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Project Title: Enhancing Web Reading Comprehension

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Abstract

First year undergraduate students lack the knowledge necessary to effectively study English I. Specifically, they lack knowledge of both vocabulary and of cognitive strategies which can help with reading comprehension when studying English language. As an English teacher I know what and how should be done to help students improve their English reading ability. The purposes of this study were to enhance the students' Web reading comprehension and self-directed learning ability, and to allow them to spend time on reading comprehension texts on the World Wide Web in the Self-Access Language Learning Centre (SALLC). In order to raise their awareness of cognitive strategies to better comprehend the texts, they were required to study in the SALLC for five weeks. The subjects in this study were 70 first-year university students from the Electrical Engineering and Industrial Education Faculties. The research involved 80 instruction sheets with websites, and a two-part questionnaire consisting of: Use of cognitive strategy during the pre-reading phase, during-reading phase, and post-reading phase, and secondly; Factors affecting reading comprehension and attitudes towards Web-reading comprehension. Percentage was used in analyzing the data. Findings have indicated that half of the students had a medium-high amount of knowledge of motivation and cognitive and metacognitive strategies, but their text-structure and language-structure knowledge was at a moderate level. Importantly, most students accepted that they gained some knowledge from reading, and that their reading comprehension ability was improved after five weeks of study. Many students also improved their abilities to the point where they could be labeled "Self-directed learners". 65% of participants indicated that the contents on the web were interesting, although only 40% indicated that they could understand questions and exercises on the instruction sheets. More importantly, the use of cognitive strategies was increased consistently until the 5th week of the study, which raised awareness of using cognitive strategies to help comprehend texts. It is recommended that to be effective readers students should be provided with more than five weeks to practice their reading comprehension and become self-directed learners.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank all of my students who are my subjects in this study. Also I would like to express my special thanks to my mother, my husband, my son and other people in my family for their encouragement.

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1.1 Introduction

In the English I class of 1st Semester Academic year 2011, most students assessed themselves as learners who could not read English. The reason for this shortfall is that they knew too little vocabulary to comprehend English passages. They were used to receiving information directly from their teachers e.g. their teachers translated most reading passages for them directly. Students were unused to reading passages for themselves, so they could not be independent learners. English I is a compulsory subject for the first year students of all faculties in Rajamangala University of Technology i.e. all students must study and complete the course. It consists of four skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking, and grammar, which the students study for 4 hours per week in total. For this study, the research focused on reading skill. This is for three reasons: Firstly, reading passages in class is very time consuming. For example, students need to pause their reading frequently to look up unfamiliar words in the dictionary. This restricts the amount of reading they can accomplish in the allotted time. Secondly, reading only from a book in class for one hour per week is not enough practice for students to improve their reading ability, and thirdly some of the reading passages selected for in class reading are uninteresting to some students.

The researcher thought that if the students had an opportunity to learn and practise reading by themselves outside of class, they could improve their reading comprehension and become independent learners. They could choose reading materials on the Web according to their own interests. The Self Access Language Learning Centre (SALLC) provides links to more than 80 teacher-certified reading passages on the World Wide Web, along with home-made reading comprehension instructions. The computer-based Self-access Centre and Web-based environment can be integrated into students' reading practice. Therefore, the research aimed at making use of Self Access Language Learning Centre (SALLC) and enhancing Web reading comprehension. According to the national Education Act 1999 (Office of National Education Committee 1999), to have the child-centered learning provided by law, Section 22 of the National Education Act stated that: "Education shall be based on the principle that all learners are capable of learning and self-development, and are regarded as being most

important. The teaching-learning process shall aim at enabling the learners to develop themselves at their own pace and to the best of their potentiality."

The statement above assures that each individual has potential for learning and is regarded as the center of teaching-learning activities.

The researcher thought that the students would benefit from this research. Not only would they have the opportunity to learn by themselves and improve their reading comprehension, but also they would receive a 10% bonus to their marks as a reward for their attendance in the SALLC.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

To study and enhance the students' Web-based reading comprehension.

The study is aimed at finding answers to following questions:

1. What cognitive reading strategies are used by the students during pre-reading, during-reading and post-reading phases?
2. What factors affect their reading comprehension?
3. What attitudes do the students have towards web reading learning in the SALLC?

