

The Effects of Topic Familiarity on Reading Comprehension and Incidental Vocabulary Learning: A Case of Narrow Reading for Primary School Learners

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Abstract

This study examines the effects of topic familiarity on learners' reading comprehension and incidental vocabulary learning gain through a narrow reading method. Participants were 36 Thai primary school learners who have been studying English for 3 hours a week in grade 5. Results revealed significant effects of topic familiarity whereby vocabulary gains were greater; 1) during the treatment, all learners slightly increased in reading abilities, (2) most of the increase obviously occurred from the fifth texts, and there were still obtains to be made by a narrow reading, and (3) more surprisingly all learners would be able to apply those target words to create their own sentences. Additionally 66.66% of learners could employ at least 3 of 5 target words in order to create as sentences. It was indicated that reading ability by narrow reading approach with topic familiarity influenced not only reading comprehension and vocabulary learning but also it contributed and facilitated to learning of sentence structures. However, the results are likely to become clearer if further studies increase some more amount of reading texts as well as times of word reoccurrence to reinforce and refine the comprehensible inputs as well as to last the retention.

Keywords: Topic familiarity, reading comprehension, incidental vocabulary learning, narrow reading method

Introduction

Reading is one of the most crucial elements of practical skills that a learner of English would learn in order to benefit from this useful information for their life. People read a variety of texts for a variety of purposes or goals. The reader may process a text in order to learn about the topic of the text, to look for some specific information presented in the text, and simply to entertain himself. In the case of reading in a (foreign or) second language (L2), the individual may process a text in order to learn the language that is used to form the text, in addition to the content of the text, Yukie Horiba and Keiko Fukaya (2015). It can also be said that reading is the base skill for learners to study a language. In school, teachers usually encounter with problems in finding an effective way to teach reading to students and despite the teachers' efforts, the learning outcome is usually unsatisfactory. It is true that there are a number of factors that can interfere with learning to read.

In Thailand, reading has been considered to be a very important part of learning a language. Some learners read for their study, some read for pleasure and entertainment, and moreover some read for an entrance examination. Consequently, reading English is the skill in which Thai students cannot reject exposure. They, however, can't resist tons of new vocabulary and new English structures or contents, contributing to depression, misinterpretation or even English reading anxiety, Wanna-ngam (2012). The present study was set up to investigate the effects of topic familiarity on reading comprehension and incidental vocabulary learning in case of a narrow reading method. In order to attribute the familiarity and narrow reading were variable to topic familiarity, it was important to ensure that the passages were as quotable as possible in terms of length, word rate and vocabulary.

Basic requirements of reading comprehension

Comprehension is a complex cognitive skill involving many levels of processing. One of the main aspects of comprehension is the readers' ability to cope with the meaning of unknown words they face in a text. Due to this reason, relying on the contextual cues to predict and infer the meaning of unfamiliar words cannot be considered a proper strategy since it may result in the superficial comprehension of the key words (Paynter, Bodrova, and Doty, 2005). To deal with this problem, readers should acquire knowledge of how words work and use specific strategies to overcome new words in the text. In addition, Hu and Nation (2000) examined the relationship between text coverage and reading comprehension for non-native speakers of English with a fiction text. Reading comprehension was measured in two ways: by a multiple-choice reading comprehension test, and by a written cued recall of the text. These measures were trialed with native speakers

before they were used in the study with non-native speakers. With a text coverage of 80% (that is, 20 out of every 100 words [1 in 5] were nonsense words), on one gained adequate comprehension. With a text coverage of 90%, a small minority gained adequate comprehension. With a text coverage of 95% (1 unknown word in 20), a few more gained adequate comprehension, but they were still a small minority. At 100% coverage, most gained adequate comprehension. When a regression model was applied to the data, a reasonable fit was found. It was calculated that 98% of text coverage (1 unknown word in 50) would be needed for most learners to gain adequate comprehension.

It has been argued that most if not all vocabulary development (in the L1 or L2) occurs as learners attempt to comprehend written input (Krashen, 1989, 1993a; Nagy, 1997). However, there still remain gaps in our knowledge about how various factors affect the process of acquiring vocabulary through reading. Research on second language reading and incidental vocabulary acquisition, or the phenomenon of “picking up” words as a by-product of reading, has found that vocabulary gains through reading are highly related to the level of comprehension attained from reading (Jacobs *et al.*, 1994; Pulido, in press; Rott, 1997).

