Development of English Proficiency through Reading Stories for Grade 11 Students at Nathonpattana School, Nakhon Phanom Province

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Abstract

The purposes of this study were: 1) to study the English proficiency of Grade 11 students at Nathonpattana School, Nakhon Phanom Province; 2) to develop English proficiency after using reading stories for Grade 11 students at Nathonpattana School, Nakhon Phanom Province; and 3) to evaluate English proficiency after using reading stories for Grade 11 students at Nathonpattana School, Nakhon Phanom Province. The sample group consisted of 25 Grade 11 students at Nathonpattana School, Nakhon Phanom Province during the second semester of the 2025 academic year. The students participated in a training program aimed at developing English proficiency through reading stories. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The research results were as follows: 1) The analysis of the students' English proficiency through reading stories revealed a marked improvement. The average score on the reading skill worksheets during the process (E1) was 61.28 ($\bar{X}$ = 61.28, S.D. = 2.59) out of a total score of 90, which corresponded to 68.09 percent. 2) The students' learning achievement showed a clear improvement after the implementation of story-based instruction. The average pre-test score was 13.20 ($\bar{X}$ = 13.20, S.D. = 2.71) and the post-test score was 20.00 ($\bar{X}$ = 20.00, S.D. = 4.03) out of a total of 30 points, equivalent to 44.00 percent and 66.67 percent, respectively. 3) The students reported the highest level of satisfaction with the development of their English proficiency through reading stories. The overall satisfaction mean score was 4.78 ($\bar{X}$ = 4.78, S.D. = 0.43) out of 5.00, which was interpreted as the highest level of satisfaction.

Keywords: English Proficiency; Story-Based Learning; Reading Skills; Grade 11 Students

Introduction

In the modern globalized world, English has become one of the most important international languages used for communication, education, business, and technology. English plays a significant role in connecting people from different cultures and countries. Therefore, the ability to use English effectively is considered an essential skill for students in the twenty-first century. Many educational systems around the world have emphasized the importance of developing English language skills among students to prepare them for academic advancement, career opportunities, and participation in the global community.

In Thailand, English is taught as a foreign language and is included as one of the major learning areas in the Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (A.D. 2008), revised in 2017. The curriculum aims to develop learners' knowledge, language skills, morality, and desirable characteristics so that they can adapt to rapid changes in modern society. English learning in Thai schools focuses on the development of four essential language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these skills, reading plays a crucial role because it provides learners with access to knowledge, information, and new ideas from various sources. Reading also supports the development of vocabulary, grammar understanding, and overall language proficiency.

Reading is widely recognized as one of the most important language skills for students learning English as a foreign language. Through reading, learners are exposed to a wide range of vocabulary, sentence structures, and language patterns that help them understand how English is used in real contexts. Moreover, reading enables students to develop critical thinking skills, interpret information, and expand their knowledge beyond the classroom. Students who possess strong reading skills are more likely to succeed in their academic studies and become independent learners in the future.

However, despite the importance of reading skills in English language learning, many students still face difficulties in reading comprehension. In many classrooms, students often lack sufficient vocabulary knowledge, which makes it difficult for them to understand English texts. Some students also experience challenges in identifying the main ideas of passages, interpreting meanings, and connecting ideas within a text. These difficulties may lead to low motivation and limited interest in reading English materials. As a result, students may struggle to achieve the expected learning outcomes in English language education.

Another problem frequently observed in English classrooms is that traditional teaching methods sometimes focus too heavily on grammar translation or memorization of vocabulary without providing meaningful contexts for language use. When students are exposed to isolated sentences or mechanical exercises, they may find it difficult to relate the language to real-life situations. Consequently, learners may lose interest in learning English and become passive participants in the classroom.

To address these challenges, educators and researchers have suggested the use of more engaging and meaningful teaching approaches that encourage active student participation. One effective approach that has gained increasing attention in language teaching is the use of stories as instructional materials. Stories have been used for centuries as a powerful tool for communication, education, and cultural transmission. They capture learners' attention, stimulate imagination, and provide meaningful contexts for language learning.

Using stories in English language teaching offers several educational benefits. First, stories provide a natural and meaningful context for vocabulary learning. When students read stories, they encounter words and expressions within a narrative context, which helps them understand meanings more easily compared to learning isolated vocabulary lists. Second, stories help learners develop reading comprehension skills because narratives often contain clear structures such as introduction, rising action, climax, and conclusion. These structures help students follow the sequence of events and understand the relationships between characters and actions.

