4.62	0.55	Strongly agree	7
8. I can adapt the knowledge in daily reading situations after learning via task-based learning focusing on the Isan festival.	4.48	0.77	Agree	8

Table 2 (Cont.)

Statements	\bar{X}	S.D.	Meaning	Rank
9. Task-based learning focusing on the Isan festival increases my reading skills.	4.66	0.71	Strongly agree	6
10. I like to learn English via task-based learning focusing on the Isan festival.	4.90	0.40	Strongly agree	2
Total	4.65	0.59	Strongly agree	

As shown in Table 2, the total mean score of the questionnaire was 4.65 which was in the strongly agree level from the 29 participants. The assessment issue with the highest mean score revealed that most students strongly agreed that task-based learning focusing on the Isan festival offers students knowledge, enjoyment, and interesting topics. ($\bar{X} = 4.93$). On the other hand, the assessment issue with the lowest mean score revealed that most students agreed that the vocabularies of the Isan festival are not too difficult and are appropriate for the student's level. ($\bar{X} = 4.24$). It could be concluded that students had positive satisfaction towards learning English via task-based learning focusing on the Isan festival.

Conclusion

The findings of this study revealed that the fifth-grade students' English reading comprehension post-test mean score was significantly higher than the pre-test mean score at the .05 level. Moreover, students had high satisfaction towards learning English via task-based learning focusing on the Isan festival at a strongly agree level. To sum up, this study indicated that learning English via task-based learning focusing on the Isan festival could promote the students' English reading comprehension. When the students' English reading comprehension is improved, students can lead to better

understanding and analysis of academic texts across various subjects, enhance communication skills, and foster critical thinking abilities.

Discussion

From the positive results, task-based learning focusing on the Isan festival was a meaningful activity that helped promote students' English reading comprehension. This study related to the study of Ngam-anant and Patamadilok (2022) investigated the effectiveness of task-based learning in the English reading comprehension ability of grade 6 students. The result showed that task-based learning could improve grade 6 students' English reading comprehension. The finding was also similar to Chaiwong (2021), Srichote (2022) and Chen and Wang (2019) found that learning English via a task-based learning approach improved students' English reading.

The study revealed that using familiar content in the lessons could help to teach and learn English efficiently because students' background knowledge makes it easier and involves the students' learning experience. When the students read, they can anticipate the meaning and relate information that they already know to the reading texts. Furthermore, they have a lot of fun to learning English with many activities about the Isan festival and are confident to read the texts.

Thus, cultural content could help students build a schema and use it to understand the process of reading passages. Students can use background knowledge related to the texts that they read. This is similar to Lailiyah, Wediyantoro, and Yustisia (2019) investigated the role of background knowledge or schema in the reading comprehension of EFL students. In addition, the students were satisfied at a strongly agreed level towards learning English via task-based learning focusing on the Isan festival. As Kokkratok (2017) studied the effects of task-based learning using ASEAN cultural content on the English reading comprehension of ninth-grade students. The study's result found that students' English reading comprehension improved and had positive satisfaction towards learning via task-based learning using ASEAN cultural content. Lornklang (2020) investigated the English for local tourism instructional model that was based on project-based learning and task-based learning that could promote students' English oral communication ability and their local attraction knowledge.

In conclusion, even though many previous studies have been conducted based on task-based learning, the researcher decided to use the Isan festival content that students are interested in and assist students build a schema to read the passages effectively, this study verifies that learning English via task-based learning focusing on the Isan festival can be used in teaching English reading comprehension successfully. Therefore, the outcome of learning was fruitful with positive satisfaction.

Recommendations

Based on this study, recommendations for instruction are the topics used in English reading instruction should be related to the students' interests, needs or way of life. In addition, teachers should consider tasks and activities in the learning process that are appropriate to students' level and duration.

Recommendations for further study are the other researchers may implement task-based learning focusing on the Isan festival with listening, speaking, and writing instruction. Exploring the long-term effects of task-based learning on language proficiency should be considered. Comparing the task-based learning effectiveness with other instructional approaches. Other contents such as stories, movies, novels, music, and tradition need to be used in further study.

Acknowledgements

This research was funded by Graduate School Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University in the academic year 2022.

References

- Chaiwong, T. (2021). *The effects of task-based learning and collaborative strategic reading instruction in enhancing reading comprehension of Mattayomsuksa 2 students* (Master's thesis, Srinakharinwirot University).
- Chen, S. & Wang, J. (2019). Effects of Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) Approach and Language Assessment on Students' Competences in Intensive Reading Course. *English Language Teaching*, 12(3), pp. 119-138.

- Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-Based Language Teaching and Learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kokkratok, W. (2017). *Effects of task-based learning using ASEAN cultural content on English reading comprehension of ninth-grade students* (Master's thesis, Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University).
- Lailiyah, M., Wediyantoro, P. L. & Yustisia, K. K. (2019). Pre-Reading strategies on Reading comprehension of EFL Students. *EnJourMe (English Journal of Merdeka)*, 4(2), pp. 82-87.
- Lornklang, T. (2020). A Development of English for Local Tourism Instructional Model in Nakhon Ratchasima Province. *Ratchaphruek Journal*, 19(1), pp. 48-57.
- Ministry of Education. (2008). *The Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E.2551*. Bangkok: Author.
- Ngam-anant, P. & Patamadilok, S. (2022). The effectiveness of task-based learning in English reading comprehension ability of grade 6 students. *Buddhist Education and Research*, 8(2), pp. 94-105.
- Nunan, D. (2004). *Task-Based Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Petnoosed, P. & Palanukulwong, T. (2021). The Effects of Cultural Familiarity on Reading Comprehension and Attitudes Towards Reading English Short Stories Written by a Native Speaker and a Thai Author. *Journal of Liberal Arts Prince of Songkla University*, 13(2), pp. 120-143.
- Sornprasert, S. & Chussanachot, R. (2019). Development a reading Instructional model based on the Schema Theory and Reciprocal Teaching Approach to enhance the English reading ability of Secondary School Students. *Journal of Education Studies*, 47(1), pp. 429-449.
- Srichote, P. (2022). *Enhancing English reading comprehension of Thai secondary school students through the integration of technology into task-based language teaching* (Master's thesis, Srinakharinwirot University).
- Thammabowon, N. (2006). *Curriculum for Kindergarten Development: Experience Management for Kindergarten*. Nonthaburi: Sukhothai Thammathirat University Press.
- Willis, D. (1996). *A Framework for Task-Based Learning*. London: Longman.
- Wisaijorn, P. (2015). *Teaching Reading*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Printing House.