Effects of Intensive and Extensive Reading Instruction on Thai Primary Students' English Reading Ability

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the effects of integrated intensive and extensive reading instruction (IIERI, hereafter) on Thai primary school students' English reading ability and to find out the students' opinions towards the instruction. Eleven Thai students studying at the primary education level were purposefully selected to participate in this study. The students took a pretest in the first week; then, they received the implementation of the integrated intensive and extensive reading instruction (IIERI) for ten weeks. They were subsequently administered a posttest and were interviewed individually at the end of the study. The quantitative results of the students' English reading ability in the English reading ability pretest and posttest revealed a statistically significant difference of p < .01, indicating that the students' English reading ability in terms of their English vocabulary knowledge and their English reading comprehension improved significantly after receiving IIERI. Furthermore, the qualitative results obtained from the interviews revealed the students held positive opinions towards IIERI: the students

	enjoyed receiving IIERI; the students saw the improvement in their English language knowledge and skills as a result of receiving IIERI; the students' reading habits changed after receiving IIERI; and the students recognized the benefits of IIERI.

1. INTRODUCTION

In Thailand, English is recognized as a foreign language and used as means of communication between Thais and foreigners. All four language skills – listening, speaking, reading, and writing are necessary for establishing a successful communication. Lacking any of these skills can cause barriers to communication. Therefore, it is important for Thai learners of English to develop these skills so that they can communicate in English effectively.

In local Thai schools, English is compulsory at all educational levels while other foreign languages are left to the institution's discretion. The teaching and learning objectives are to enable learners to obtain favorable attitudes towards a foreign language; to enable learners to acquire the ability to use a foreign language for communicating in different situations; to enable learners to seek knowledge from various resources; to enable learners to engage in a livelihood; and to enable learners to pursue further education at higher levels (Ministry of Education, 2008).

Unfortunately, many Thai students who receive English education throughout their school life still do not perform well when it comes to using English – many cannot communicate in English effectively and many cannot do well on English exams. This aspect is indicated in the most recent results of the Ordinary National Educational Test (O-NET) reported by the National Institute of Education Testing Service (NIETS) of Thailand, revealing that the average scores of English tests in the three educational levels including primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary levels throughout Thailand were below 50% (NIETS, 2020).

The low English ability of Thai students may be caused by the fact that they have low English reading proficiency. Having the ability to read in English provides opportunities for learners of English to develop English competency (Grabe, 2009); and having strong English reading skills allows English language learners to achieve a greater progress in learning English as well as learning in other academic contents (Anderson, 1999). This means without sufficient English reading ability, Thai students may

experience learning problems – for example, they may not be able to read and understand texts in textbooks, they may misunderstand the lessons, and they may fail English exams. Moreover, English reading ability and skills are sometimes needed in real-life situations or in real-world contexts. Therefore, possessing strong English reading ability, without a doubt, is useful for all Thai students.

As a primary school teacher, by rethinking my approach to teaching English, I may be able to develop and improve my students' English language knowledge and ability, particularly in the area of English reading as its role is large. Normally, in an English reading class where intensive reading (IR) is employed, the instruction focuses on teaching and learning target vocabulary, phonology, grammar points, and reading strategies through the use of short reading texts presented in school textbooks followed by reading comprehension exercises and for homework, students are usually assigned to read another reading passage in their textbooks and answer follow-up reading comprehension questions. In such circumstances, students have no freedom to choose what to read and/or what to do with the texts and have limited opportunities to practice their reading skills after class. While in an English reading class where an extensive reading (ER) approach is employed, the focus is usually on engaging students in reading graded readers or other supplementary reading materials extensively. In such classes, some important aspects for teaching and learning English may be omitted and no formal linkage between in-class reading and out-of-class reading is provided. Realizing the fact that employing either IR or ER alone may not be sufficient for developing the students' English reading ability, a new effective and appropriate English reading instructional method is needed. By combining IR with ER and establishing an explicit link between the two, students will have chances to learn, acquire, and practice their English language knowledge and skills both inside and outside the classroom as well as having opportunities to read extensively in and out of class and to read what they find interesting. Given these problems, it is of my interest to study the effectiveness of integrating intensive reading instruction and extensive reading instruction in teaching English to Thai primary students whose English proficiency is at the beginner level. As suggested by Anderson (2008), one principle for developing reading ability and skills of low proficiency level learners is to provide both intensive and extensive reading instruction.