1.3 Context of the Study

The participants consisted of 70 undergraduate students majoring electrical engineering and electronics education who studied the English I course with the researcher in the first semester of Academic year 2011 at Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya, Songkhla.

They were asked to complete the questionnaires once a week in a five week period regarding how they practiced reading comprehension on Websites in the Self-Access Language Learning Centre, Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya, Songkhla.

1.4 Definition of Terms

Reading comprehension is the process of constructing meaning from text. The goal of all reading instruction is ultimately targeted at helping a reader comprehend text. Reading comprehension involves at least two people: the reader and the writer. The process of comprehending involves decoding the writer's words and then using background knowledge to construct an approximate understanding of the writer's message (Lenz, 2005).

A reading comprehension strategy means an overt process consciously selected and used by a reader to aid the process of constructing meaning more effectively and efficiently(Lenz, 2005).

Web is defined as a set of Hypertext Transfer protocol documents on all internet servers which are easily accessible (Bernes-Lee, 1991).

Enhance is to increase in strength or amount (Longman, 1987: p 337).
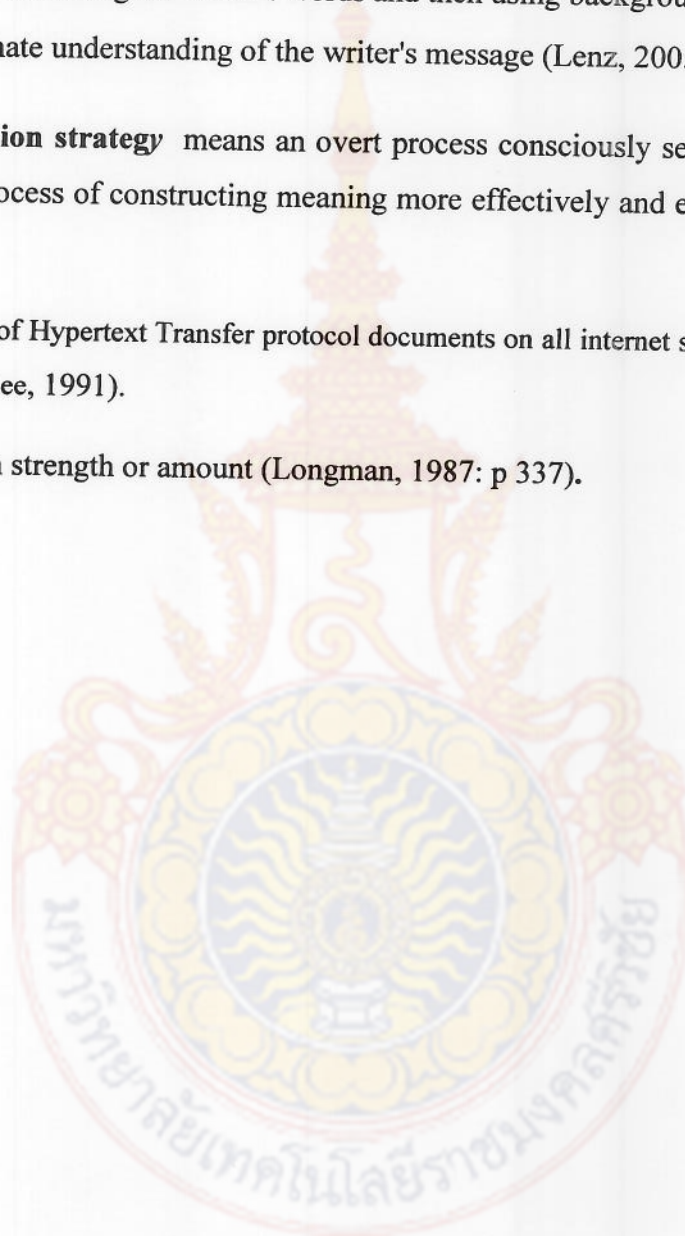
Chapter Two: Reviewed Literature

2.1 Reading comprehension

Reading comprehension is the process of constructing meaning from text. The goal of all reading instruction is ultimately targeted at helping a reader comprehend text. Reading comprehension involves at least two people: the reader and the writer. The process of comprehending involves decoding the writer's words and then using background knowledge to construct an approximate understanding of the writer's message (Lenz, 2005).

