



Enhancing English Reading Comprehension in Prathomsuksa 6 Students Through Communicative Language Teaching and Active Learning Activities

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Received 18/12/2024

Revised 07/01/2025

Accepted 07/02/2025

Abstract

Background and Aim: This study aims to explore the effectiveness of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and active learning activities in enhancing English reading comprehension among Prathomsuksa 6 students at Ban Nasee School. Given the challenges students face in reading comprehension, it is essential to develop effective teaching methods to enhance their skills. The researcher is interested in examining whether CLT and active learning activities can enhance students' reading abilities and what students' attitudes are toward these approaches. This study will compare students' reading comprehension abilities before and after teaching English reading using CLT and active learning activities. Additionally, it will assess students' attitudes toward the learning process.

Materials and Methods: This study employed a one-group pretest-posttest design to evaluate the effectiveness of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and active learning activities in enhancing English reading comprehension among Prathomsuksa 6 students at Ban Nasee School. A total of 13 students were selected through cluster random sampling, and the study followed a one-group pretest-posttest design over 12 weeks. Thirteen students participated in 12 weeks of instruction, with two hours of class per week. The instruments used included 12 lesson plans, an English reading comprehension test, and an attitude questionnaire. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (means, percentages, standard deviations) and inferential statistics (one-sample t-tests, dependent samples t-tests) to assess changes in reading comprehension and student attitudes. The findings provide insights into the potential of CLT and active learning to improve student engagement and reading comprehension in English.

Results: The results of this study revealed a significant improvement in students' English reading comprehension after the implementation of CLT and active learning activities. The pretest mean score increased from 11.61 (29.05%) to 32.30 (80.77%) in the posttest, exceeding the criterion of 70%. Statistical analysis revealed a significant difference in scores, indicating that the teaching methods effectively enhanced reading comprehension. Additionally, students demonstrated a positive attitude toward the use of CLT and active learning, reflecting high levels of engagement and satisfaction with the learning process. These results suggest the effectiveness of CLT and active learning strategies in improving reading comprehension skills.

Conclusion: The implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and active learning activities significantly improved English reading comprehension among Prathomsuksa 6 students. The results highlight both increased reading proficiency and positive student attitudes, demonstrating the effectiveness of these teaching methods.

Keywords: Communicative Language Teaching; Active Learning; English Reading Comprehension; Prathomsuksa 6 Students

Introduction

English has become a global lingua franca, essential for communication in fields such as business, education, and international relations. (Crystal, 2012). In Thailand, English proficiency is especially critical due to the country's active participation in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its integration into the global economy. (Kirkpatrick, 2008). The Thai government's emphasis on English as a key subject in the Basic Education Core Curriculum (2008) reflects its role in preparing students for higher education and international careers. (Ministry of Education, 2008) Among the key language skills, reading comprehension stands out as crucial for academic success and cognitive development. However, many Thai students, including those at Ban Nasee School, struggle with reading comprehension, which significantly affects their academic performance.

To address these challenges, this study proposes the use of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and active learning, by utilizing the methods of Harmer (2009), McKinney (2008), and Williams (2015). Harmer (2009) defines Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as a method that prioritizes

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Citation



Pirom, A., & Lerdpreedakorn, N. (2025). Enhancing English Reading Comprehension in Prathomsuksa 6 Students Through Communicative Language Teaching and Active Learning Activities. *International Journal of Sociologies and Anthropologies Science Reviews*, 5 (4), 201-208;
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.60027/ijssr.2025.6288>



interaction, using communication as both the goal and tool for language learning. CLT encourages learners to practice the language in real-life contexts through three stages: presentation, practice, and production. McKinney (2008) highlights active learning activities, such as games, think-pair-share, and concept mapping, which engage students and enhance both comprehension and retention by promoting interaction with the content and peers. Williams (2015) outlines a framework for reading comprehension, emphasizing pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading stages. Reading comprehension involves decoding words and understanding their meaning to analyze and apply information from a text.