After reviewing the relevant literature, many scholars posit that providing English reading instruction that combines IR and ER can develop the learners' reading skills and ability in the target language (Hedge, 2000; Brown, 2007; Anderson, 2008; Grabe & Stoller, 2013). However, very few research studies related to this area of inquiry are available. A number of research studies on the effects of combining IR and ER conducted outside Thailand can be seen (see Al-Homoud & Schmitt, 2009; Miftah, 2013; Jafarpour, 2014; Teng, 2015; Mart, 2015; Suk, 2016; Park, 2017) but, such research on this topic are rare in Thailand. Existing research studies related to IR and ER conducted in Thailand such as the study of Tamrackitkun (2010), Phadung and Charumanee (2011), Kaewinta (2012), Patanasorn (2013), Charumanee (2014), Pattatesang (2016), Wisaijorn (2017), and Panprom and Adipattaranan (2017) tend to focus on the effects of employing ER or of inserting ER into a regular English course, not the effects of combing IR and ER. And, only a few of them were conducted with Thai primary students (see Phadung & Charumanee, 2011; Kaewinta, 2012; Pattatesang, 2016). Taking into consideration these limitations and to fill these gaps in the current research, this study investigated the effects of integrating IR with ER on Thai sixth grade students' English reading ability and tried to find out the students' opinions toward this new method of English instruction.

In this study, the researcher carried out experimental research with Thai sixth grade students enrolled at a private school in the South of Thailand. The researcher employed the integration of intensive and extensive reading instruction, following Anderson's (2008) principles for teaching reading to beginning proficiency level learners and principles for promoting ER proposed by Day and Bamford (1998) and Bamford and Day (2010). In implementing IIERI, I, the researcher who was also the teacher of the class explicitly taught English vocabulary, phonology, and reading strategies using short English texts and related reading tasks and activities. Also, the students were involved in reading longer but easier English texts that they selected to read and they were encouraged to apply and make use of the knowledge and skills gained during the IR instruction when engaging in reading independently. Once the students finished their reading, they completed related reading tasks and activities, of which, some of them were similar to what had been done earlier during the IR instruction. IIERI continued for the period of ten weeks. The researcher examined the effects of IIERI by comparing the students' pretest and

posttest scores obtained before and after the implementation of IIERI – the quantitative research results revealed the extent to which IIERI developed and improved Thai primary students' English reading ability in terms of their English vocabulary knowledge and their English reading comprehension. The qualitative research results obtained from eleven semi-structured one-on-one interviews helped the researcher understand the students' opinions towards IIERI.

1.1 Research Objectives

This study has two objectives as follows:

1. To develop Thai primary students' English reading ability through the integrated intensive and extensive reading instruction.

2. To investigate Thai primary students' opinions towards the integrated intensive and extensive reading instruction.

1.2 Research Questions

This study has two research questions as follows:

1. How effective is the integrated intensive and extensive reading instruction in improving the students' English reading ability?

1.1 To what extent does the implemented integrated intensive and extensive reading instruction improve the students' English vocabulary knowledge?

1.2 To what extent does the implemented integrated intensive and extensive reading instruction improve the students' English reading comprehension?