2.1.1 Factors affecting reading comprehension

While word identification is a process that results in a fairly exact outcome (i.e., a student either reads the word "automobile" or not) the process of comprehending text is not so exact. Different readers will interpret an author's message in different ways. Comprehension is affected by the reader's knowledge of the topic, knowledge of language structures, knowledge of text structures and genres, knowledge of cognitive and metacognitive strategies, their reasoning abilities, their motivation, and their level of engagement (Lenz, 2005).

Reading comprehension is also affected by the quality of the reading materials. Some writers are better writers than others, and some writers produce more complex reading materials than others. Text that is well organized and clear is called "considerate text," and text that is poorly organized and difficult to understand can be called "inconsiderate text." The more inconsiderate the text, the more work will be required of a reader to comprehend the text. Readers who do not have the background, abilities, or motivation to overcome the barriers presented in inconsiderate text will have more difficulty comprehending these types of texts (Lenz, 2005).

Students who had trouble learning to decode and recognize words will often have difficulty with reading comprehension. Students who struggle with decoding rarely have a chance to interact with more difficult text and often learn to dislike reading. As a result, these students do not have sufficient opportunities to develop the language skills and strategies necessary for becoming proficient readers (Lenz, 2005).

Readers with poorly developed language skills and strategies will not have the tools to take advantage of the obvious structures and comprehension cues that are part of considerate text nor will they have the extra tools needed to overcome the barriers of inconsiderate text (Lenz, 2005).

The type of instruction that a student receives will also affect reading comprehension. Strategies for improving reading comprehension must be taught directly by teachers. Simply providing opportunities or requiring for children to read will not teach many students the comprehension strategies they need to be proficient readers. These need to be taught directly as students learn to read simple sentences and this direct instruction needs to continue in different forms throughout a student's elementary and secondary school experience (Lenz, 2005).

2.1.2 The different components of teaching reading comprehension

There are many ways to think about reading comprehension and many factors that affect reading comprehension. Teachers should keep in mind two overriding questions about how to organize how to teach reading comprehension. These questions are, "What strategies should I teach?" and "How should I teach strategies?" (Lenz, 2005).

The most practical way of thinking about teaching reading comprehension is to organize instruction according to how you want students to think about strategies. For this reason, the most straightforward way of organizing comprehension strategies is to think about strategies that one might use *before* reading, *during* reading, and *after* reading (Lenz, 2005).

Before Reading Strategies consist of those strategies that a student learns to use to get ready to read a text selection. These strategies help the student get an idea of what the author might be trying to say, how the information might be useful, and to create a mental set that might be useful for taking in and storing information. These strategies could include previewing headings, surveying pictures, reading introductions and summaries, creating a pre-reading outline, creating questions that might need to be answered, making predictions that need to be confirmed, etc. The primary question for a teacher here is: "What steps (observable as well as unobservable) should I teach students to do regularly and automatically that will prepare them in advance to get the most out of a reading selection that needs to be read more thoroughly?" (Lenz, 2005).

When a teacher introduces a reading selection to students, walks students through the text, helps the students get ready to read through the use of advance organizers, or creates pre-reading outlines, he/she is ensuring content learning by compensating for the fact that students have not developed good Before-Reading Strategies. Teachers will need to continue to lead students in these types of before-reading activities to ensure content area learning occurs until students have been taught to fluently use Before-Reading Strategies. Teacher use of before-reading prompts and activities does not necessarily lead students to develop and use Before-Reading Strategies independently without direct and explicit instruction. This is why it is important to directly teach and provide practice that gradually requires students to use Before-Reading strategies (Lenz, 2005).

During Reading Strategies consist of those strategies that students learn to use while they are reading a text selection. These strategies help the student focus on how to determine what the author is actually trying to say and to match the information with what the student already knows. These strategies should be influenced by the Before Reading Strategies because students should be using or keeping in mind the previews, outlines, questions, predictions, etc. that were generated before reading and then using this information to digest what they are reading. The During Reading Strategies that help a student understand during reading include questioning, predicting, visualizing, paraphrasing, elaborating (i.e., comparing what is read to what is known), changing reading rate, rereading, etc. The primary question for a teacher is: "What steps (observable and unobservable) should I teach students to do so that they will regularly and automatically figure out the intended meaning of the text and how it connects to what they already know?" (Lenz, 2005).

