

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ATHLETES ENGLISH READING SKILLS AT THAILAND NATIONAL SPORTS UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research was to investigate the development of English reading comprehensive skills among undergraduate athletes at the Thailand National Sports University, Chon Buri Campus, using the jigsaw reading activity. The sample group for this study consisted of 10 first-year undergraduate athletes majoring in Sports Management within the Faculty of Liberal Arts.

The instruments utilized in this research were seven lesson plans incorporating the Jigsaw Reading activity, each requiring three class periods, and seven subjective English reading comprehension tests designed to measure interpretive, critical, analytical, and summarizing comprehension levels is above 60 percent of the total score.

Data analysis involved calculating percentages, means and standards deviation. The results indicated that the athletes' development in English reading comprehension met the established criteria, achieving an average percentage score of 86, which was categorized as 'satisfactory.' The learners consistently demonstrated a tendency toward continuous improvement in their English reading comprehension development.

Keywords: Jigsaw Activity ; English Reading Skills ; Thailand National Sports University's Athletes

INTRODUCTION

Fradila, et al. (2021) Language is a tool devised by humans for communication, the pursuit of knowledge and mutual understanding within society. To ensure the continuous and effective transmission and reception of messages, human beings must simultaneously employ various integrated communication skills, including listening, speaking, reading and writing. In terms of current global influence, English can arguably be cited as a premier universal language.

Furthermore, Thailand's accession to the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), alongside other nations in

Southeast Asia, has resulted in an increasingly significant role for English within Thai society. Among the four English language skills, reading is counted as a vital skill that enables learners to achieve sustainable success in contemporary life. Specifically, proficiency in English reading leads to the acquisition of knowledge, fostering the continuous development of ideas, critical thinking, and substantial further learning from both domestic and international media sources throughout one's life. This is not limited merely to classroom instruction provided by a teacher but enables the autonomous creation of knowledge and self-directed learning (Johan, Rullyana & Ardiansah, 2022).

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The present reality regarding the acquisition of English reading skills among learners reveals that academic achievement is generally unsatisfactory. This is particularly noticeable in English reading, where most athletes register low performance levels. Research and findings by Chubua (2011) highlight process-related difficulties in English reading, specifically the learners' inability to identify the main topic, grasp the gist, find supporting details, locate referents, ascertain the author's purpose, or summarize the content. These deficiencies directly impact reading competence.

Moreover, issues originating from the learners themselves further compound the problem. Athletes dedicate minimal time to reading or avoid reading English texts entirely due to a lack of concentration, an inability to recognize the value of reading, an aversion to reading, a failure to cultivate a reading habit, and a general lack of enthusiasm. Consequently, athletes lack reading experience and are unable to employ various techniques to enhance their own English reading ability.

English reading proficiency is deemed crucial for sustained success in the modern world, as it enables autonomous knowledge acquisition beyond the classroom, yet current academic performance in this area is unsatisfactory, with many athletes exhibiting low scores. These deficits stem from process-related issues—such as the inability to identify main ideas or summarize—compounded by learner factors like a lack of concentration, poor reading habits, and low motivation. The researcher, recognizing these shortcomings, reviewed the evolution of reading instruction, noting the transition from the Grammar-Translation Method to the modern, interactive, and learner-centered communicative approach, which emphasizes both linguistic competence and effective communication. This analysis highlights a discrepancy between current optimal teaching practices and the traditional lecture-based methods most athletes are accustomed to, thus motivating the search

for more effective, student-centered interventions like Jigsaw Reading.

The core of the jigsaw reading technique lies in promoting mutual interdependence and individual accountability by structuring a collaborative learning process: athletes are initially sorted into mixed-ability Home Groups where each member reads a different sub-section of a text; they then meet in Expert Groups with peers who read the same material to discuss and master the content; finally, they return to their Home Groups to teach their sub-section to others, ensuring every student learns the entire text. This method, which requires positive interdependence, collaborative skills, and face-to-face interaction to be effective, is seen as a viable intervention by the researcher to enhance the poor English reading comprehension skills observed in undergraduate athletes at the Thailand National Sports University, Chon Buri Campus Chankuna, Thanaiudompat & Sujintawong, 2022).

Objective

To investigate the development of English reading comprehension skills through the jigsaw reading activity among undergraduate athletes at the Thailand National Sports University, Chon Buri Campus.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized an experimental design, serving as a preliminary investigation aimed at learner development. The methodology employed a single experimental group and involved the collection of developmental data on athletes' reading comprehension. The specific research procedures are detailed in the following sections.

1. The participants consisted of ten first-year undergraduate athletes enrolled in the sports management program, faculty of liberal arts, at the

Thailand National Sports University, Chon Buri Campus, during the second semester of the 2025 academic year, and divided into 2 groups, 5 participants in each group.

2.The instruments utilized in this research consisted of both experimental instruments and data collection instruments, which are detailed as follows.