2. What are the students' opinions towards the integrated intensive and extensive reading instruction?

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Five Principles for Teaching Reading to Beginning Learners

Anderson (2008) suggests five principles for teaching reading to beginner learners of a second and/or foreign language as follows:

First, teachers should use reading materials that are appropriate for learners. Anderson (2008) introduces guidelines for selecting appropriate reading materials based on Betts' (1957, as cited in Anderson, 2008) four levels of reading. If the instructional goal is to develop the learners' reading fluency, reading materials should be at the "basal reading level" or "*i* - 1" in terms of Krashen's input hypothesis. Meanwhile, if the instructional goal is to teach reading strategies, reading materials should be at the "capacity reading level" or "*i*" in terms of Krashen's input hypothesis. Lastly, if the instructional goal is to teach vocabulary, reading materials should be at the "instructional reading level" or "*i* + 1" in terms of Krashen's input hypothesis. This implies that reading materials for ER should be easy and comprehensible to students so that they can independently work with the texts without much difficulty whereas reading materials for IR should be at or a little beyond the students' current ability level so that they will have opportunities to develop the target reading strategies and vocabulary.

Second, teachers should give balanced instruction of bottom-up reading processing, top-down reading processing, and interactive reading processing.

Third, teachers should explicitly teach reading strategies and encourage learners to apply reading strategies when engaging in reading either in or out of the classroom. Reading strategies that should be taught to beginning proficiency level learners include activating prior background knowledge, asking questions, making predictions, skimming for main ideas, identifying main ideas, and scanning for specific information.

Fourth, teachers should develop the learners' vocabulary knowledge and skills by teaching high-frequency words, synonyms, antonyms, and word families of target words.

Fifth, teachers should combine IR and ER in instruction. For IR, the focus is on teaching and learning reading skills, vocabulary, and phonology using short reading texts and reading comprehension exercises. While for ER, the focus is on encouraging learners to read longer reading texts with the purpose of gaining new information and/or enjoyment. Additionally, "extensive reading provides opportunities to practice skills introduced during intensive reading instruction, and it can lead to increased enjoyment of reading." (Anderson, 2008, p. 9)

2.2 Intensive Reading Instruction

IR refers to the use of written texts to develop and maximize one's reading comprehension skills. In IR instruction, tasks and activities are designed for explicit teaching and learning of reading strategies and reading comprehension skills that learners need to be well-equipped with so that they can apply them while reading independently outside the classroom (Anderson, 1999). During IR instruction, the emphasis is on teaching and learning useful reading strategies, target vocabulary, and certain phonological aspects using short written texts along with reading comprehension exercises (Anderson, 2008). In other words, IR provides opportunities for students to learn and acquire the target language knowledge and skills that can be vital tools for students to achieve a successful engagement in reading both in and out of the classroom.

2.3 Extensive Reading Instruction

ER is an approach to language teaching, which requires learners to independently read extensive written texts that are easy and interesting serving various reading purposes (Day & Bamford,1998; Bamford & Day, 2010). ER can also be referred to as a process in which learners engage in reading large quantities of written texts that are self-selected with the focus of reading for enjoyment and that the selected texts should be easy and comprehensible to learners containing 5% or less unknown words (Nation, 2013). In other words, in employing ER, students should be involved in reading great amounts of written texts that are easy enough so that students can read and make sense of the texts on their own and that the texts need to be interesting and attractive matching the students' reading interests and purposes for reading – this way, students will feel enjoyment and become motivated and want to engage in reading.

The benefits of ER are widely discussed by scholars and researchers. Grabe (1991) claims that learners learning a second and/or foreign language should read extensively as engaging learners in long concentrated silent reading periods can build up the learners' language awareness of the target language vocabulary and grammar; can develop and improve the learners' reading comprehension skills; can expand the learners' background knowledge; and can increase the learners' motivation and confidence. Grabe (2009) presents existing research

studies, revealing that ER can improve the learners' reading comprehension and vocabulary and that ER is motivating to learners. Likewise, Nation (2013) asserts that ER can aid learners in developing and acquiring reading fluency and vocabulary knowledge in a foreign language. The power of ER is large – it can lead to the improvement in the learners' reading ability and other language skills, an increase in the learners' vocabulary and topical and/or world knowledge, and the enhancement in the learners' positive attitudes towards reading as well as their motivation to read (Day & Bamford, 1998).