Incidental vocabulary learning

Incidental learning is a learning process to learn something without the intention of doing so. It is also learning one thing while intending to learn another thing (Richards and Schmidt, 2002). In terms of language acquisition, incidental learning is said to be an effective way of learning vocabulary from context (Day, Omura and Hiramatsu, 1991 ; Jenkins, Stein, and Wycsocki, 1984 ; Nagy, Herman, and Anderson, 1985; Saragi, Nation, and Meister, 1978). Among the early studies of vocabulary acquisition in first languages (e.g., Boettcher, 1980 ; Carey, 1982 ; Clark, 1973 ; Dale, O'Rourke and Bamman, 1971; Deighton, 1959 ; Eichholz and Barbe, 1961 ; Gentner, 1975), the study by Nagy *et al.*, (1985) is particularly significant. In the course of their research they developed a methodology for measuring small gains in vocabulary knowledge. They detected that a single incidental encounter of a word would seldom lead to full knowledge or understanding of a word's meaning. Moreover, if learning the meaning of vocabulary from context does occur, Carey (1978) suggested that it must be on the basis of encounters perceived in an incidental way. Because of this, learning vocabulary is understood to be a gradual process (Deighton, 1959). Nagy *et al.*, (1985) declared that when this gradual learning process is encouraged by the help of contact with a sufficient amount of written language exposure, incidental vocabulary learning in the first language can be substantial.

In second language vocabulary acquisition research, the effects of these factors have been studied extensively to understand their effects on incidental vocabulary acquisition from reading. However, the first two factors offer a narrow focus for the objective is limited to short-term lexical/communicative gain compared to repetition of words. Repeated encounters with target words in reading could be effective in consolidating the previously learned lexical knowledge of the same words to the next level, and learners might be able to retain and retrieve them for long-term productive use. Hence, in the context of the present study, incidental vocabulary acquisition has been defined as ‘acquisition of unknown words through multiple exposures from meaning-focused reading’ (Rott, 1999; Chen and Truscott, 2010; Heidrari-Shahreza and Tavakoli, 2012). The coverage of known words must be high in the texts so as to enable them to view the target words, unknown in nature, in a larger context in order to construct meaning of the text rather than meaning of the individual target words. The present study adopted several such criteria to prepare the texts which would be discussed in detail under the heading reading materials.

Narrow reading

Narrow reading is an effective way of language instruction by allowing students to see vocabulary repeatedly in a variety of comprehensible contexts. The students need to read regularly on one specific theme in order that they are exposed to large amounts of authentic English for building their own comprehension. Krashen (1981 - 1985) stated that narrow reading is an effective way for unskilled readers to develop reading comprehension and vocabulary learning. With frequent reoccurrences of the same words under the same or similar topic, the readers are able to acquire new inputs themselves. However, the readers are required regular reading to expose themselves to the same words more often. Krashen also proposed that comprehensible input can be gained from narrow reading. By reading the familiar or interesting topic, the readers are getting use to the context and are able to expand their amount of reading to further areas. Studies have shown that narrow reading—reading several books by the same author— improves the likelihood of incidental vocabulary learning (Cho, Ahn, and Krashen 2005; Gardner 2008; Pulido, 2004), as authors tend to possess a certain repertoire of vocabulary, have observable preferences of word choice, and tend to use the same phrases repeatedly. In addition, the familiar characters and background of a series make for an easier reading experience (Krashen, 1993). Gardner (2008) states that books by the same author tend to exhibit similar collocation, allowing for more effective vocabulary recycling than those written by multiple authors. Furthermore, Gardner (2008) shows that narrative writing tends to be more effective for vocabulary learning when it is written by the same author, whereas expository writing is more effective if it is thematically linked.

Narrow reading entails narrowing the input material of a second language to a single genre, author, or specific topic to facilitate the language-acquisition process. The technique is similar to the reading-in-depth technique (Dubin, 1986), which facilitates learners' recognition of vocabulary, concepts, background information on a topic, and an author's writing style. Narrow reading is theoretically influenced by the Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982) with its focus on subconscious language acquisition, comprehensible input through contextual or extra-linguistic support, and a communicative orientation. Through his Input Hypothesis, Krashen insists that language can only be acquired subconsciously. Explicit or direct instruction is not considered helpful. Accordingly, the narrow reading technique aims to make written language input comprehensible to readers. It encourages students to read passages written by a single author, or passages on the same theme, instead of reading a variety of styles and topics. Narrow reading provides students with more comprehensible input because "the more one reads, the more one will have background knowledge in a particular topic from a previous context to help them understand the current context (Changpueng, 2005: 89). Students are also exposed to a familiar set of vocabulary and grammatical structures, which help them comprehend the reading texts. The feeling of being able to understand the texts motivates them to read more, and helps expand their range of reading (Changpueng, 2005; Cho and Krashen, 1995). Recent studies have revealed the effectiveness of narrow reading in promoting reading comprehension and vocabulary development. Cho, Ahn and Krashen (2005) found that beginning EFL learners, who spent 40 hours reading a series of six Clifford books, experienced improvement in their reading comprehension and vocabulary. Moreover, Kyongho and Nation (1989) revealed that running-story materials have the potential to facilitate low-frequency word acquisition because they consist of a repeated set of words, outside the most frequent word list, that help learner's vocabulary acquisition. The above studies suggest that reading a series of related texts may enhance readers' background knowledge, which further motivates them to read more and eventually become a good reader. Consequently, in this study, learners were provided with an orientation session to make sure they understood the narrow-reading technique.

