

CHAPTER 3

THE METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses in detail the research methodology containing participants, the research instrument, the procedure regarding the development of the research instrument, the pilot study, as well as the procedure for ensuring the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. This chapter also includes the process involved in the distribution and collection of the data and the analysis of data and statistical devices, which are included in this chapter for a clear understanding.

Participants

The subjects of this study consisted of second-year English majors at Thepsatri Rajabhat University and Phetchabun Rajabhat University. In all, there were 70 English majors from Thepsatri Rajabhat University and Phetchabun Rajabhat University, ranging in age from 18-26 years old. They were eminently suited to participate in this research undertaking because the focus of this case study is students' ability in English reading skills. It was presumed that, in a general reading context, their use of English was adequate after studying it for at least 8 years. Most the subjects started learning English in Prathomsuksa 5 (Grade 5) and had continued to do so down to the present (as second-year college students). Moreover, they had already taken the English for Communication and Study Skills course that semester (2/2009).

Research Instruments

The first research instrument used in this study was in the form of the English Reading Skills test. To evaluate the specific skills of the students, reading passages were selected from a variety of sources. This study also employed personal observation as an instrument with an Alpha coefficient of 0.79. In all, 9 passages with a total of 70 question were included in the English Reading Skills test, the aim of which was to measure reading strategies in 7 sets: scanning, skimming, using reference words, interpreting context clues, finding topics, main ideas and supporting details and comprehension in the different reading passages which were selected as resources. Another tool was the English Reading Skills and Strategies Survey, developed from Student Questionnaire devised by Somnuk Songsiri (1999). This was used to measure the frequency with which English reading skills and strategies were used in 7 main areas. The questionnaire was divided into two parts, as follows:

Part I explored the background of the respondents in terms of gender, age, prior educational background, and their grade for the English for Communication and Study Skills course.

Part II surveyed the frequency with which participants used reading skills and strategies, which the were classified into the following seven categories: scanning, skimming, using reference words, interpreting context clues, finding topics, main ideas and supporting details and using prior knowledge (in terms of language and their own experience).

The Construction of the Instruments

As the purpose of this study was to investigate the English reading skills of second-year English majors, the instruments were prepared to study their abilities in this regard.

They were graded as *excellent*, *good*, *fair*, and *needs to improve*, with regard to the seven groups of skills, namely, Scanning, Skimming, Using Reference Words, Interpreting Context Clues, Finding Topics, Main Ideas and Supporting Details and Comprehension.

Development of the Research Instruments

In order to collect data relevant to the study, two instruments were used: a reading test covering the seven types of reading skills cited above and a survey of the frequency with which they used specific strategies to respond to the questions.

The procedure involved in the development of the first research instrument began with the researcher processing the English reading tests, containing 9 passages with 70 items, designed to test the following 7 sets: scanning, skimming, using reference words, interpreting context clues, finding topics, main ideas and supporting details and comprehension. The researcher then compiled the survey relating to English reading skills and strategies. After that, the researcher consulted her thesis advisors to check for language and content validity. Next, the test and survey were tested by conducting a pilot study at Thepsatri Rajabhat University for further revision and to check the reliability of the instrument. Finally, the researcher modified and revised

the piloted test and survey, according to the suggestions of her thesis advisor, as well as the results of testing the instrument itself.

The research questions were as follows:

1. To what extent do English majors employ reading strategies?
2. How efficient are second-year English majors when they read English texts?
3. What problems do second-year English majors encounter and which reading skills do they use when reading?

Treatment of the Data

The first step the researcher was to choose 70 students from second-year English majors as subjects for this study. Then, the teacher passed out the reading tests, after which the students were given 1.30 hours to complete the examination. After the students had finished doing the pretest, the teacher corrected the tests, and passed out the survey relating to the Frequency of Use of English Reading Skills and Strategies to the students. After completing the surveys, the students then handed them in. Finally, the reading tests, and survey were computed in order to conduct an analysis of the data.

Analyzing the Results of the Reading Test and the Reading Skills and Strategies Survey

After the subjects had completed the survey, the data from the returned surveys was computed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows. At this point, it is worth noting that the following statistical devices were employed in this study:

1. Frequency and percentages were used to calculate the frequency of use regarding reading skills. The test score results from the English reading tests were graded in the following manner: 80% and up was interpreted as 'excellent'; 65%-79% as good; 50-64%, as 'fair'; and below 50% as 'need' to improve'. In addition, general information regarding the respondents was culled from the questionnaire pertaining to the Frequency of Use of English Reading Skills and Strategies.

The scores of the learners regarding each skill were transformed into percentages, and then interpreted in terms of levels of ability: beginner, intermediate, upper-intermediate and advanced.

2. Independent t test is employed to determine whether significant differences existed between the two groups of subjects with respect to reported comparing English reading performance among the second-year English major at Thepsatri Rajabhat University and Petchabun Rajabhat University.

3. With regard to the questionnaire, the criteria the researcher employed was adapted from the Likert rating scale. If students checked 5, it

was interpreted that they always use that reading skill; 4 would be interpreted to mean that they often use that reading skill, 3 that they sometimes use that reading skill, 2 that they rarely use that reading skill, and 1 that they almost never use that reading skill. The interpretation of the data suggested by (Best & Kahn, 2003) was as follows: A mean of 4.51 to 5.00 signifies always, a mean of 3.51 to 4.50 signifies often, a mean of 2.51 to 3.50 signifies sometimes, a mean of 1.51 to 2.50 signifies rarely and a mean of 1.00 to 1.50 signifies almost never. Also suggests that a mean of 4.51 to 5.00 is the highest level, Mean of 3.51 to 4.50 signifies high, a mean of 2.51 to 3.50 signifies medium, a mean of 1.51 to 2.50 signifies low and a mean of 1.00 to 1.50 the lowest. Meanwhile, teachers learn from the answers provided by the study groups and what problems may be revealed when students utilize these seven techniques for reading in English.

4. The chi-square method was used to find the correlation between the students' score on the English reading test and the frequency with which they used the skills and strategies they had been taught.

Analysis of the Data

The recorded data was transcribed to evaluate the English reading skills of the subjects. Based on the information gained regarding the students' ability vis-à-vis reading and the seven skills relating to reading, the data collected from the subjects was analyzed.

Summary

The aim of this chapter was to provide information on the data collecting procedure. The setting of the study has been briefly introduced. Furthermore, the sampling method and construction of the instrument were discussed as well.