2.4 The Integration of Intensive and Extensive Reading Instruction

Many scholars and researchers in the field of English language teaching recommend language teachers to include both IR and ER in English instruction as they are effective pedagogical approaches that can be used to develop and improve the target language reading ability and skills of learners (Hedge, 2000; Brown, 2007; Anderson, 2008; Grabe & Stoller, 2013). In addition, Day and Bamford (1998) suggest that ER can be integrated into a regular language course and ER can enhance the learners' reading ability, vocabulary knowledge, topical and/or world knowledge, linguistic competence, and positive attitudes towards reading in the target language. Similarly, Hedge (2000) and Anderson (2008) agree that IR and ER should be integrated and linked so that learners will have opportunities to learn and acquire new language knowledge and skills during IR instruction and will have plenty of opportunities to read extensively and to apply and practice their newly developed language knowledge and skills while engaging in ER. Following this principle, the learners' target language knowledge and skills, particularly reading skills are likely to be developed and enhanced.

To conclude, IR has been proven to be beneficial to students to some extent – it provides opportunities for students to learn and extend their knowledge and skills in the target language. The students' knowledge of the target language vocabulary, phonology, reading strategies as well as other related language aspects can be strengthened from receiving explicit instruction during IR. Nonetheless, fostering IR alone may be insufficient for developing the students' target language knowledge and skills on a long-term basis as the students' learning may stop once the class has ended or once students leave the school. To increase opportunities for

learning and for enhancing the students' target language knowledge and skills, particularly in the area of reading, students should be involved in learning to read and in practicing reading while in class with guidance from teachers as well as reading and in applying and reinforcing their developed knowledge and skills through engaging in reading extensively and independently outside the classroom. By adding ER into a second and/or foreign language teaching and learning situation, students can be exposed to great amounts of reading, providing them with great knowledge and opportunities for reading for pleasure as well as for developing and improving one's own target language knowledge and skills. Hence, integrating IR and ER in English instruction and making explicit connections between them permit students to learn, obtain, and exercise their target language knowledge and skills both inside and outside the classroom; to connect in-class teaching and learning with out-of-class reading, allowing them to read independently and effectively and to achieve successful comprehension of a text; to read what they want to read either for enjoyment or for information; and to take responsibility for their own learning. This way, students learn to read and can read without the need for help and support from the teacher and thus, become more independent and life-long readers.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employed an embedded experimental mixed methods design, and a one-group pre-test post-test design was used. Creswell (2014) states that the embedded mixed methods design allows researchers to collect one or more forms of quantitative and qualitative data within a larger research design such as an experimental study, providing different types of data to research questions and that data can be collected before, during, and/or after the experiment. In an embedded experimental mixed methods design, the quantitative study predominates while the qualitative data is included to answer secondary research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In this study, the research participants took a pretest, received the treatment (IIERI), took a posttest, and had an individual interview. Quantitative data obtained from comparing pretest and posttest scores provided answers to Research Questions 1, 1.1, and 1.2

while qualitative data obtained from eleven semi-structured one-on-one interviews provided answers to Research Question 2.

3.2 Research Participants

A total of eleven sixth grade students, including 7 males and 4 females, aged between eleven and twelve years old, participated in the study.

3.3 Sampling Procedure

This study employed an intact group design. The intact group design is often used when researching a regularly occurring class in a real-world educational context and the intact group is already-formed and preexisting before the study occurs and members of the intact group are not randomly selected and assigned (Nunan & Bailey, 2009).