Topic familiarity

Although scholars' definitions of background knowledge are often worded differently, they typically underlie the same basic concepts. For instance, Stevens (1980) defines background knowledge quite simply as "... what one already knows about a subject... (p.151)." Biemans and Simons' (1996) definition of background knowledge is slightly more complex. "Background knowledge is all kinds of knowledge learners have when entering a learning environment that is

potentially relevant for acquiring new knowledge” (p.6).

It is interesting to note that topic familiarity, as Pulido (2004) states, deals with background knowledge about the topic and content of a text. In this study, topic familiarity and background/prior knowledge are generally used interchangeably. Prior knowledge about the topic and content of a text is a determining factor as far as comprehension is concerned (Daniels and Zemelman, 2004). In fact, familiarity with the text and activating background knowledge may result in improving comprehension regardless of strengths or weaknesses in reading abilities (Recht and Leslie, 1988). Unsurprisingly, research findings indicate that there is a high correlation between prior knowledge and gains in reading comprehension (Long, Winograd and Bridget, 1989).

Clearly, when readers are familiar with the topics or concepts being read, their inadequacies are decreased. In other words, when poor readers are enriched with prior knowledge, their modes of reasoning and comprehension are improved to the point that their ability to summarize or recall becomes as effective as good readers who use their prior knowledge to make connections and synthesize new information while reading a text. In addition, studies concerning students' comprehension and recall have provided several interesting results. First, students who read topic-familiar texts had a better recall compared with those studying unfamiliar texts. Research findings about the effect of familiar and unfamiliar cultural aspects on comprehension have revealed that texts with familiar cultural contents help learners not only make correct inferences but also recall more (Kelly and Cool, 2002 ; Shiri and Revie, 2003). With previous knowledge about a subject, the learners understand a text efficiently and they have fewer errors in recall. As a result, poor readers have a poor memory for what they read; therefore, they can recall very little of what they read. By comparing good and poor readers, researchers found that they have similar levels of short-term recall provided that the text is familiar to them. Previous studies on L2 text comprehension claim that text recall is enhanced when learners possess and utilize appropriate background knowledge (Gebhard, 2000).

As a consequence, among various knowledge sources, prior knowledge is a very important knowledge source which contributes to comprehension of the text as well as successful lexical inference. A large number of studies have similarly focused on the impact of topic familiarity or background knowledge on inference (Bensoussan, 1992; Rott, 2000), most of which have shown positive results. Similarly in another study, Recht and Lesile (1988) investigated high-ability and low-ability students' reading performances on topic familiarity/unfamiliarity, and its role in comprehension. The results indicated that high ability students with higher levels of knowledge performed better than those who lacked an insufficient amount of knowledge on reading comprehension tasks simply because they were

already informed about the topic and could recognize key concepts in text and incorporate these concepts into reading summaries or other goal related tasks (Recht and Leslie, 1988).

Consequently, the researcher intends to point out the way to have the students read English pleasantly with little concern about the vocabulary and the contents. Reading an uncomplicated structure stories chosen by the students 'interests are the idea used in this research study. Therefore, narrow reading approach with topic familiarity is employed in this study in order to contribute reading comprehension, facilitate incidental vocabulary learning, and reveal the learners' overall attitude toward the narrow reading approach.

Research questions

The following research questions guided the present study:

1. Does narrow reading method with topic familiarity enhance reading comprehension?
2. Does narrow reading with topic familiarity facilitate incidental vocabulary learning?
3. Are the target words gained greater after participants read narrative passages by means of narrow reading with topic familiarity approach?
4. What is the readers' overall attitude toward reading instruction by means of narrow reading with topic familiarity approach?

It was hypothesized that narrow reading method would have a significant effect on reading comprehension and vocabulary gains in such that gains would be significantly greater when participants read the passages with topic familiarities.

Methodology

Participants

Thirty-six primary school learners of Thai nationality served as participants (23 females and 13 males) were studying in grade 5 of the first semester at Mahasarakham University Demonstration School (Elementary) in 2018 academic year. The participants of the present study completed approximately 160 hours of English instruction in grade 4 and applied in grade 5 with 200 hours of English instruction an academic year. On the basis of the results of the questionnaire only participants who indicated the following were chosen to

participate in the study: (a) non-native speakers of English; (b) no previous study abroad to an English-speaking country.

Instruments

In Thailand, according to the Ministry of Education's policy, curriculum (The Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (A.D. 2008)) has been divided into three educational levels in order to determine the study frames of context and vocabulary knowledge. For primary education level (grades 1- 6), this level covers the first stage of compulsory education. It focuses on acquiring various skills-reading, writing, calculation, fundamental thinking, communication, social learning process and fundamentals of human beings as well as complete and balanced development of quality of life in various respects-physical, intellectual, emotional, social and cultural with an emphasis on integrated learning management.