The purpose of this research is to investigate the effectiveness of CLT and active learning in improving the reading comprehension abilities of Prathomsuksa 6 students at Ban Nasee School. The study will also assess students' attitudes toward these instructional strategies to determine their impact on student engagement and motivation. By exploring these approaches, the research aims to provide valuable insights into how more dynamic and participatory teaching methods can improve reading comprehension and foster a positive learning experience.

Objectives

1. To study and compare the reading comprehension abilities of Prathomsuksa 6 students before and after the implementation of CLT and active learning activities in their English instruction.
2. To assess the attitudes of Prathomsuksa 6 students towards the use of CLT and active learning activities in enhancing their English reading comprehension skills.

Literature review

The effectiveness of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in language learning is widely recognized. Harmer (2009) highlights the significance of communication in language acquisition, emphasizing the need for interaction over rote memorization of grammar rules. CLT encourages learners to engage in real-life communication tasks, such as role plays, gap activities, and discussions, where they practice language in meaningful contexts. This interaction not only fosters linguistic competence but also enhances pragmatic, discourse, and strategic communication skills. In the CLT framework, the teacher shifts from being a traditional lecturer to a facilitator and assessor, guiding students to actively participate and evaluate their learning. This approach, when coupled with a structured framework like the PPP (Presentation, Practice, Production) method, has been shown to improve both language skills and reading comprehension (Harmer, 2009).

Reading comprehension, a critical skill for academic success, has also been a focus of many scholars. William (2015) presents a model of reading comprehension that divides the process into three key stages: pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading. The pre-reading phase aims to activate students' prior knowledge, introduce new vocabulary, and motivate them to engage with the text. During the while-reading phase, students deepen their understanding by making inferences and drawing connections to real-world contexts. The post-reading phase focuses on reflecting on the material, reinforcing comprehension, and ensuring retention. This cognitive approach to reading comprehension underscores the importance of interaction with the text, where meaning is constructed rather than simply decoded. William's model suggests that educators should engage students with various levels of comprehension, literal, inferential, and applied, to foster deeper learning.

Active learning, as discussed by McKinney (2008), plays a pivotal role in fostering student engagement and critical thinking. Active learning involves various student-centered activities such as problem-solving, cooperative learning, debates, role-playing, and multimedia instruction. These activities require students to actively participate, ensuring a deeper level of cognitive processing. By connecting learning tasks to real-world experiences, active learning helps students retain information more effectively while developing essential skills such as communication and critical thinking. McKinney's research suggests that such activities promote collaboration and reflection, empowering students to take ownership of their learning and engage meaningfully with the material. These benefits make active learning highly effective for enhancing both language and cognitive skills.

The combination of CLT and active learning strategies has the potential to significantly improve English reading comprehension. Harmer's emphasis on communication and interaction can be particularly effective in the context of reading comprehension, as students are encouraged to use language in real-life situations. Similarly, William's model provides a structure for fostering comprehension through systematic engagement with texts. McKinney's active learning strategies add a layer of depth, encouraging students to interact with texts in ways that promote collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving. By incorporating these strategies, educators can create a dynamic classroom environment that engages students in both language learning and comprehension development.

In the context of teaching reading, integrating active learning and CLT principles provides a comprehensive framework for improving reading comprehension skills. According to Harmer (2009), the three-stage approach of Presentation, Practice, and Production (PPP) aligns well with William's reading comprehension stages. In the pre-reading stage, teachers can activate prior knowledge through games and vocabulary-building exercises. The while-reading stage, based on McKinney's active learning methods, encourages students to generate questions and engage in discussions, fostering deeper understanding. In the post-reading stage, activities like concept mapping help reinforce comprehension and ensure students retain the material.

A key challenge in teaching reading comprehension is fostering student engagement, which can be achieved by employing interactive and student-centered methods. The research by McKinney (2008) highlights that activities such as think-pair-share and cooperative learning allow students to share their insights and work together to solve problems. These strategies not only improve comprehension but also help students build a sense of ownership over their learning process. Additionally, activities like Jigsaw and Word Scramble, used in the pre-reading phase, can be effective in preparing students for new content and vocabulary, motivating them to engage with the text and with each other.