This study was conducted in a private school in the South of Thailand during the second semester of the academic year 2019, from November 2019 to February 2020. There were 160 primary school students enrolling at the school at the time of the study. Of that amount, all of sixth grade students (a total of eleven students) were selected as the research participants in this study on the basis of their shared characteristics and subjects to availability: their mother language was Thai; they studied English as a school subject; they were English language beginner learners; they had limited opportunities to meet or use English outside the classroom; and they studied English with the researcher during the time of the study.

Note that in the school where the research was conducted, there was only one classroom for the sixth grade level and the total number of the students was eleven students. The researcher is well aware of this research limitation emerging from the small sample size.

3.4 Research Instruments

3.4.1 A Reading Ability Test

A reading ability test was used as a pretest and a posttest. It was designed to measure the students' English reading ability including their English vocabulary knowledge and their English reading comprehension. The test consisted of four main parts with a total of 40

questions. The first part tested the students' ability to identify the meaning of English words (10 matching items); the second part tested the students' ability to recognize English words in context (5 multiple-choice items); the third part tested the students' ability to use English words in context (5 fill-in-the-blank-space items); and the fourth part tested the students' English reading comprehension (5 reading comprehension passages with 20 multiple-choice items).

In developing the English vocabulary test sections, the tested words (20 words) were systematically selected from the Vocabulary Lists for Primary School Levels published by English Language Institute, Office of the Basic Education Commission, Ministry of Education (2016) – the researcher selected every fifth word from the list and then, selected the ones that were introduced in the lesson plans. In developing the English reading comprehension test section, the tested passages (5 passages) were randomly selected from a government English textbook for the sixth grade called "Project: Play and Learn Student's Book 6" published by Office of the Basic Education Commission, Ministry of Education (2016).

To establish the validity of the test, the researcher sent a copy of the test to the panel of three experts (two were Thais and one was a native speaker of English) for validation – they were asked to examine the content of the test and to check if the test tested the students' English vocabulary ability and English reading comprehension ability. Small revisions on the language of the test were made based on the experts' comments and suggestions. After that, the researcher piloted the test with sixth grade students studying in another private school in the same province. To establish the reliability of the test, the researcher used the formula KR-20 to find out the internal consistency of the test (the KR-20 score was 0.99).

3.4.2 Semi-Structured One-on-One Interviews

Each of the eleven research participants received a semi-structured one-on-one interview in Thai. The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. Excerpts presented in this article were translated from Thai to English by the researcher. Data obtained from the interviews provided solid evidence of opinions of the students towards IIERI.

To establish the validity of the interview questions, the researcher sent a copy of the interview questions to the panel of three experts for validation – they were asked to examine the content of the

interview questions and to check if the interview questions were valid. The interview questions were revised based on the experts' comments and suggestions. After that, the researcher piloted the interview questions with sixth grade students studying in another private school in the same province. A few revisions were made to make the interview questions clearer and easier to understand from the views of the students.

3.4.3 A 20-Hour Lesson Plan

A 20-hour lesson plan, which comprised IR and ER instruction (see Figure 1) was used to facilitate the teaching and learning throughout the period of the study.

