

## **The Effect of Task – Based Learning Program to Improve English Reading Skills of Students in a Private University in Nakhon Pathom\***

**ผลของการใช้โปรแกรมการเรียนรู้แบบเน้นภาระงานเพื่อพัฒนาทักษะการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษ ของนักศึกษามหาวิทยาลัยเอกชนแห่งหนึ่ง ในจังหวัดนนทบุรี**

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### **Abstract**

The purposes of this study were to: 1) investigate reading skill of first year students; 2) compare students' English reading achievement before and after using task – based learning program; and 3) investigate students' satisfaction towards task- based learning. The research samples were 40 first year nursing students who registered in English I section 2 in the second semester of academic year 2014. The research instruments were lessons plan, rubric score for evaluating learning task,

the reading comprehension tests, and the satisfaction the set of questionnaires. The data were analyzed by t-test, mean, and standard deviation. The findings of the study revealed that: the average score of students reading comprehension were significantly different at the .05 level after using Task Based Learning was higher than the average score before using Task Based Learning and the students' satisfaction towards task-based learning was at a very good level.

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## บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อ 1) ศึกษาทักษะการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษาชั้นปีที่ 1 2) เพื่อเปรียบเทียบผลสัมฤทธิ์ทางการเรียนของนักศึกษาก่อนเรียนและหลังเรียนที่ใช้วิธีการเรียนรู้แบบเน้นภาระงาน 3) เพื่อศึกษาความพึงพอใจของผู้เรียนกลุ่มตัวอย่างนักศึกษาพยาบาลชั้นปีที่ 1 จำนวน 40 คน ที่ลงทะเบียนเรียนรายวิชาภาษาอังกฤษ 1 กลุ่มที่ 2 ในภาคเรียนที่ 2 ปีการศึกษา 2557 เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการวิจัยมี แผนการสอน แบบประเมินชิงงาน

แบบทดสอบก่อนและหลังเรียน และแบบประเมินความพึงพอใจ สถิติที่ใช้ในการประเมินข้อมูล ได้แก่ การทดสอบที่ ค่าเฉลี่ย และส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน การวิจัยได้ผลดังนี้ คะแนนทดสอบหลังเรียนทางด้านทักษะการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษที่เรียนรู้แบบเน้นภาระงานสูงกว่า คะแนนทดสอบก่อนเรียนอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ ที่ระดับ 0.05 และโดยภาพรวมผู้เรียนพึงพอใจในการเรียนรู้แบบเน้นภาระงานอยู่ในระดับดีมาก

### Statement of the Research Problem

This study focused on the effect of Task-Based Learning Program to improve students' English reading skills in a private university, Nakhon Pathom. It also investigated how the Task-Based Learning affects the way to teach reading skills. After the background was set out, the research questions were given in the study.

Nowadays, there are various ways to teach the L2 language--English. One of the most significant and effective methods is known as the Task-Based Learning. This becomes the main area in language pedagogy and also in current Second Language Acquisition research. Likewise, it provides advantages for reading the L2 texts-English texts (Willis 1996; Skehan 1998 Language Teaching Research)

In Thailand, however, teaching how to read a text written in English effectively seems not at all easy due to

the students' language barriers. Most of them have a limit of vocabulary knowledge. Moreover, the textbook written in Thai and the textbook written in English have different structures in writing. A student who is able to clearly read the English texts should know at least how a paragraph is organized, and also know full-well about the English grammatical structures in order to help them interpret and appreciate while reading an English text.

As mentioned above, the Task-Based Learning and Teaching has brought out ways to have students practice the English text reading to serve and construct the L2 acquisition (Ellis, 2003) To shed light of this research, the researchers have prepared a set of research questions to find out and determine how the Task-Based Learning affects students' reading skills in a private university in Nakhon Pathom.

### Research Question

This study was guided by two research questions.

1. Is task - based learning program effective in teaching reading skill?
2. What are the students' responses toward using task- based learning program?

3. to investigate students' satisfaction towards task- based learning.

### Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework showed the relationship between independent variable and dependent variable as follow :

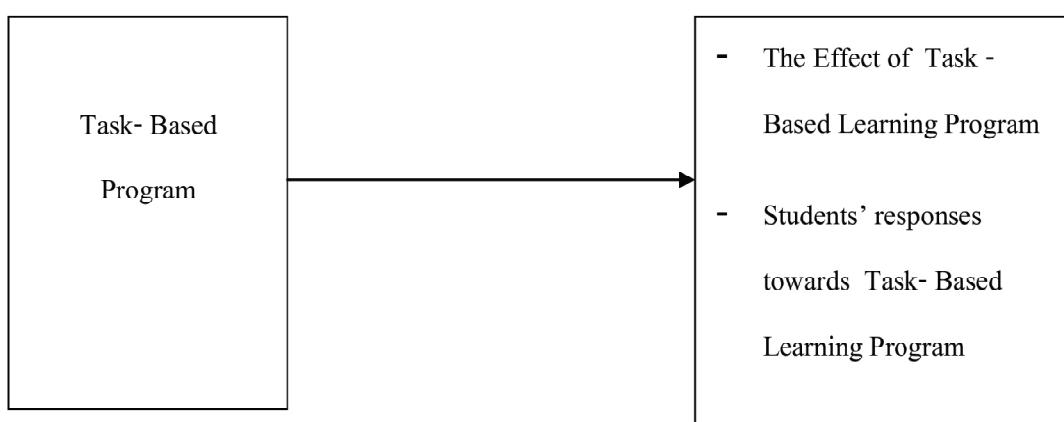
The independent variable was Task-Based Program

The dependent variables were the effect of teaching program on Task - Based Learning and students' response towards Task- Based Learning Program

### Objectives of the research

The three objectives of this study were:

1. to investigate English reading skill of first year students;
2. to compare students' English reading achievement before and after using task - based learning program;



### Scope of the Research Study

1. The contents

The content consisted of Reading Concept, Theory of Second Language Acquisition, and Task Based Learning.

2. The Population

The research population of the study were 134 first year nursing students who registered English I in the second semester of academic year 2014.

The research samples were 40 first year nursing students who registered in English I section 2 in the second semester of academic year 2014.

### 3. Time frame

Students took pre reading comprehension test on January 20, 2015 and took post -test on February 24, 2015.

## **Operational Definition of the Research**

### **Variables**

Task - Based Program is a teaching method that help the first year nursing students who took English I section 2 to achieve the target what they have been assigned. Those tasks clearly specify what to do. To achieve one way or the other, students must be involved in completing a continuously related task-based. (Ellis,2003)

The Effect of Task - Based Learning Program is a successful outcome which is normally be considered by the results of pre-and-post Task-Based Learning method.

Students' response is the students' satisfaction to Task-Based learning program.

Students' reading skill is the skill that helps the first year nursing students interpret and decode the given texts by using their own prior knowledge and combining the information from the text to help them make sense of the text.

### **Experimental design**

The research design was the Quasi-experimental with one-group pretest-posttest. The statistics analysis used were t-test, mean, and standard deviation. To collect the data, the quantitative questionnaires and the purposive sampling techniques were used to check the 40 nursing students' satisfaction on the TBL method.

### **Research Instruments**

Research instruments were rated by 3 experts: Capt.Dr.Vipada Poonsakvorasan, WRTN in the field of task - based instruction, Assoc.Prof.Dr. Ruengdet Pankhuenkhat,in the field of linguistic, and Dr.Arturo G.Ordonia in the field of curriculum and instruction. The instruments were corrected and selected by the index of item - objective congruency (IOC)>0.67

1. The lesson Plan manual that consisted of 4 reading lessons. The reading's lessons were *Which is colder: the North Pole or the South Pole?*, *The Green-house Effect*, *Type of Robots*, and *Preparing to Visit Foreign Countries*. The lesson plans composed of 3 steps: pre-task, task - cycle, and post - task.

2. The Rubric for evaluating students' performance was divided into 3 parts: *class participation*, *presentation* and *outcome*.

3. The multiple choice test with 30 items provided to test the students' reading comprehension both pre-test and post-test. The test focused on 3 areas: *vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension*.

4. The satisfactory questionnaire was developed by researchers after the experiment to assess the students' satisfaction in using Task - based learning program. The questionnaire consisted of 3 parts: *pre-task, task - cycle, and post-task*.

#### Data collection

The researchers collected data as follow :

1. Collected scores from pre-reading comprehension test.

2. Collected scores from the task -based learning program which had four activities in order to analyze the efficiency of process (E1).