The role of the teacher in this approach shifts from being the sole authority in the classroom to a guide who facilitates student interaction and fosters a collaborative learning environment. This shift is crucial for creating a dynamic and engaging classroom atmosphere where students are motivated to learn actively and reflect on their progress. With the support of CLT and active learning strategies, students are encouraged to take risks, make connections, and engage meaningfully with English texts.

Miller (1990) categorizes reading comprehension abilities into four levels. The first level, textually explicit comprehension, involves understanding the meaning directly from the text, such as identifying the main idea, supporting details, or sequencing events. The second level, textually implicit comprehension, requires the reader to infer meaning not explicitly stated in the text, using background knowledge to summarize, predict, and answer questions based on the implied content. Critical implicit comprehension is the third level, where the reader analyzes, interprets, and evaluates the text, distinguishing facts from opinions and understanding metaphors. The highest level, scripturally implicit comprehension, demands a deep understanding of the text and the integration of extensive background knowledge.

In summary, the integration of CLT principles and active learning strategies provides a comprehensive approach to improving English reading comprehension. By creating an interactive, student-centered learning environment, teachers can foster both cognitive and communicative skills in students. This research aims to explore the effectiveness of these approaches in enhancing reading comprehension among Thai students, specifically Prathomsuksa 6 students at Ban Nasee School. Through the application of these methods, the study seeks to contribute valuable insights to the field of English language teaching, with potential implications for enhancing student engagement and achievement in reading comprehension.

Conceptual Framework

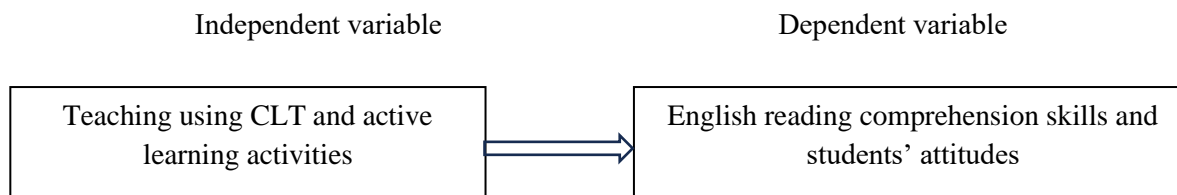


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Methodology

1. Population and Sample: The population for this study consisted of 140 Prathomsuksa 6 students from the Mahathadjadee Schools Network, which includes 14 schools in Ban Phue District, Udon Thani Province, under the Office of Udon Thani Primary Education Service Area 4, during the first semester of the 2024 academic year. The sample for this study comprised 13 Prathomsuksa 6 students from Ban Nasee School, located in Udon Thani Province, who were selected through cluster random sampling. These students participated in the study during the same semester of the 2024 academic year.

2. Research Instruments: The lesson plans for teaching English reading comprehension using CLT and active learning activities consisted of 12 units, each lasting 2 hours, for a total of 24 hours. An English reading comprehension ability test, consisting of 40 multiple-choice items, was used as both a pretest and



posttest to assess the students' reading comprehension ability with CLT and active learning activities. An attitude questionnaire, based on a five-point Likert scale, was employed to measure students' attitudes toward English reading comprehension ability using active learning activities. The questionnaire included 20 items.

3. Data Collection: The goal of this study was to assess the effectiveness of CLT and active learning activities in teaching English reading comprehension ability. Data collection occurred during the first semester of the 2024 academic year, with the following procedures:

1. The students completed a 40-item English reading comprehension pretest, which lasted one hour.

2. The teaching process was implemented over 12 weeks, totaling 24 hours, with 12 lesson plans.

3. A posttest, identical to the pretest, was administered after the completion of the teaching process.

4. An attitude questionnaire was used to evaluate students' perceptions of the teaching methods. This questionnaire was reviewed by three experts for content validity, construct validity, and language accuracy. The 20 items with an Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC) score of 1.00 were selected. The questionnaire was then administered to the students after the teaching program.