However, to be skillful in using language, learners are required to employ English for communication by using these themes; namely, myself, family, schools, the environment, foods, beverages, free time and recreation, health and welfare, selling and buying and the climate with vocabulary of around 1,050-1,200 words, and using simple and compound sentences to communicate meanings in various contexts.

1. Topic Survey Form

It was used to explore what was the most interesting topic determined by The Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (A.D. 2008) among the students. The checklist items are common topics. The students are asked to rank the topics with reference to their interest to find the most interesting topic among the whole class. There were 10 topics for Thai elementary school students and published by Ministry of Thai Education.

2. Pre/Post Tests on Reading Comprehension and Incidental Vocabulary Learning

The tests focused on the selection of texts since the chosen texts had to be as interesting as possible to the students and also to some extent in text simplification by the Range program (Hirsh and Nation (1992), Laufer and Nation (1995) and Coxhead (2000)). It was required to ensure that the syntax and the words matched the readers' English proficiency in order that the students are able to read pleasantly without overloading of low frequent words. The pre- and post-tests were the same. However, both of the tests were based on "myself" topic (the most popular and interesting topic according to topic survey session which still included 5 target words for the monitor of vocabulary learning. The test was employed to assess reading comprehension and incidental vocabulary learning.

The reading comprehension part was constructed and based on cognitive domain in Bloom's Taxonomy: namely, knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

3. Reading Materials

To narrow the reading of the students, reading texts were elaborately constructed. Subsequently, students stayed on the reading track in which they were exposed to new inputs and acquired them effectively. According to Krashen's Input Hypothesis, one can gain comprehensible input by learning something just one step beyond one's initial level called $i+1$. Like extensive reading, narrow reading is based on reading for pleasure or the enjoyment of reading. The reading texts used as the treatment was a series of the 9 simplified texts under a single topic for which was the most interesting one the participants selected. Their sentence structure and vocabulary were similar to those appearing in the pre/post-tests. In fact, the 9 reading texts were constructed first so that what was provided for the students as the treatment and the pre/post tests were correlated and analyzed by the Range program based on studies of Hirsh and Nation (1992), Laufer and Nation (1995) and Coxhead (2000), for the language testing expert who took part in the simplification of all texts in terms of structure, sentence length, vocabulary and their overall appropriateness. Five words, representing concepts most frequently associated with the first 1000 words for GSL, were chosen from among the unknown words in the students' course books used in 2018 academic year. TWs were used to ensure that no learner had prior knowledge of the TWs. In practical, the TWs were circumspectly placed in all the passages, and interspersed throughout the passages. However, each TW appeared only once in each story, thus the frequency of exposure to them was equivalent across all stores.

4. The RANGE program

It is a Windows based program developed by Paul Nation and Alex Heatley of Victoria University, Wellington and freely available from <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/lals/staff/paul-nation/nation.aspx>. It can apply three distinct word lists, called Baseword lists, to any text, and can sort the text vocabulary into three categories of headwords from each list, and a category of words outside all three lists, making four categories altogether. This program has been used with the text based on studies of Hirsh and Nation (1992), Laufer and Nation (1995) and Coxhead (2000).

5. Questionnaire

The questionnaire is constructed to elicit information on the overall attitude toward narrow reading after finishing the reading activity and to investigate

whether or not the different agreements on the use of narrow reading approach with topic familiarity affect reading comprehension and vocabulary learning.

Procedures

The experimental procedure used in this study had multiple arrangements. First, a sample of Thirty-six primary school learners of Thai as an L2 served as participants (i.e., 23 females and 13 males) were studying in grade 5 of the first semester at Mahasarakham University Demonstration School (Elementary) in 2018 academic year. On the basis of the results of the questionnaire only participants who indicated the following were chosen to participate in the study: (a) non-native speakers of English; (b) no previous study abroad to an English-speaking country. Second, a topic familiarity questionnaire including 10 topics was applied to determine participants' degree of familiarity with the ten text topics provided in the questionnaire. The students are asked to rank the topics with reference to their interest to find the most interesting topic among the whole class. There were 10 topics for Thai elementary school students and published by Ministry of Thai Education. Third, the pre- and post-tests were the same. Both of the tests were based on "myself" topic the most popular and interesting topic according to the topic survey session included 5 target words for the monitor of vocabulary learning. The test was employed to assess reading comprehension and incidental vocabulary learning. The reading comprehension part was based on cognitive domain in Bloom's Taxonomy: namely, knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Fourth, the reading texts used a series of 9 simplified texts under a single topic for which was the most interesting one the participants selected. Their sentence structure and vocabulary were similar to those appearing in the pre/posttests. In fact, the 9 reading texts were constructed first so that what was provided for the students as the treatment and the pre/post tests were correlated and analyzed by the Range program Five words, representing concepts most frequently associated with the first 1000 word for GSL, were chosen from among the unknown words in the students' course books used in 2018 academic year. TWs were used to ensure that no learner had prior knowledge of the TWs. In practical, the TWs were circumspectly placed in all the passages, and interspersed throughout the passages. However, each TW appeared only once in each story, thus the frequency of exposure to them was equivalent across all stores. Fifth, the questionnaire was constructed to elicit information on the overall attitude toward narrow reading after finishing the reading activity and to investigate whether or not the different agreements on the use of narrow reading approach with topic familiarity affect reading comprehension and vocabulary learning.