3. Collected scores from post-reading comprehension test in order to analyze the efficiency of product(E2).

4. Collected scores from the satisfactory questionnaire.

#### Analysis Result

The efficiency of reading activity task was 74.38/ 73.00 which the standard criteria was 75/75. From this result, the efficiency of the reading task was lower than the set criteria (75/75) but not less than 2.5. This mean the task based learning program was at a fairly good.

**Table 1** The comparing results of students' reading comprehension before and after using Task Based Learning

Sampling	N	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	t	p-value
Pre-test	40	16.75	3.03	-14.87	0.000*
Post-test	40	21.90	2.94		

\* Statistical significant level .05

From table 1 the result showed that the mean scores ( $\bar{x}$ ) of students in the post - test was higher than that of the pre-test. When comparing by t-test found that the mean score of students in

the pre-test and the post test were significant different at the level of 0.05. This proved that most students were able to get a better reading skills after having been taught by using the TBL method.

**Table 2** The results of students satisfaction after using Task Based Learning

Step	List	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Interpreted
<b>1</b>	<b>Pre-Task</b>	<b>4.33</b>	<b>0.60</b>	<b>Very good</b>
1.1	Teacher presents teaching topics, describes the method of teaching and rating including activates students' background knowledge.	4.55	0.60	Excellent
1.2	Teacher explains vocabulary and phrases that is useful to work.	4.48	0.60	Very good
1.3	Teacher explains the step of doing tasks.	3.95	0.60	Very good
<b>2</b>	<b>Task Cycle</b>	<b>3.93</b>	<b>0.54</b>	<b>Very good</b>
2.1	Reading passage is suitable.	3.85	0.62	Very good
2.2	Students plan and share responsibility to work together.	4.08	0.47	Very good
2.3	Students work in groups.	3.98	0.48	Very good
2.4	Students use English language in presentation.	3.82	0.60	Very good
<b>3</b>	<b>Post- Task</b>	<b>4.41</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>Very good</b>
3.1	Students learn vocabulary and grammar by doing tasks.	4.02	0.62	Very good
3.2	Teacher corrects students' language mistake.	4.52	0.55	Excellent
3.3	Teacher reviews and practices language pattern to students.	4.68	0.53	Excellent
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4.19</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>Very good</b>

Table 2 showed that in the pre-task, the overall scores was at 4.33 which is Very Good. In the task cycle showed that the average scores was 3.93 which is Very Good. In the post-task showed the average scores that was 4.41 which is Very Good. In overall, the results showed that the Task-Based Learning was practical and useful in order to help students improve their reading skills.

## Discussion

The effect of Task - Based Learning program to improve English Reading Skills of Students in a private University in Nakhon Pathom can be discussed as follows :

1. When comparing the students' reading results before and after using Task - Based Learning program, the results clarified that most students were able to get a better reading skills after having been taught by using the TBL method. This research was consistent with Panor Sanguankaew and Vipada Poonsakvorasan's research that emphasized students' reading improvement after using Task-Based Learning activities. Furthermore, this research had

similarity to Littlewood's statement (1983) saying that Task- Based Learning program could help students to improve reading skills. Because students had the opportunity to practice reading skills through reading activities, they also enhanced communicative skills naturally.

2. The students' satisfaction showed that students' satisfaction on the TBL method was very good level. In

each step with the highest score, we found that students' satisfaction in step 1.1, teacher presents teaching topics, at excellent level, students plan and work together in step 2.2 at very good level and teacher reviews and practices language pattern to students in step 3.3 at excellent level. Therefore, task-based reading activities had the steps that teachers taught new words that related to passage, prepared students before doing tasks and then, practiced the grammar. From these things, students worked and learned together which is consistent with Skehan (1996) mentioned that teacher should give student an opportunity to learn by doing tasks.

## Recommendations

1. Recommendations from this study

Period of the research was likely too short to conduct the in-depth information. Therefore, the researchers should create the longer research's period in order to clearly measure how the Task-Based Learning method works, or not, to help students improve their reading skills.

2. Recommendations for further study

2.1 The researchers should develop Task - based activities to cover four skills : listening speaking, reading and writing.

2.2 The researchers should develop research instruments that are consistent with reading comprehension test (pre and post test)

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