5. Statistical analysis was used to examine and summarize the pretest and posttest data, as well as the results from the student attitude survey.

4. Data Analysis: The data analysis in this study used three types of statistics: mean (\bar{X}), percentage, and standard deviation (S.D.) to examine students' English reading comprehension abilities and attitudes. A t-test for dependent samples was applied to compare pretest and post-test scores. The quality of the instruments was evaluated using the IOC index, difficulty index (p), and reliability of the test. Data interpretation was based on average scores from the attitude questionnaire, using the Likert scale to assess students' perceptions of the teaching methods.

Results

The results of Prathomsuksa 6 students' English reading comprehension at Ban Nasee School, before and after learning through CLT and active learning activities, are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 The comparison of the students' mean scores under the pre-test and the post-test.

Number	Pretest		Posttest	
	Score (40 scores)	Percent	Scores (40 scores)	Percent
X	11.61	29.05	32.30	80.77
S.D.	2.75	6.88	3.01	7.52

From Table 1, it was found that the students' pretest mean score on English reading ability was 11.61 or 29.05 percent, and the posttest mean score was 32.30 or 80.77 percent, respectively.

Table 2 shows a comparison of Prathomsuksa 6 students' English reading comprehension scores after learning with CLT and active learning activities, against the set goal of 70 percent, using a one-sample t-test.

Test	n	X	S.D.	70 Percentage	t
Posttest	13	32.30	3.01	294	18.24*

*Significantly different at the .05 level

Table 2 shows that the students' posttest mean score on English reading comprehension ability was 32.30. The results can be explained that the student's English reading comprehension ability after studying English reading comprehension using CLT and active learning activities was significantly different at the .05 level. The post-test score was significantly higher than the set criterion of 70 percent.

Table 3 shows the comparison of Prathomsuksa 6 students' English reading comprehension scores before and after learning with CLT and active learning activities, using a t-test for Dependent Samples.

Test	n	X	S.D.	Percentage	t
Pretest	13	11.61	2.75	29.05	18.24*
Posttest	13	32.30	3.01	80.77	

*Significantly different at the .05 level



Table 3 shows that the students' pretest mean score on English reading comprehension ability was 11.61 or 29.05 percent, and the posttest was 32.30 or 80.77 percent. The results explain that the student's English reading comprehension ability before and after studying English reading comprehension using CLT and active learning activities was significantly different at the .05 level. The posttest score was significantly higher than that of the pretest.

Table 4 Students' attitude towards teaching English reading comprehension using CLT and active learning activities

Items	Attitude Questionnaire	\bar{x}	S.D.	Interpretation
1	Learning English reading comprehension through language teaching using CLT and active learning activities helps students better understand the content they read.	4.31	0.61	Good
2	Teaching English reading through language teaching using CLT and active learning activities is an activity that generates interest and stimulates students to want to learn more.	4.62	0.74	Very good
3	English reading comprehension using CLT and active learning activities assists the students in systematically connecting with the text.	4.77	0.42	Very good
4	Answering questions based on images aids students in linking their existing background knowledge with the material they are about to read.	4.77	0.42	Very good
5	Teaching vocabulary during pre-reading activities aids in a better understanding of the reading text.	4.54	0.50	Very good
6	Teaching examples of structures and sentences that teachers provide in pre-reading activities are beneficial to students' understanding of English reading content.	4.38	0.74	Good
7	Reviewing vocabulary through rearranging the alphabet assists students in enhancing their retention of the vocabulary to be utilized in the reading passage.	4.31	0.72	Good
8	Making the questions related to the text in Worksheet 1 helps students to better comprehend the reading passage.	4.54	0.63	Very good
9	The activity of summarizing the mind map in Worksheet 2 helps enhance English reading skills for better understanding among students.	4.85	0.36	Very good
10	Engaging in discussions and exchanging opinions with partners helps students achieve a better understanding of the content of the reading passage.	4.69	0.46	Very good
*11	Summarizing the reading text proves to be too difficult.	4.62	0.49	Very good
12	Presenting the summary of the reading text in front of the class fosters self-confidence.	4.62	0.49	Very good
13	Providing feedback to groups after their presentation of summaries is both creative and engaging.	4.62	0.62	Very good
*14	Completing English reading comprehension quizzes is dull and does not aid in understanding the reading text.	4.31	0.46	Good
15	The activity of providing feedback to groups presenting their summary work in class is creative and engaging.	4.92	0.27	Very good
*16	Reading in English for comprehension through CLT and active learning activities did not enhance students' vocabulary and expressions, and could not be applied to reading comprehension.	4.62	0.49	Very good
17	Group activities help students exchange information and ideas with their partners, and students enjoy learning more.	4.85	0.36	Very good