2.1 The experimental instruments consisted of a total of seven lesson plans utilizing the Jigsaw Reading activity. The experimental instruments were tested the reliability and consistency. Each plan was designed to require three class periods, with each period lasting 60 minutes. The researcher developed this lesson plans based on the course content, ensuring the Jigsaw Reading activities comprehensively covered the necessary material. All lesson plans mandated the following sequential procedures (Aronson, 2000):

Phase 1 : Pre-reading, the instructor initiated the process by explaining the steps and preparing the learners for the lesson, typically by initiating a discussion or posing brief questions related to the reading content. Subsequently, images or topic headings were introduced to prompt learners to activate or recall relevant prior knowledge before engaging with the text. The instructor then helped athletes grasp the preliminary structure (outline) of the reading before dividing them into mixed-ability groups, termed Home Groups. The group size was determined by the instructor based on the length of the reading passage.

Phase 2: While - reading jigsaw Implementation, each student in the Home Group agreed upon and was assigned a specific, individually accountable segment of the reading passage for comprehension. For example, if the entire text contained three paragraphs, a group of five athletes would assign one paragraph to each member. They might conduct a preliminary discussion of the content outline for mutual understanding before proceeding with detailed individual reading.

The instructor allocated a specific time for this reading. Following this, each student from the Home Group joined a new group called the Expert Group, where all readers responsible for the same paragraph or sub-section convened. Members of the Expert Group exchanged knowledge, negotiated meaning collaboratively, with more proficient athletes assisting the less proficient ones. All members in this group were required to ensure their understanding of the content was consistent and accurate, thereby completing the rotation from Home Group to Expert Group.

Phase 3: Post - reading, after completing the assigned reading, both individually and in the Expert Group, all learners returned to their original Home Groups to elaborate and explain their respective reading segments in detail to the other members, collaboratively achieving full comprehension of the entire text. This stage allowed athletes to review, revise, supplement, and synthesize the information for maximum accuracy and completeness through mutual understanding, effectively completing the entire jigsaw puzzle to form a cohesive picture. Subsequently, the instructor assigned the Home Groups a knowledge review exercise before an individual reading comprehension test was administered to record scores for subsequent analysis.

2.2 The data collection instruments consisted of 7 subjective English reading comprehension tests designed to assess comprehension at the levels of interpretation, inference, critical analysis and summarization. These assessments were administered in alignment with the specific objectives of each corresponding lesson plan (Srisopha, Thanaiudompat & Ritngam, 2025).

3. Experimentation and data collection, this study employed a single-group research design, utilizing the Jigsaw Reading activity to investigate the

development of the athletes' English reading comprehension. To quantify this developmental progress, the researcher calculated the average achievement scores derived from tests administered immediately following the completion of each lesson plan. A total of eight lesson plans and eight corresponding tests were utilized, with scores recorded at 10 points per assessment. Data collection for measuring the development of the learners' reading comprehension totaled seven instances.

4. Data analysis was conducted by examining each student's English reading comprehension based on the scores derived from the total of seven post-instruction assessments administered following each lesson plan. Subsequently, the entirety of the collected scores was subjected to statistical analysis to determine the mean, percentage, and standard deviation. These statistics were then compared against established quality benchmarks to conclude the athletes' overall development in reading comprehension.

Research Finding

The results derived from the investigation into the development of athletes' English reading comprehension, utilizing the jigsaw reading activity, are presented as follows:

Table 1 Students' scores on the English reading comprehension test.

Student No.	Test 1 (10)	Test 2 (10)	Test 3 (10)	Test 4 (10)	Test 5 (10)	Test 6 (10)	Test 7 (10)	Total score	Average (mean)
1	3	5	5	6	7	7	8	41	5.86
2	4	6	5	5	7	7	9	43	6.14
3	4	7	7	6	7	8	8	47	6.71
4	5	7	7	5	5	7	8	44	6.29
5	5	6	6	6	5	8	8	44	6.29
6	4	5	6	5	6	6	9	41	5.86
7	5	5	7	7	6	7	9	46	6.57
8	4	7	5	7	6	7	9	45	6.43
9	5	6	6	7	7	8	9	48	6.86
10	6	6	7	7	7	7	9	49	7.00
Total Mean	4.50	6.00	6.10	6.10	6.30	7.20	8.60	44.80	6.40

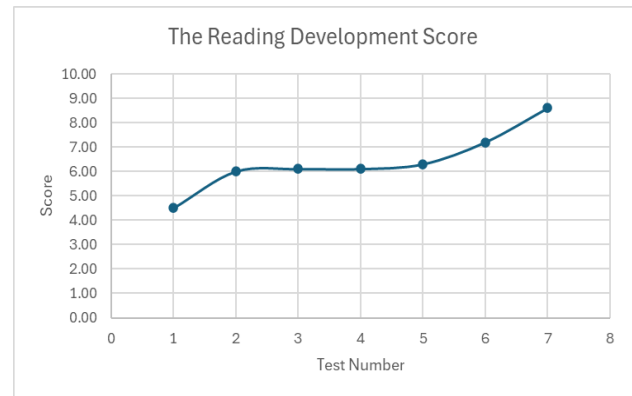


Figure 1 Presentation of the average scores for the development of English reading comprehension.