When *a teacher* develops reading guides and outlines that need to be completed during reading, requires students to ask and answer questions, creates summaries as they read, etc., they are compensating for the fact that students have not developed good During-Reading Strategies. Teachers will need to continue to lead students in these types of during-reading activities to ensure content area learning occurs until students are taught to fluently use Before-Reading Strategies. Teacher use of during-reading prompts and activities does not necessarily lead students to develop and use During-Reading Strategies independently without direct and explicit instruction. This is why it is important to directly teach and provide practice that gradually requires students to use During-Reading strategies (Lenz, 2005).

After-Reading Strategies consist of those strategies that students learn to use when they have completed reading a text selection. These strategies are used to help the student "look back" and think about the message of the text and determine the intended or possible meanings that might be important. These strategies are used to follow up and confirm what was learned (e.g., answer questions or confirm predictions) from the use of before and during reading strategies. However, After-Reading Strategies also help the reader to focus on determining what the big, critical, or overall idea of the author's message was and how it might be used before moving on to performance tasks or other learning tasks. The primary question for a teacher is: "What steps (observable and unobservable) should I teach students to do so that they will regularly and automatically stop when they are finished reading a text selection and try to figure out the intended meaning of the text to determine what is most important and how they will use it?" (Lenz, 2005).

When a teacher reviews a reading selection, leads a discussion on what was important about the author's message, helps students summarize or "look back" at what was read, provides a post-organizer, or asks students to complete a study guide over what was learned from reading text, the teacher is compensating for the fact that students have not developed good After-Reading Strategies. Teachers will need to continue to lead students in these types of before reading-activities to ensure content area learning occurs until students have been taught to fluently use After-Reading Strategies. Teacher use of after-reading prompts and activities does not necessarily lead students to develop and use After-Reading Strategies independently without direct and explicit instruction. This is why it is important to directly teach and provide practice that gradually requires students to use After-Reading strategies (Lenz, 2005).

2.1.3 Teaching comprehension strategies

A majority of the research indicates that the most successful way to teach comprehension strategies to students with limited reading proficiency is to use very direct and explicit instruction. The stages of instruction that are most often cited as being effective in helping a student learn a strategy are: (1) orient students to key concepts, assess, and ask students to make a commitment to learn, (2) describe the purpose of the strategy, the potential benefits, and the steps of the strategy, (3) model (thinking aloud) the behavioral and cognitive steps/actions involved in using the strategy, (4) lead verbal practice and elaboration of the

key information and steps related to the strategy, (5) provide for guided and controlled practice of the strategy with detailed feedback from the teacher and/or knowledgeable peers, (6) gradually move to more independent and advanced practice of the strategy with feedback from the teacher and/or knowledgeable peers, and (7) posttest application of the strategy, and help students make commitments to generalize its use. Once the strategy is learned, the teacher must then ensure that students begin to transfer or generalize the strategy to new and different situations. The eighth stage, generalization, includes four distinct phases: (1) orientation and awareness of situations in which the strategy can be used, (2) activation by preparing for and practicing strategies in content-area classes, (3) adaptation of the strategy steps for use in other tasks, and (4) maintenance of the strategy for continued application in a variety of real-life learning and work place settings (Lenz, 2005).

2.1.4 The key principles of reading instruction

2.1.4.1 Teach reading comprehension skills and strategies at all levels of reading development.

Teachers at every grade level and every subject area should always be planning how reading assignments will help students develop and practice skills and strategies. Students need teachers to teach and draw attention to appropriate strategy use in textbooks, especially in content areas where there are many reading demands (e.g., language, social studies, and often science). A reading comprehension *skill* is a developed ability to construct meaning effectively, immediately, and effortlessly with little conscious attention. A reading comprehension *strategy* is defined as an overt process consciously selected and used by a reader to aid the process of constructing meaning more effectively and efficiently. Once a student uses a strategy effectively, immediately and effortlessly with little conscious attention to construct meaning, it becomes a reading skill. Most planning for comprehension instruction is targeted at teaching comprehension strategies and then developing practice activities that help the student become skilled in the use of the strategy so that it is unconsciously selected and used in a variety of situations (Lenz, 2005).