Items	Attitude Questionnaire	\bar{x}	S.D.	Interpretation
18	Students prefer this learning technique for reading comprehension in English over traditional reading instruction methods.	4.46	0.63	Good
19	There are individual and group assessments of student learning outcomes.	4.92	0.27	Very good
20	The assessment covers the content that has been taught.	4.46	0.75	Good
Overview**		4.15	0.52	

Table 4 shows that the average score of students' attitudes towards learning English reading comprehension with Communicative Language Teaching and active learning activities was 4.15. This indicates that students had a positive attitude towards the teaching methods, at a good level.

Discussion

This study aimed to examine the impact of CLT and active learning activities on Prathomsuksa 6 students' English reading comprehension ability. The study employed a one-group pretest-posttest experimental design, where students' reading comprehension skills were measured before and after the teaching intervention. The results were as follows:

1. English Reading Comprehension Ability

The study showed significant improvement in students' English reading comprehension scores after participating in CLT and active learning activities. Pretest scores were low, with an average of 11.62 (29.05%), while posttest scores rose to 32.31 (80.78%). This supports the first hypothesis that students' reading comprehension abilities would improve. Before the intervention, students struggled with understanding and summarizing texts, mainly due to a lack of background knowledge. However, after the intervention, students showed a marked improvement, likely due to the interactive nature of CLT and active learning, which promoted deeper engagement. This finding aligns with Harmer (2009) and Williams (2015), whose frameworks emphasize structured activities like pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading to enhance comprehension. Similarly, McKinney (2008) supports using games, think-pair-share, and concept mapping to facilitate learning, which was evident in the students' improved performance. The study suggests that the levels of reading comprehension proposed by Miller (1990) effectively align with the students' reading abilities, as assessed through the English Reading Comprehension Test. Applying textually explicit, textually implicit, and critical implicit comprehension levels provides a comprehensive framework to evaluate student performance. These levels appear to offer a meaningful way to assess and understand varying degrees of comprehension in learners, making them suitable for this study's context.

2. Comparison with the Set Criterion

The study also revealed that students' post-test scores exceeded the set criterion of 70%. With pretest scores averaging 11.33 (28.33%) and posttest scores rising to 32.31 (80.78%), the results confirm the second hypothesis that CLT and active learning activities would lead to a substantial improvement in students' reading comprehension.

3. Students' Attitudes Towards Teaching Methods

The students' attitudes towards the CLT and active learning activities were also positive. The questionnaire results, measured on a five-point Likert scale, indicated that students enjoyed the interactive and engaging nature of the lessons. Group activities also helped students exchange information and ideas among friends, making learning more enjoyable as they collaborated in reading and sharing their opinions with their partners, as seen in item 17 of the questionnaire, with a mean of 4.85. Furthermore, the activity of providing feedback to the groups presenting their summaries in class was creative and engaging, allowing students to share their opinions, as shown in item 15 of the questionnaire, with a mean of 4.92.

Conclusion

The study on the comparison of pretest and posttest scores on English reading comprehension ability and Prathomsuksa 6 students' attitudes towards teaching English reading comprehension using Communicative Language Teaching and active learning activities yielded significant findings. First, the students' posttest mean score of 32.31 (80.78%) was substantially higher than their pretest score of 11.62 (29.05%), surpassing the 70% criterion, with a statistically significant improvement at the 0.5 level. Second,

the students expressed a positive attitude towards the teaching approach, with an average score of 4.15, indicating a favorable response to the use of Communicative Language Teaching and active learning activities in enhancing their English reading comprehension.

