

## **Abstract**

Effects of Cultural Content Schemata on Reading Performance of Matthayom Suksa 5 Students

at Phimanphitthayasan School

by

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This study examined whether the existing cultural background knowledge helped students comprehend better when they read the familiar text written in English than when reading the unfamiliar one. The following questions were investigated. Do the subject's cultural content schemata help him/her comprehend better when reading the familiar content passage than when reading the unfamiliar one? Which group of students (able or less able readers) was more successful in comprehending the familiar passage ("Loy Krathong Festival"). Which group of students (able or less able readers) was more successful in comprehending the unfamiliar passage ("Pancake Race"). Are there any differences in the vocabulary test scores of the two passages? Subjects were twenty students at Phimanphitthayasan School. They were asked to read two passages--the one presenting familiar cultural content while the other consisted of the unfamiliar cultural content. These subjects were then tested their comprehension by a multiple-choice test and a vocabulary test. Results indicated that prior knowledge affected reading performance. Subjects were successful in reading the familiar passage but failed to construct the meaning from the unfamiliar one. Scores of a multiple-choice test showed that able readers could interpret the information presented in the "Loy Krathong Festival" passage significantly better than did the less able readers. However, both groups of students could produce much lower scores when reading the "Pancake Race" passage. Regarding vocabulary test scores, both groups could gain the higher scores from the familiar passage than from the unfamiliar one. Details of the results were discussed in the study.