2.1.4.2 Reading comprehension instruction must be responsive.

Continually assess progress in learning, make specific instructional accommodations to meet individual student's needs, and provided individualized and elaborated feedback (Lenz, 2005).

2.1.4.3 Reading comprehension instruction must be systematic.

Systematic reading instruction is structured, connected, scaffolded, and informative. Structured instruction is characterized by lessons that organize and group new knowledge and skills into segments that can be sequentially presented in a clear manner. Connected instruction is characterized by lessons that show the learner connections between the segments and what is already known. Scaffolded lessons are characterized by instruction in which the teacher provides to students, early in the learning process, a significant amount of support in the form of modeling, prompts, direct explanations, and targeted questions. Then as students begin to acquire the targeted objective, direct teacher supports are reduced, and the major responsibilities for learning is transferred to the student. Informative instruction is characterized by lessons in which the teacher explains the purposes and expected outcomes and requirements for learning and when and how that newly learned information will be useful (Lenz, 2005).

2.1.4.4 Reading comprehension instruction must be intensive.

Intensive reading instruction means that sufficient time, used wisely and with high student engagement, is provided direct instruction for students to master the reading skills and strategies they need (Lenz, 2005).

2.1.4.5 Reading comprehension instruction should involve authentic reading at all stages.

Authentic reading involves incorporating a variety of "real" reading materials, such as books, magazines, and newspapers into the instructional process (Lenz, 2005).

2.1.4.6 Reading comprehension instruction involves providing opportunities to read for pleasure.

Struggling readers do not read as often or as much as their peers. Reading for enjoyment should be modeled and encouraged at all grade levels. This requires providing ample materials to read at their independent reading level (Lenz, 2005).

2.1.4.7 Reading comprehension instruction requires collaboration with other professionals and shared responsibility for student success.

All teachers play either a primary or secondary role in teaching students to read. All classroom teachers who expect students to learn the content of specific subjects need to be teaching reading. Studies have shown that one of the most damaging practices affecting struggling readers is the lack of coordination among educators that are responsible for literacy development. Building staff must work together to plan and implement effective instruction in reading comprehension (Lenz, 2005).

2.1.5 Factors affecting reading comprehension

Students which have good reading comprehension can read accurately and efficiently. By reading the text, they can get the maximum information from the text with the minimum of misunderstanding. However, not all students have good reading comprehension. There are some factors which influence their comprehension in reading. The factors can be described below (Lenz, 2005).

The first factor is the purpose of reading. Donoghue (2009) states that the purpose of reading can focus the students' attention and it can help them in understanding the text. He also states, "Comprehension in reading is stronger when the purpose is specific."(p. 176). Reading for a specific purpose influences the students' ability to comprehend a text. When the students have a purpose for reading the text, they will focus their attention on the text and they will try harder to comprehend it. It is obvious that the purpose of reading must be constructed before reading. The teachers should be able to help the students in constructing their purpose for reading.

The second factor is students' interest in reading. When the students are curious about a subject, they will have high interest in reading the text to seek information and discover answers to satisfy their curiosity (Donoghue, 2009, p. 176). The student's level of interest in a subject will therefore have an obvious effect on their reading comprehension -especially if their interest in the subject is strong enough to qualify them as avid readers.

The third factor is the quality of the reading material. Lenz (2005) states that the students' reading comprehension can be influenced by the quality of the reading material. If the text is well organized, the students will understand the text easily. On other hand, if the text is poorly organized the students will have a difficult time understanding it.

The fourth factor is the students' background knowledge. Readers who do not have background knowledge about the topic of the text or the text type will have more difficulty in comprehending it (Lenz, 2005, p.1). Students' background knowledge can influence their reading comprehension. Therefore, the students should be introduced to the text types early and review them as often as possible. Activating their background knowledge is also needed before reading the text.

The fifth factor is the quality of the instruction. Donoghue (2009) states that the quality of instruction can influence the students' reading comprehension. The quality of the instruction is determined by the instructors themselves. An effective instructor engages the students productively on the reading tasks. They can motivate the students in the reading lesson. The types of their instruction also can encourage the students to be active readers. Those will give positive impact to the students' reading comprehension.