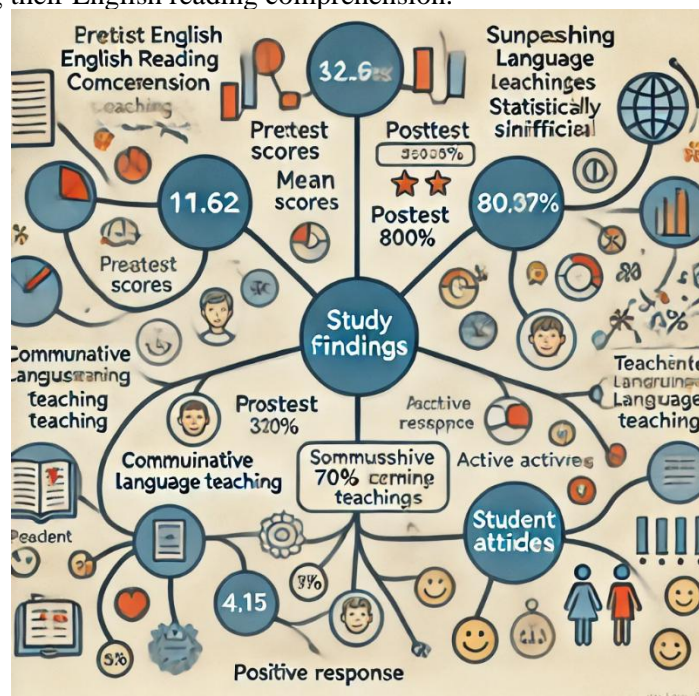


Figure 2 Comparison of Pretest and post-test scores and Attitudes toward teaching Approaches

1. Overview of the Study

The study's main objective was to assess how well Prathomsuksa 6 students' attitudes were shaped and how their English reading comprehension improved when Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was integrated with active learning activities. The study sought to assess the effect of these cutting-edge teaching strategies on student outcomes by comparing pretest and posttest results and polling student opinions.

2. Pretest and Posttest Comparison

The model shows that student performance has significantly improved. A baseline proficiency in English reading comprehension was shown by the pretest scores, which averaged 11.62 (29.05%) before to intervention. Following the intervention, scores significantly increased to an average of 32.31 (80.78%), exceeding the study's 70% threshold. The statistical significance of this development highlights how effective the instructional strategies were.

3. Teaching Methodologies Employed

Active learning exercises and Communicative Language Teaching, which emphasize interactive and contextual student engagement, were used in the study. These approaches place a strong emphasis on active engagement, peer interaction, and practical usage, all of which probably helped students' reading comprehension. The effectiveness of these methods shows how they can improve language learning in educational environments.

4. Student Attitudes

An average attitude score of 4.15 out of 5 indicated that students' opinions of the teaching methodology were overwhelmingly positive. This suggests that the use of CLT and active learning has been well received. The importance of positive attitudes in educational practice is reinforced by the fact that they are frequently associated with sustained academic performance and enhanced motivation.

Recommendation



1. Recommendation for this study

1.1 CLT and active learning activities into their reading ability have been shown to improve students' reading comprehension and surpass the 70 percent goal. By using these methods, students' skills, confidence, and motivation are significantly enhanced. This approach leads to better overall performance in reading comprehension.

1.2 The positive attitude of students towards CLT and active learning activities it is recommended that English teachers continue using these methods to engage and motivate students. These strategies effectively make learning enjoyable and encourage active participation. Maintaining the use of active learning in reading lessons will further enhance student interest and improve learning outcomes.

2. Recommendations for further study

2.1 The researchers should explore the application of CLT and active learning activities in improving students' listening, reading, and writing skills, as these areas are actively engaged during the activities.

2.2 The researchers should focus on methods for teaching English reading skills through active learning activities, targeting students at all educational levels to determine the most effective approaches.

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