FIGURE 1

The Integrated Intensive and Extensive Reading Instruction (IIERI)
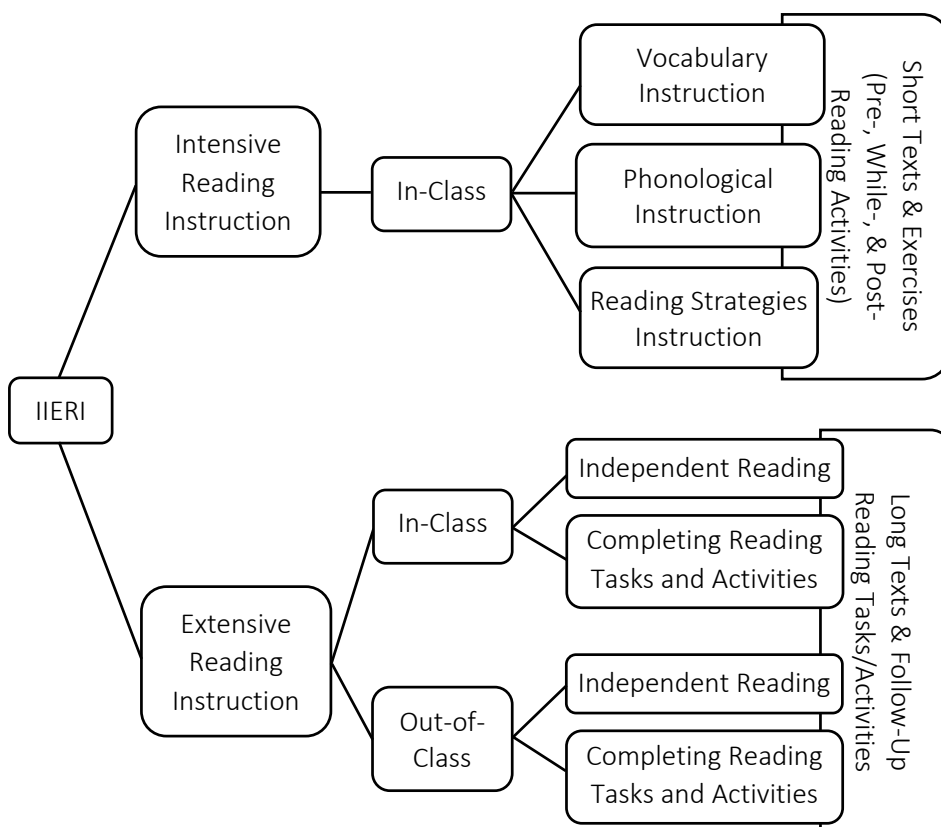
The researcher met the students twice a week for the total of ten weeks of instruction. Each lesson lasted one hour. The class time was devoted for both IR and ER instruction.

During the IR instruction, in each lesson, the researcher explicitly taught target English vocabulary before, while, and/or after engaging the students in reading using wide-ranging vocabulary teaching activities such as using word cards, brainstorming related words, locating words, and guessing the meaning of unknown and/or difficult words using available contextual clues; the researcher explicitly taught the correct pronunciation and related information of target English words; and the researcher explicitly taught and modeled how to use reading strategies including activating and using background knowledge, drawing and guessing the meaning of unknown and/or difficult words by observing available contextual clues, making predictions about in the texts, asking questions related to information in the texts in order to check comprehension, skimming the texts for main ideas, identifying main ideas in the texts, and scanning the texts for specific information. The researcher involved the students in reading short English written texts and trained them in exercising and applying the taught and learned language knowledge and reading strategies while reading. After reading, the students had to complete some follow-up reading comprehension exercises and/or related reading tasks and activities such as retelling the story, summarizing the texts in writing and orally, discussing the texts and sharing ideas related to the texts, answering questions, filling in the worksheets, and doing some drawing and coloring tasks.

The ER instruction occurred both inside and outside the classroom. During the in-class instruction, the researcher presented two longer but easier English written texts of the same topic for the students to select and read for ER. Once the text was selected, the researcher and the students previewed and talked about the selected text. Depending on the time available, certain amounts of class time were devoted for reading the selected ER text in class. Once the class time was over, the students were asked to continue their reading at home and were encouraged to apply the knowledge and skills introduced in class when reading independently outside the classroom. Some reading tasks and activities similar to what had been carried out during the IR instruction were assigned to the students with an intention to connect IR with ER and to let the students practice the knowledge and skills received during IR

instruction while engaging in ER activities. Examples of the ER activities done out of class included reading and keeping reading logs, writing a story summary, drawing a picture summarizing the story, drawing and writing short descriptions of the scene in the story most liked, making a personalized bookmark, answering questions, and filling in the worksheets. Examples of the ER activities done in class included voting for the ER texts, previewing and reading the selected ER texts, retelling the story, summarizing the texts in oral, sharing ER experience and comments, and giving an individual and a group presentation.