Engaged reading is a merger of motivation and thoughtfulness. Engaged readers seek to understand; they enjoy learning and they believe in their reading abilities. They are mastery oriented, intrinsically motivated, and have self-efficacy.

Classroom contexts can promote engaged reading. Teachers create contexts for engagement when they provide prominent knowledge goals, real-world connections to reading, meaningful choices about what, when, and how to read, and interesting texts that are familiar, vivid, important, and relevant. Teachers can further engagement by teaching reading strategies. A coherent classroom fuses these qualities.

The sixth factor is the students' linguistic and discourse knowledge. Snow (2002) states that to comprehend the text, the readers must have a wide range of capacities and abilities. These can include various types of knowledge, like linguistic knowledge and discourse knowledge. Both types of knowledge are interrelated. When the students fail to understand the words or sentences in the text, it is not only caused by the lack of their linguistic knowledge, but also caused by the lack of their discourse knowledge.

The seventh factor is the students' vocabulary knowledge. Vocabulary knowledge can influence the students' reading comprehension. Students often fail to understand the text because of their lack of vocabulary knowledge. According to Snow (2002), to comprehend the text the readers must have vocabulary knowledge. In order to comprehend a reading passage, sufficient vocabulary knowledge is required.

The last factor is the students' knowledge of reading strategies. The reader must have knowledge of specific comprehension strategies in order to comprehend a passage. (Snow, 2002, p.3). Knowledge of reading strategies is important in reading comprehension. The students who have knowledge of reading strategies will comprehend texts more easily, while those who do not have such knowledge with find it difficult to adequately understand their readings. It is obvious that the students' knowledge of reading strategies influence their reading comprehension.

In conclusion, reading comprehension is affected by factors which come from the students, the instructors, and the text. The factors which come from the students consist of their background knowledge, their vocabulary knowledge, their linguistic knowledge, their discourse knowledge, their knowledge of specific comprehension strategies, and their motivation. The factor which comes from the instructors is the quality of their instruction. Finally, the factor which comes from the text is the quality of the text itself. All of the factors determine the students' success in comprehending a text.

2.2 Metacognitive Strategies in Reading

Ozek and Civelek (2006) state that reading strategies are divided into two major categories: metacognitive and cognitive reading strategies. The strategies that function to monitor or regulate cognitive strategies are called metacognitive strategies. They involve thinking about

the learning process, planning for learning, monitoring of comprehension or production while it is taking place, and self evaluation of learning after the language activity is completed (Skehan, 1998, p.87).

In Livingston's view, "metacognition" is one of the latest buzz words in educational psychology. Metacognitive activities are engaged in every day learning which enables us to be successful learners, and has been associated with intelligence (1996, p.1). These activities are: planning how to approach a learning task, monitoring comprehension, and evaluating progress toward the completion of a task. In Flavell's term (1979), metacognition includes person knowledge, task knowledge and strategic knowledge. Person knowledge means general knowledge about how human beings learn. For example: How does learning take place? What facilitates or inhibits human learning? Task knowledge means knowledge of which tasks should be learned according to their nature such as types of tasks, the levels of difficulties, etc.. Strategic knowledge means strategies of knowledge about when and where they should be used appropriately in the learning process. Brown (1987) states metacognitive experiences involve the use of metacognitive strategies or metacognitive regulation. These strategies are used in the learning process (e.g. planning , monitoring and checking the outcomes of those cognitive activities) in order to reach a cognitive goal such as understanding the text.

2.3 Cognitive Strategies in Reading

Williams and Burden state that cognitive strategies are seen as mental processes directly concerned with the processing of information in order to learn, that is for obtaining, storage, retrieval or use of information (1997, p.148). They are more limited to specific learning tasks and involve more direct manipulation of the learning material itself (Brown, 1994, p.115). In general, studies in both L1 and L2 reading research provide a binary division of cognitive strategies as bottom-up and top-down. Goodman refers to the bottom up model as the "common sense notion" (1998, p.11). In this approach, reading is meant to be a process of decoding; identifying letter, words, phrases, and then sentences in order to get the meaning.