Furthermore, stories can enhance students' motivation and interest in reading English texts. Many students enjoy reading stories because they are entertaining, imaginative, and emotionally engaging. Stories can also stimulate students' curiosity and encourage them to predict events, analyze characters, and discuss the moral lessons embedded in the narrative. This interactive learning process promotes deeper comprehension and meaningful language use.

In addition, story-based learning allows teachers to integrate various language skills in the classroom. For example, after reading a story, students can participate in activities such as discussing the characters, summarizing the plot, retelling the story, or expressing their opinions about the events. These activities help students practice speaking and writing skills while reinforcing their reading comprehension. As a result, the use of stories in language teaching contributes to the development of overall English proficiency.

Previous research has also demonstrated the effectiveness of using stories in English language instruction. Studies conducted in both Thailand and other countries have found that storytelling activities can improve students' reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and learning motivation. For instance, some studies have shown that students who learn English through stories demonstrate higher engagement and better understanding of reading materials compared to those who follow traditional teaching methods. These findings suggest that story-based instruction can create a more meaningful and enjoyable learning environment for students.

Moreover, reading stories can support students' cognitive and emotional development. Stories often contain moral lessons and real-life experiences that encourage learners to reflect on human values, relationships, and decision-making. Through stories, students can develop empathy, creativity, and critical thinking skills. These qualities are essential for learners to become responsible and thoughtful members of society.

At Nathonpattana School in Nakhon Phanom Province, English is taught as part of the foreign language curriculum for secondary school students. However, based on classroom observations and preliminary investigations, it was found that many Grade 11 students still experience difficulties in reading English texts. Some students struggle to understand vocabulary and sentence structures, while others have difficulty identifying the main ideas of passages. These challenges often lead to low reading achievement and reduced confidence in using English.

Therefore, it is important to explore effective teaching methods that can help improve students' English reading proficiency. One potential approach is the use of reading stories as instructional materials in the classroom. Story-based reading activities may help students understand English texts more easily because narratives provide clear contexts, interesting plots, and meaningful language input.

In this study, the researcher selected three short stories to be used as learning materials: "The King's Three Questions," "The Wise Old Owl," and "The Honest Woodcutter." These stories were chosen because they contain simple language, clear storylines, and moral lessons that are appropriate for secondary school students. By engaging with these stories, students can practice reading comprehension, learn new vocabulary, and develop a deeper understanding of English texts.

Through the implementation of story-based instruction, students are expected to become more active participants in the learning process. Activities such as predicting story outcomes, answering comprehension questions, discussing characters, and summarizing the stories can help students interact with the texts and improve their language skills. Additionally, these activities may increase students' motivation and interest in learning English.

In response to these challenges, the researcher conducted a study entitled "Development of English Proficiency through Reading Stories for Grade 11 Students at Nathonpattana School, Nakhon Phanom Province." The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of using stories to develop students' English reading proficiency and to evaluate the improvement of students' learning achievement after participating in story-based reading activities. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the improvement of English language teaching practices and provide useful instructional materials for teachers who wish to enhance students' reading skills through engaging and meaningful learning activities.

Research Objectives

1. To study the English proficiency of Grade 11 students at Nathonpattana School, Nakhon Phanom Province.
2. To develop English proficiency after using reading stories for Grade 11 students at Nathonpattana School, Nakhon Phanom Province.
3. To evaluate English proficiency after using reading stories for Grade 11 students at Nathonpattana School, Nakhon Phanom Province.