Finally, a few weeks later, the Posttest was administrated. This test included 5 target words (TWs) which were related to the text topics. To check

the reading comprehension and incidental vocabulary learning of the participants, they were asked to recognize the 5 TWs which they had used multiple choices and word meaning. Participants were required to employ prior knowledge about target words to make their own sentences.

Results

To investigate the significance of the results, the data obtained were analyzed by different appropriate statistical procedures. The topic survey of frequencies was ranked by the participants' interesting topics among 10 topics for Thai elementary school students. This research was applied independent t-test of the SPSS software to indicate the results of Pre/Post Test on reading comprehension, incidental vocabulary learning and the total scores. The questionnaire was constructed to elicit information on the overall attitude, after finishing the reading activity toward the use of narrow reading approach with topic familiarity affect reading comprehension and incidental vocabulary learning.

Table 1. The topic survey of frequencies

Topics	Frequency	Topic	Frequency
Myself	12	Beverages	2
Family	6	Free time and recreation	4
School	5	Health and welfare	0
The environment	1	Selling and buying	2
Food	4	The climate	0

With reference to the curriculum (The Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (A.D. 2008) designed by the Ministry of Education, has obviously been determined the study frames of context and vocabulary knowledge for all primary education level. However, this level (grade 1-6) covers the first stage of compulsory education, and to be skillful in using language, learners are required to make use of English for communication by using these 10 themes; namely, myself, family, schools, the environment, foods, beverages, free time and recreation, health and welfare, selling and buying and the climate with vocabulary of around 1,050-1,200 words (concrete and Abstract words). The topic survey forms were slightly applied from the learners' reading interest questionnaire. The forms were designed to have the students choose the list of topics according to individual interest. From the results of the survey were found that "Myself" was chosen mostly in the top 1 from the 10 provided topics according to the Ministry of Education's policy, curriculum (The Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E.

2551 (A.D. 2008). Therefore, the study was decided to employ “Myself” as the topic of the study mentioned in Table 1.

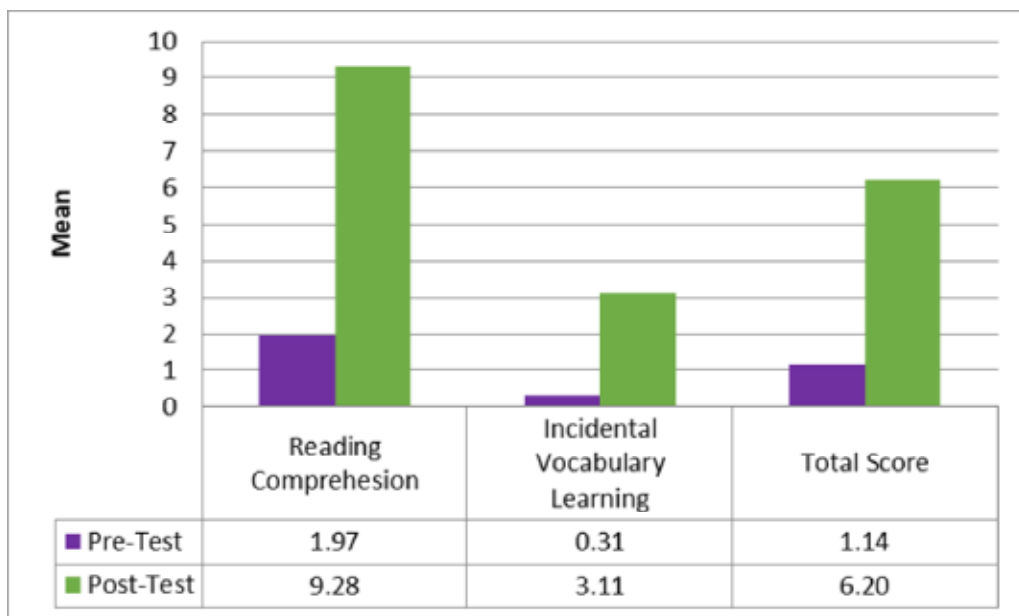


Figure 1: The results of Pre/Post Test on reading comprehension, incidental vocabulary learning and the total scores.