Table 2 Mean and standard deviation of learners' scores for the development of English reading comprehension

Sum	86.00
Count (n)	10
Average (mean)	8.60
S.D.	0.25

Table 2 encapsulates the terminal statistical synthesis of the English reading comprehension development among the cohort of ten first-year athletes, revealing an aggregate mean score of 8.60 out of a possible 10 points. This outcome corresponds to an 86 percent success rate, a figure that not only decisively surpasses the predefined 60 percent competency threshold but is also academically categorized as "very good" or "excellent". The data underscores a sustained upward trajectory in performance across the sequential assessments, while the remarkably marginal standard deviation of 0.25 signifies a high degree of performance homogeneity within the sample group. Consequently, these metrics provide robust empirical evidence of the jigsaw technique's efficacy in facilitating uniform cognitive advancement and mitigating the disparate reading deficiencies initially observed in the student-athletes.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The research results indicated that the athletes' development in English reading comprehension achieved an average score of 86.00%, categorized as very good (or excellent), and demonstrated a continuous upward trend in reading comprehension development. The scores showed a significant increase in each successive test. The result suggested that a potential contributing factor to occasional score dips might be the cultural or belief-related content of certain lessons, which may have led to temporary score reductions among learners with an insufficient foundational knowledge base.

Overall, these findings align with several aspects of the prior research reviewed in the literature chapter. The researcher delineates three primary factors through which the jigsaw activity contributed to the athletes' reading comprehension development: the promotion of cognitive, affective (psychological), and social skills, as discussed below.

Cognitive skill enhancement and reading comprehension improved because the jigsaw activity features a sequential process for fostering cognitive skills. This includes the pre-reading phase, where the instructor stimulates learners' awareness of the upcoming content (Je, Muhammad and Shahzad, 2025). Learners are given the opportunity to survey the text for main issues via images, symbols, or headings, simultaneously activating prior knowledge so it is readily accessible (Kusumawati, Puspitasari and Rahayu, 2024). This phase provides a conceptual framework that efficiently facilitates the subsequent extension of knowledge and reinforces basic reading comprehension.

During the reading phase, learners engage in self-directed reading, allowing them to autonomously process and consolidate understanding. At this point, athletes become aware of their own thought processes,

enabling self-monitoring of comprehension and an understanding of their own cognitive mechanisms (Kusumawati, Puspitasari and Rahayu, 2024). Thus, the Jigsaw activity fosters both self-directed learning and aligns with the principles of Metacognition.

Social and affective skill promotion, furthermore, the jigsaw activity promotes collaborative learning, consistent with Tamah's (2007) findings on the impact of the technique on classroom interaction. Tamah (2007) found that athletes can learn independently within their groups, engaging in the negotiation for meaning involving self-reflection, group members, and the instructor; they prompt group members, attempt to answer known questions, and collaboratively evaluate accuracy.

The post-reading phase further enhances cognitive comprehension as learners must convey their acquired knowledge to their group members. Athletes could review knowledge, emphasizing personal understanding through elaboration and diverse communication methods, with peers posing questions to address doubts in a setting of Face-to-Face Promotive Interaction (Je, Muhammad and Shahzad, 2025), which effectively mitigates potential misunderstandings. This provides learners with the opportunity to augment their cognitive skills, aligning with Sakhonkaruhatdej, et al. (2019), whose research showed a significant improvement in post-test scores over pre-test scores.

These three phases collectively demonstrate that the jigsaw activity enables learners to construct knowledge, enhance their competence, and subsequently expand their knowledge base, thereby promoting increased academic success.

SUGGESTION

The study concluded that the English reading comprehension of students in the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thailand National Sports University, Chonburi Campus, successfully met the established criterion of an average of 86 percent. This performance was categorized as 'fair,' with an encouraging observation of a continuous upward trend in the learners' developmental progress.

The future study recommendations forth had two main areas for future consideration. The

instructional recommendations emphasized the need for instructors to gain a thorough understanding of the Jigsaw teaching method before implementation, allocate sufficient time for explaining learning activities to ensure clarity, and employ guiding techniques to facilitate accurate peer learning and stimulate self-directed discovery. The research-oriented suggestions proposed that future studies was explore the Jigsaw technique's impact on diverse skills (e.g., social and psychomotor skills), utilize pilot testing to optimize the method's content and delivery, and investigate its application across a wider variety of sample groups and professional disciplines (Thanaiudompat, 2023).

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