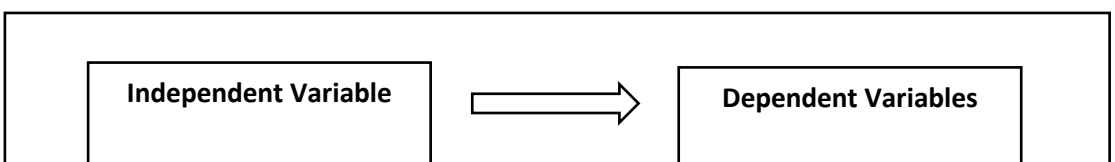
Literature Review

Reading is a multifaceted cognitive activity that requires the integration of linguistic decoding and meaning construction. Interactive reading models suggest that effective comprehension emerges when learners simultaneously process text through bottom-up (decoding symbols) and top-down (utilizing prior knowledge) strategies. Our intervention applied this concept by utilizing story-based instruction to provide meaningful language input, allowing students to acquire vocabulary and grammatical structures within a narrative context rather than through isolated drills.Theoretical frameworks support the positive impact of contextualized reading. Schema Theory, for instance, emphasizes that successful reading depends on the learner's ability to connect new information with existing cognitive frameworks, such as cultural background and personal experiences. This is operationalized through the Three-Stage Reading model (Pre, While, and Post-reading), which guides students to activate prior knowledge, interact with the text, and consolidate understanding . Furthermore, Krashen's Input Hypothesis reinforces that language acquisition is optimized when learners are exposed to "comprehensible input" that is slightly above their current proficiency level .Empirical research in the Thai context aligns with these theories. Sastravaha (1998) found that storytelling activities significantly improved reading comprehension and student interest compared to traditional methods. Likewise, Mahamud (2005) and Chainet (1997) reported that using culturally relevant folktales led to notable gains in reading skills and vocabulary growth among secondary students. These studies suggest that when reading materials align with the learners' cultural identity and interests, motivation and proficiency levels increase.In Thai secondary education specifically, the

curriculum acknowledges communicative competence as a goal, yet classroom practice often continues to emphasize rote memorization and grammar translation . Consequently, many students struggle to identify main ideas or interpret texts meaningfully, leading to a gap in reading proficiency . The present study fills this gap by implementing a structured manual for Grade 11 students at Nathonpattana School, combining interactive reading strategies with moral stories. By situating the intervention within the local school environment, we aim to generate practical insights for English reading instruction.In summary, the literature indicates a strong theoretical and empirical basis for using story-based instruction to enhance reading proficiency. It draws on Schema Theory and interactive reading models, prioritizing contextualized input and cognitive engagement. Storytelling has been shown to boost vocabulary, comprehension, and learner satisfaction. Accordingly, this research applies a three-stage reading model to design lessons that gradually increase in complexity. The following conceptual framework illustrates the research process and theoretical foundations used in the study.

Conceptual Framework

The development cycle of this study is illustrated in Figure 1 (below). Following the analysis of learner needs (Step 1), the researcher developed the story-based reading manual (Step 2), implemented the instructional intervention and collected data (Step 3), and finally evaluated the research outcomes (Step 4). The expected outcomes of integrating story-based reading into the classroom include improvements in students' reading comprehension, vocabulary, interpretive skills, and overall motivation to learn English. Together, these elements form the framework for understanding how story-based instruction can develop reading proficiency in the specific context of Grade 11 students at Nathonpattana School.