According to Figure 1, the results were presented in 3 main sections: pre/post reading comprehension, pre/post vocabulary learning and pre/post total scores. The learners learned through the reading treatment by the use of the narrow reading approach, their reading comprehension and vocabulary learning were obviously improved. With reference to the mean score of Pre-Test was at 1.97, and then it was considerably leapt to 9.28 of the Post-Test. It was very clear that the reading comprehension resulted greater over 73.1 percentages. Based on the result of incidental vocabulary learning, revealed 0.31 score of the Pre-Test, and then the Post-Test also had a growth of score at 3.11. Additionally, it was indicated that the incidental vocabulary learning markedly improved more 56 percentages. Consequently, the total score resulted significantly 1.14 of the Pre-Test and 6.20 for Post-Test, which were marginally 62.2 percentages. Therefore, the data has been shown the learners’ abilities were significantly improved on reading comprehension and incidental vocabulary learning.

Table 2. Level of Significance of Pre/Post Reading Comprehension

Pair 1 Pretest- Posttest	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
	7.16	2.752	.459	6.236	8.098	15.627	35	.000

After the students were treated to 9 pieces of reading texts in which the researcher had simplified in order to appropriately expose the students' reading ability according to Language Acquisition Theory proposed by Stephen Krashen, they were resembled to have a greater improvement on reading comprehension. According to Table 5, P-value was less than 0.05. It reveals to the pre-reading comprehension and post-reading comprehension are significantly different at the level of 0.05. It was also found that the mean difference between pre-reading comprehension and post-reading comprehension was 7.16. The higher mean score markedly reflected the effectiveness of reading instruction by means of narrow reading, facilitating reading comprehension.

Table 3. Level of Significance of Pre/Post Incidental Vocabulary Learning

Pair 1 Pretest- Posttest	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
	2.25	1.273	.212	1.819	2.681	10.602	35	.000

To evaluate whether the learners gained more new vocabulary from reading a number of texts or not, the researcher constructed the 9 pieces of reading texts by remaining or inserting the target words into the texts and also some contexts of each texts were slightly changed in conformity with the inserted words. All of the reading texts were subsequently comprised of 5 target words. After the learners were exposed to the 9 reading texts, they appeared to have some improvement on vocabulary learning. According to Table 6, P-value was less than 0.05. It means that pre-vocabulary learning and post-vocabulary learning are significantly different at the 0.05 level. It was also found that the mean difference between the pre-vocabulary learning and post-vocabulary learning was 2.25. The higher mean score obviously influenced the effectiveness of reading instruction by means of narrow reading method, contributing incidental vocabulary learning.

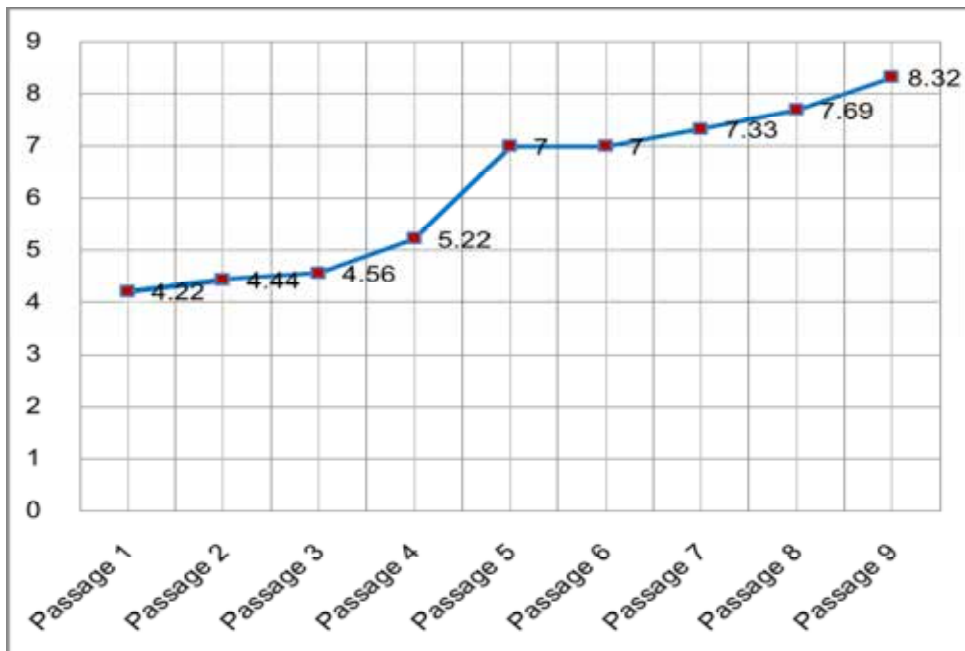


Figure 2: The learners' improvement score during the treatment

Based on the figure 2, the line graph revealed the trend of the students' development during their treatments between the first text and the ninth text. It was clear from the graph that all mean scores of learners were slightly increased from 4.22 – 8.32 from the first text to the last. At the beginning of the treatment, the first text was at 4.22 of mean score, and then it was gradually risen for 4.44, 4.56 and 5.22 of the second, third and fourth text respectively, however, the mean score was continually significant growth. As shown in the line graph, it was considerably greater at 5.22 and 7 of the fourth and fifth text, then the line continually maintained. Consequently, it might imply that the repetitions of the words occurred.