On the other hand, top-down model advocates "the selection of the fewest and most productive elements from a text so as to make sense of it" (Lynch & Hudson, 1991, p. 218)

and views the reading process as an active "psychological guessing game" (Carrell, 1998, 2).

Top-down rejects the notion that identification of letters to form words, and the derivation of meaning from these words is efficient reading. On the contrary, it assumes that efficient reading requires the readers to make predictions and hypothesis about the text content by relating the new information to their prior knowledge and by using as few language clues as possible. It is further assumed that the readers can check whether the hypothesis are correct or not by sampling the text.

The top-down model is influenced by schema theory, which emphasizes the importance of the reader's background knowledge in the reading process (Carrell, 1998, p. 4). According to this theory, so as to comprehend a text, readers make use of both the text and their background knowledge. Therefore, interaction of the background knowledge and the text is essential for efficient reading. Salataci (1998) also state that while reading, a variety of processes repeatedly occurs in readers' minds. Readers, with the help of top-down and bottom-up strategies, use pre-reading information to make some predictions about the text. Processing information is started at the sentence level. That is to say, they focus on identification of the meaning and grammatical category of a word, sentence syntax, and text details, etc. While processing information provided them by each sentence, readers check to see how this information fits, again employing bottom-up and top-down strategies such as background knowledge, prediction, getting the gist of a text, skimming, scanning, etc.

2.4 Internet

One benefit of technology is how it can facilitate students' research around customized topics of interest. Using the Internet can enhance their motivation as students share and discuss what they are learning among friends. Web-based searches can build general, background knowledge before, after, and during reading, or they can to facilitate deep understanding of a particular book.

2.5 The Value of Technology in Language Learning

Technology has affected our learning styles and has allowed us to obtain a great amount of information (Chapelle, 2001). This phenomenon has also had a profound and significant effect on education in Taiwanese society. According to Liou's investigation of students' perception of using the Internet, most students have regularly communicated or chatted

online at home or outside the classroom (Liou, 2002). Meanwhile, Lin (2004) argues that teachers need to consider integrating students' preferences into teaching to promote students' learning and motivation and to help students appreciate social interaction through the use of technology in language learning.

The integration of computers into language teaching and learning has been widely accepted by many educators and researchers (Warschauer & Whittaker, 1997; Warschauer & Healey, 1998). How to take advantage of online resources available via the Internet to facilitate language learning has also been a critical issue discussed by numerous researchers (Felix, 1999; Warschauer, 1995a, 1995b; Singhal, 1997; Sperling, 1997; Paulsen, 2001; Kung & Chuo, 2002). Paulsen (2001) indicates that we do not need to question whether to utilize electronic technology in foreign language instruction, but we need to give much attention as to how to control it and guide our students to use it.

Many EFL instructors are taking advantage of technology to provide students with opportunities to continue learning outside the classroom because, for instance, technology allows learners to work at their own pace and to have the freedom to choose their own materials (Blin, 1999; see Pinkman, 2005). Moreover, technology and multimedia resources and Web-based learning environments provide students with authentic and global environments and interesting tools to achieve learner autonomy or learner independence and offer them an opportunity to learn, practise and communicate with others in the target language outside the classroom (Hanson-Smith, 2000; Pinkman, 2005).

2.6 Learner Attitudes and Motivation

Wenden (1998) defines attitudes as motivation, beliefs and evaluations. According to the author, learners' beliefs about their role in the learning process and their capability as learners are two types of vital attitudes learners keep. Brown (1987) indicates that awareness of self, of others, and of the culture of the target language can be part of attitudes. Positive attitudes are helpful for increasing motivation while negative attitudes have a different result.

According to Dornyei (1998), most scholars accept that motivation is one of the primary forces that affect whether second language (L2) or foreign language learning can be successful or not. This is because motivation offers the key factor to initiate L2 learning and then maintain it during the long and often tiresome learning process.

Thanasoulas (2000) points out that in language learning, learners are motivated in different ways and to various degrees. For example, some learners like doing grammar and memorizing, others want to speak and role-play; while still others prefer reading and writing, but avoid speaking. Finding a good job and being interested in the culture of the target language can be sources of learners' motivation. Furthermore, a learner's willingness to be responsible for her own learning and her confidence in her ability as a learner can be possible ways of promoting learner autonomy.