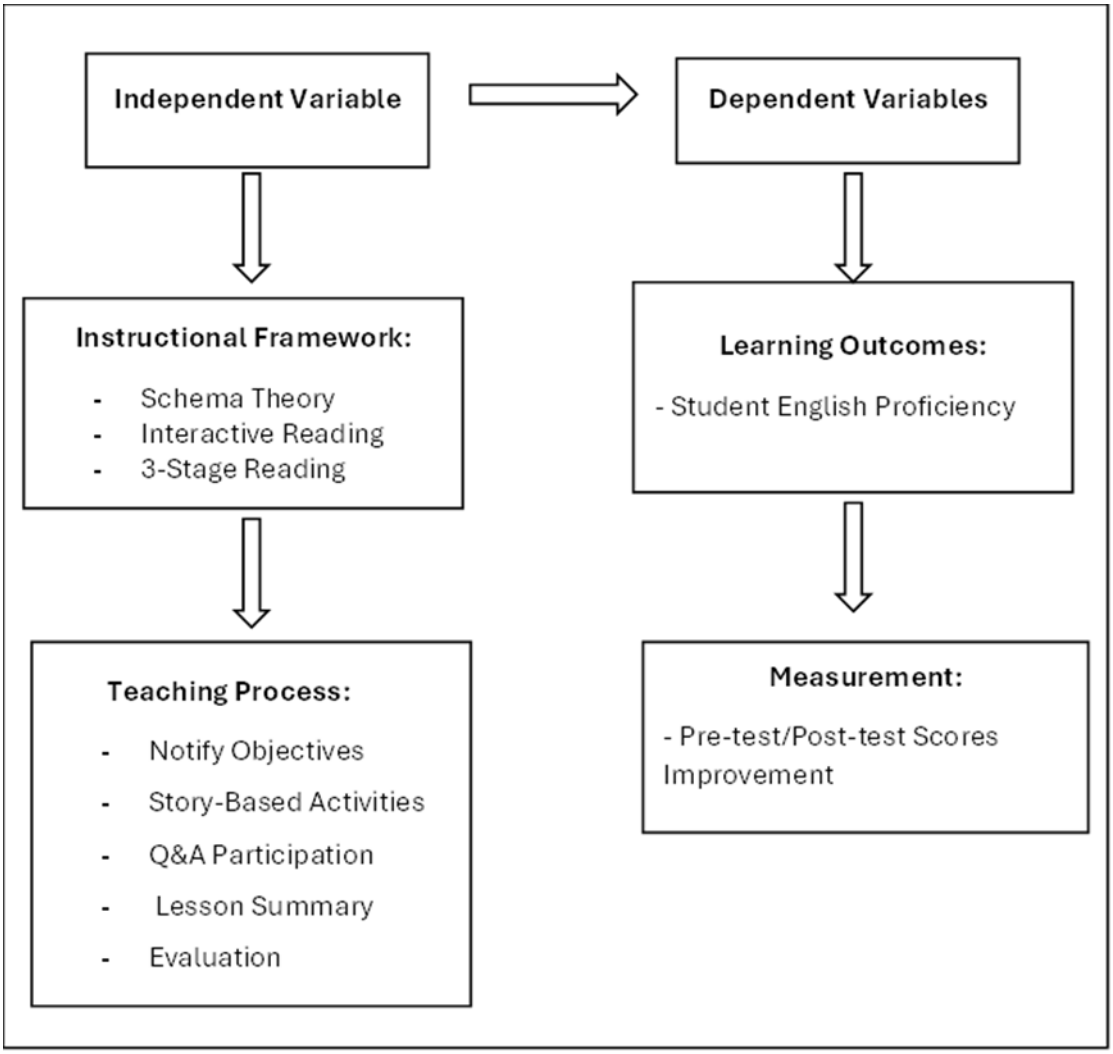


Figure 1 : This framework posits that the implementation of a structured

Research Methodology

Research Design

This research employed a pre-experimental research design using a one-group pre-test and post-test design to examine the development of English proficiency through reading stories for Grade 11 students. The research design can be illustrated as follows:

T1 – X – T2

Where:

T1 = Pre-test

X = Learning activities using reading stories

T2 = Post-test

The purpose of this design was to compare the students' English proficiency before and after learning through reading stories.

Participants

The participants in this study were 25 Grade 11 students at Nathonpattana School, Nakhon Phanom Province, during the second semester of the academic year 2025. The participants were selected using purposive sampling because they were studying English reading comprehension at that time.

Research Instruments

The research instruments used in this study consisted of five instruments as follows:

1. A manual for developing English proficiency through reading stories, which was used as a guideline for teaching and learning activities in the classroom.

2. Three lesson plans designed for teaching English reading comprehension through three selected stories:

- The King's Three Questions
- The Wise Old Owl
- The Honest Woodcutter

3. A pre-test, which was used to measure the students' English reading proficiency before the implementation of the instructional activities.

4. A post-test, which was used to measure the students' English reading proficiency after learning through reading stories.

5. A satisfaction questionnaire, which was used to evaluate the students' opinions and satisfaction toward learning English through reading stories.

Research Results

1. Students' Needs in Developing English Proficiency through Reading Stories

Table 1. Students' Needs toward Learning English through Reading Stories (n = 25)

No.	Items	M	S.D.	Meaning
1	I would like stories such as folktales or legends to be used.	4.40	0.58	High
2	I prefer stories that reflect Thai culture.	4.28	0.74	Highest
3	I think short stories are the most suitable.	4.60	0.58	Highest
4	I want stories that contain a variety of useful vocabulary.	4.56	0.65	High
5	I want activities to help understand vocabulary through context clues.	4.12	0.73	High
6	I think predicting the content before reading helps me.	4.36	0.70	Highest
7	I want activities that focus on identifying the main idea.	4.60	0.50	High
8	I want reading activities to connect my prior knowledge.	4.44	0.58	High
9	I want my teacher to teach me the pronunciation.	4.44	0.58	High
10	I prefer stories with appropriate length—not too short or too long.	4.48	0.71	High
Total Average		**4.43**	**0.64**	**High**

The results indicate that the overall students' needs toward developing English proficiency through reading stories were at a high level (M = 4.43, S.D. = 0.64).

2. Efficiency of the Reading Stories Manual

Table 2. Efficiency of Learning Process from the Reading Stories Manual

Exercises	Full Score	M	S.D.	Percentage (%)
Unit 1: The King's Three Questions	30	19.48	3.34	64.93
Unit 2: The Wise Old Owl	30	20.16	2.30	67.20
Unit 3: The Honest Woodcutter	30	21.64	2.12	72.13

Total (E1)	**90**	**61.28**	**2.59**	**68.09**

The results show that the students' scores gradually increased from Unit 1 to Unit 3, indicating that the reading stories manual helped improve students' English reading proficiency during the learning process.

3. Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Scores

Table 3. Comparison of Mean Scores between Pre-test and Post-test (n = 25)

Test	**Full Score**	**M**	**S.D**	**t**	**p**
Pre – test	30	13.20	2.71	8.11	.000
Post - test	30	20.00	4.03		
Significant at the 0.05 level					

The results show that the post-test mean score (M = 20.00) was significantly higher than the pre-test mean score (M = 13.20) with t = 8.11 and p < 0.05. This indicates that the students' English proficiency improved after learning through reading stories.

4. Students' Satisfaction toward Learning through Reading Stories

Table 4. The analysis of students' satisfaction with the Reading Stories Manual (^{n} = 25)

Students' satisfaction	***N*** **= 25**		**Range**
	M	***S. D.***	
1. Satisfaction with the Teacher			
1.1 The teacher was well-prepared for each class.	4.80	0.41	High level
1.2 The teacher encouraged students to work in groups and individually.	4.80	0.41	High level
1.3 The teacher encouraged students to be creative.	4.64	0.64	High level
1.4 The teacher used a variety of teaching methods and materials.	4.76	0.52	High level
1.5 The teacher gave opportunities for students to ask questions.	4.76	0.44	High level
1.6 The teacher provided advice and support to all students.	4.72	0.46	High level
1.7 The teacher was helpful and facilitated learning in every activity.	4.76	0.52	High level
1.8 The teacher had a suitable personality and good communication skills.	4.88	0.33	High level
1.9 The teacher was punctual.	4.84	0.37	High level
1.10 The teacher paid attention to all students in the class.	4.84	0.37	High level
2. Satisfaction with the Lessons			
2.1 The classroom environment was conducive to learning.	4.72	0.46	High level
2.2 The course content is practical and applicable to real life.	4.72	0.46	High level
2.3 The learning activities were aligned with the learning objectives.	4.80	0.41	High level
2.4 The learning activities were fun and	4.72	0.46	High level

interesting.			
2.5 The duration of the course was appropriate.	4.68	0.48	High level
3. Satisfaction with the Learning Process			
3.1 I felt comfortable asking questions when I had doubts.	4.96	0.37	High level
3.2 The assessment criteria were clearly communicated to me.	4.72	0.20	High level
3.3 I had the opportunity to participate in the evaluation process.	4.84	0.46	High level
3.4 The teacher assessed students fairly.	4.80	0.37	High level
3.5 I was happy to study with this manual.	4.78	0.41	High level
Summary	**4.78**	**0.43**	High level

The results indicate that the students' satisfaction toward learning English through reading stories was at the highest level (M = 4.78, S.D. = 0.43).

Knowledge from Research

The new body of knowledge obtained from this research is the development of English proficiency through reading stories for Grade 11 students. The study demonstrates that the use of reading stories as instructional materials can effectively improve students' English reading comprehension and language proficiency.

The research also provides a systematic instructional approach consisting of three main stages: pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading activities. These stages help students develop vocabulary knowledge, improve reading comprehension, and enhance their ability to understand story content.

In addition, the study introduces a reading stories manual consisting of three selected stories: The King's Three Questions, The Wise Old Owl, and The Honest Woodcutter. The instructional manual was designed to support English learning through story-based activities that encourage students' participation, discussion, and comprehension.

The results of the study show that students' English proficiency significantly improved after learning through reading stories. Furthermore, the students expressed a high level of satisfaction with the learning activities. Therefore, this research contributes new knowledge by demonstrating that story-based learning can be an effective approach for improving English proficiency among secondary school students.

Suggestions

1. Suggestions for Practice

English teachers should apply reading stories as instructional materials to improve students' English proficiency, especially reading comprehension and vocabulary development.

- Teachers should select interesting and appropriate stories that match the students' language level to increase students' motivation and participation in learning English.
- The reading stories manual developed in this study can be used as a guideline for teaching English reading skills in secondary schools.
- Teachers should integrate pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading activities to help students understand the content of the stories more effectively.

- Learning through stories should also include discussion and interactive activities to encourage students to practice English and express their ideas.

2. Suggestions for Further Research

- Future research should apply the reading approach to students at different educational levels, such as primary school or university students.

- Further studies should investigate the effectiveness of different types of stories, such as modern stories, cultural stories, or digital stories, in improving English proficiency.

- Future research may examine the impact of story-based learning on other English skills, such as speaking, listening, or writing skills.

- Researchers may also develop new instructional materials or digital learning media based on reading stories to enhance English learning.

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