In any cases, reading a word once is not usually enough for a learner to retain it. Estimations in the literature of how many times we need to see a new word before we learn it range from 5-17, averaging out at around 10 [cf. 28], so extensive reading is unlikely to result in large increases in vocabulary knowledge unless students read the enormous amount necessary for new words to be repeated in context a sufficient number of times for them to be noticed and acquired. Time is also a factor within the classroom (Perry and MacDonald, 2001). Furthermore, the means of the fifth and sixth were equalized stably at 7, and the graph of the mean scores were continually risen significantly from the seventh text to the ninth by 7.33, 7.69 and 8.32 respectively.

Table 4. Frequencies of the Different Level of Agreement toward the Narrow Reading with topic familiarity

Level of Agreement	Frequency	Score
Mostly agree (5)	1	5
Agree (4)	14	56
Neither agree nor disagree (3)	20	60
Disagree (2)	1	2
Mostly disagree (1)	0	0
Total		
The students' overall attitude: 123/36: 3.42		

According to the questionnaire was presented 5 parts: namely, reading interest, reading comprehension, vocabulary, the appropriateness of the stories, feeling and valuing for the narrow reading approach. To answer the research question enquiring about the students' overall attitudes toward the instruction by the use of narrow reading with topic familiarity, the study was added up the scores from every part of the questionnaire in order to result each student's total score (frequency) deepening in different ranges as in Table 4. Therefore, the finding has shown that students' overall attitude was quite moderate at 3.42, indicating that after the participants were treated the instruction by means of narrow reading with topic familiarity; they neither agreed nor disagreed or slightly agreed with the instruction. Although the overall mean of the students' attitudes might not significantly reflect anything about the effectiveness of narrow reading and topic familiarity.

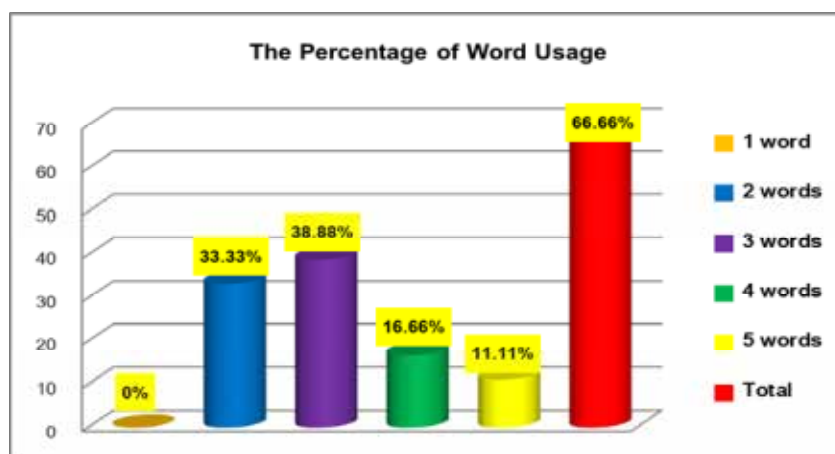


Figure 3: The percentages of learners could apply target words as sentences.

To be more investigative, the current study delved into the learners' productive output which was the word usage after treatments. The finding has been shown that 66.66% of participants were evidentially contributed and encouraged regarding word usages through reading ability and comprehensive inputs. 33.33% (12 learners) of 36 participants could construct sentences by using 2 words from the 5 target words, meanwhile 38.88% (14 learners) were ensured to use 3 words as grammatically correct sentences. Additionally, 6 learners (16.66%) were obviously facilitated to apply 4 of 5 target words. However, there were only 4 (11.11%) of learners correctly employing all 5 target words in sentence structure. As the findings previously mentioned in details, it could be assumed the hypothesis on comprehensive inputs by narrow reading with topic familiarity contributed learners felt more confident to apply at least 3 -5 words for grammatically acquiring in sentence structures. With reference to the results have been revealed from the above bar charts 66.66% (24 learners) of the participants were enhanced to be not only more comprehensive, but also confidentially comfortable to create sentences based on their prior knowledge.

Discussion

The findings of this study were aimed at the effects of topic familiarity on reading comprehension and incidental vocabulary learning by narrow reading. With reference to the curriculum (The Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (A.D. 2008) designed by the Ministry of Education, has obviously been determined the study frames of context and vocabulary knowledge for all primary education level. However, this level (grade 1-6) covers the first stage of compulsory education, and to be skillful in using language, learners are required to make use of English for communication by using these 10 themes. The topic survey forms were slightly applied from the learners' reading interest questionnaire.