2. 7 Self-directed Learning and Lifelong Learning

An estimated 70 percent of adult learning is self-directed learning (Cross, 1981). Self-directed learning has been described as "a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others," to diagnose their learning needs, formulate learning goals, identify resources for learning, select and implement learning strategies, and evaluate learning outcomes (Knowles, 1975).

Mocker and Spear (1982) included self-directed learning in a descriptive model of lifelong learning based entirely on the locus of control for decision making about the objectives and means of learning. The model is a two-by-two matrix of learner and institution; the self-directed learning situation occurs when learners--not the institution--control both the learning objectives and the means of learning. The following situations occupy the other cells of the matrix: (1) formal learning, in which institutions, not learners, control objectives and the means of learning; (2) nonformal learning, in which learners control the objectives and institutions control the means; and (3) informal learning, in which institutions control the objectives but learners control the means of learning.

Thus, whether or not learning is self-directed depends not on the subject matter to be learned or on the instructional methods used. Instead, self-directedness depends on who is in charge--who decides what should be learned, who should learn it, what methods and resources should be used, and how the success of the effort should be measured. To the extent the learner makes those decisions, the learning is generally considered to be self-directed.

Perhaps only degrees of self-directedness are actually possible, given the frequent necessity of maintaining institutional standards and, as Mezirow (1985) points out, the impossibility of freely choosing among objectives unless all possible objectives are known. Some writers

have pointed out that Mocker and Spear's model could be viewed as a continuum rather than as a matrix.

Some self-directed learning takes place in comparative isolation in secluded libraries. Other self-directed learners engage in more interpersonal communication (with experts and peers, for instance) than is typically available in conventional classroom education.

The resources available to self-directed learners include printed and audiovisual materials; experts interviewed by letter, telephone, or in person; cultural institutions such as museums, zoos, and arboretums; and associations of all types.

Muongmee (2007) stated in the complex context of fast globalization and huge transformation in the new century, "self-directed learning" and lifelong learning are the goals of the 1999 National Education Act in Thailand. Teachers are the principal keys in educational change to lead students towards these goals. It is important that teachers be self-directed learners themselves and to become one of the best and probably the most influential role model for their students. To be self-directed learners, teachers decide what they need to know and what to learn; set their own goals; identify and find resources for learning; and evaluate their own learning. All these skills and qualities must be developed in students. In the teaching-learning process, teachers also need to find ways to avoid unhappy learning situations and to provide resources and an atmosphere for happy learning.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.1 Subjects

The study was carried out during the first semester of the academic year 2011 at Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya, Songkhla. The target group comprised 70 undergraduate students majoring electrical engineering and electronics education who studied the English I course .

3.2 English I

English I is a compulsory subject for the first year Bachelor degree students. They studied English 4 periods a week for 15 weeks per semester.

3.3 Instruments

The research instruments were:

3.3.1 80 instruction sheets including reading websites and answer keys, (See Appendix C).

3.3.2 Internet

3.3.3 Questionnaire about reading comprehension strategies

3.3.4 Questionnaire regarding factors affecting reading comprehension and students' attitudes towards reading comprehension.

3.4 Data Collection

The process for enhancing Web reading comprehension in this study includes 3 procedures as follows:

1. The first week of the semester, teachers gave 5 sets of first part of the questionnaire about reading comprehension strategies to 70 students and explained how to learn and practice their reading skill in Self-Access Language Learning Centre (SALLC).

2. The students studied by themselves in the SALLC in their free time once a week for 5 weeks.

3. The students submitted the questionnaire each week for 5 weeks.

4. In the sixth week the researcher had the students complete the second part of questionnaire about factors affecting reading comprehension and students' attitudes towards reading comprehension.

3.5 Data Analysis

Quantitative data was gathered by means of the questionnaires Descriptive results (percentages) were analysed by computer software.

3.6 Main Study

In this project, the participants were asked to complete the questionnaire once a week for five weeks regarding how they practiced reading comprehension on Websites in the SALLC.(see Appendix A).

The questionnaire of factors influencing reading comprehension and students' attitude (see Appendix B) was given out at the sixth week of the class. The questionnaire was used to assess learners' attitudes towards their assignments and the benefits of learning outside class.