The forms were designed to have the students choose the list of topics according to individual interest. From the results of the survey were found that "Myself" was chosen mostly in the top 1 from the 10 provided topics. The learners learned through the reading treatment by the use of the narrow reading approach with topic familiarity, their reading comprehension and vocabulary learning were obviously improved. It was very clear that the reading comprehension resulted greater over 73.1%. The higher mean score markedly reflected the effectiveness of reading instruction by means of narrow reading, facilitating reading comprehension. Additionally, based on the result of incidental vocabulary learning, it was indicated that the incidental vocabulary learning markedly improved more 56%. Consequently, the total score resulted significantly 1.14 of the Pre-Test and 6.20 for Post-Test, which were marginally 62.2%. Therefore, the data has been

shown the learners' abilities were significantly improved on reading comprehension and incidental vocabulary learning.

In practicing, the line graph revealed the trend of the students' development during their treatments between the first text and the ninth text. It was clear from the graph that all mean scores of learners were slightly increased from 4.22 – 8.32 from the first text to the last. As shown in the line graph, it was considerably greater at 5.22 and 7 of the fourth and fifth text. It might imply that the repetitions of the words occurred. In any cases, reading a word once is not usually enough for a learner to retain it. Estimations in the literature of how many times we need to see a new word before we learn it range from 5-17, averaging out at around 10 [cf. 28], so extensive reading is unlikely to result in large increases in vocabulary knowledge unless students read the enormous amount necessary for new words to be repeated in context a sufficient number of times for them to be noticed and acquired. Time is also a factor within the classroom (Perry and MacDonald, 2001). Enquiring about the students' overall attitudes toward the instruction by the use of narrow reading with topic familiarity, the participants of current study were indicated overall attitude was quite moderate at 3.42.

Furthermore, the current study also delved into the learners' productive output which was the word usage after treatments. The finding has been shown that 66.66% (24 learners) of participants were evidentially contributed and encouraged regarding word usages through reading ability and comprehensive inputs. It could be assumed the hypothesis on comprehensive inputs by narrow reading with topic familiarity contributed learners felt more confident to apply at least 3 -5 words for grammatically acquiring in sentence structures. Therefore, the participants were enhanced to be not only more comprehensive, but also confidentially comfortable to create sentences based on their prior knowledge.

The findings of this study may have a number of important implications for future practice. Instructors need to take advantage of the significant effects of topic or content familiarity and narrow reading on learners' comprehension and incidental vocabulary acquisition. They should consider if topic and content of the texts are familiar to the learners when assuming reading comprehension or vocabulary learning that familiar contents help students make use of their suitable skills and strategies to comprehend the text.

Pedagogical implications

Thai EFL learners are frequently observed not to put their noses to work seriously to get involved with reading comprehension their courses. Most Thai EFL learners see English as a fundamental part of curriculum. Therefore, they do

their best to prepare themselves to pass the tests, but most of the students are not well- motivated to read in foreign language because they don't think they will ever use it after their graduation. In addition to the current curriculum will allow students to acquire fuller knowledge of foreign languages. Furthermore, there should focus more on reading techniques because it can prepare students for the examination less painfully. The researcher suggests some more target words for the further study to gain more obvious result on the part of vocabulary learning.

Limitations

No study is without its limitations. Future study may wish to consider the following in an attempt to improve upon the formulation of models of L2 incidental vocabulary acquisition through reading. the generally low levels of gain and weak memory traces that were attained may have resulted from several factors, such as individual interest and cultural familiarity which may not have been as sensitive in investigating incidental gains from only one exposure to the target word as other measures.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the results from the present study enquired the nature of the impact of a type of topic familiarity and narrow reading method facilitating L2 incidental vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension. The study was presented in 3 main sections: pre/post reading comprehension, pre/post vocabulary learning and pre/post total scores. The learners learned through the reading treatment by the use of topic familiarity and the narrow reading approach, their reading comprehension and vocabulary learning were obviously improved. With reference to the comparisons of Pre-Test and Post-Test, it has been considerably leapt. It was very clear that the reading comprehension resulted greater over 73.1 %. Based on the result of incidental vocabulary learning has revealed a growth of score. It was indicated that the incidental vocabulary learning markedly improved more 56 %. Consequently, the total score resulted significantly 1.14 of the Pre-Test and 6.20 for Post-Test, which were marginally 62.2 %. Addition to, the data has been shown the learners' abilities were significantly improved on reading comprehension and incidental vocabulary learning. Furthermore, over 60 % of the participants could apply at least 3 of those 5 target words for constructing sentences correctly. That means they will also be able to learn from sentence structure. Therefore, there is evidentially strong support for the hypothesis that the rich do indeed get richer when considering the impact of topic familiarity and narrow reading method on incidental vocabulary acquisition and comprehension.

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