For validation, the 20-hour lesson plan was sent to the panel of three experts to measure its content validity. Some improvements were made to make it more feasible and appropriate to the time permitted.

3.4.4 Reading Materials

In this study, reading materials were carefully selected following the principles for selecting appropriate reading materials of Anderson (2008). Another principle for text selection was that texts used for ER should be easy, interesting, and attractive to students so that students can read and comprehend the texts by themselves and can practice the target language knowledge and skills without feeling overwhelmed by text difficulty and also that the students' motivation to read English could increase. As suggested by Day and Bamford (1998), texts designed and used for ER should be interesting, easy, and a little below or at the language level of learners so that learners can read the texts independently without the need for assistance from the teacher or help from a dictionary. Following the above principles, two sets of reading materials, the IR and ER materials were selected and used in this study.

The first set consisted of English written texts designed to be used for IR during the IR instruction. They were narrative and expository texts. They were varied in genres and topics, which they matched the students' interests and were relevant to sixth grade students as written in the Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (Ministry of Education, 2008). They were short (lower than 500 words). They were at or a little beyond the students' current English ability level (Flesch reading ease scores of the texts were between 70 and 87). Note that prior to selecting the texts, the researcher calculated the average Flesch reading ease scores of English passages presented in the government English textbook for Thai

sixth grade students and in the commercial English textbook for Thai sixth grade students in use in the school where this study was conducted. The results were used to establish the mean value of readability scores so that the appropriate reading materials could be selected.

The second set consisted of English written texts designed to be used for ER during the ER instruction. Like IR texts, ER texts consisted of narrative and expository texts and they were varied in genres and topics suiting the students' various reading interests and their grade level. However, the ER texts were longer (more than 500 words); and they were at or below the students' current English ability level (Flesch reading ease scores of the texts were 87 and above). This way, the students would want to engage in ER and would be able to read and comprehend their selected ER texts independently outside the classroom.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Research Findings in Response to Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asks, "How effective is the integrated intensive and extensive reading instruction in improving the students' English reading ability?" To answer the first research question, a paired-samples t-test was conducted. The total pretest and posttest scores of the students were calculated for the mean scores ($\overline{X}$) and the standard deviations (S.D.) and then, the mean scores of the pretest and posttest were compared and analyzed using SPSS for Windows in order to examine whether there was a statistically significant difference. The analysis of the results revealed that the students' posttest scores increased significantly after receiving IIERI for ten weeks, implying that the students had made a substantial improvement in their English reading ability after participating in the study.

As indicated in Table 1, the mean scores of the pretest and the posttest for the students' English reading ability were significantly different at the .01 level; the students' posttest mean score ($\overline{X}$ = 22.91, S.D. = 8.25) was statistically significantly higher than the students' pretest mean score ($\overline{X}$ = 13, S.D. = 6.25); the t-value for the comparison of the students' pretest and posttest mean scores was t(10) = 9.78 with p ‹ .01, which is beyond the critical boundary of t = 3.169;

TABLE 1

Comparison of the Students' English Reading Ability Before and After Receiving the Implementation of the Integrated Intensive and Extensive Reading Instruction (IIERI)

	N	Pretest $\overline{X}$	Pretest S.D.	Posttest $\overline{X}$	Posttest S.D.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Total Test Scores	11	13	6.25	22.91	8.25	9.78*	10	.000

*p ‹ .01

and the associated significance level was .000. When subtracting the students' posttest mean score ($\overline{X}$ = 22.91) from the students' pretest mean score ($\overline{X}$ = 13), it revealed a margin of improvement of +9.91. These results mean there was an increase in the students' English reading ability posttest scores after receiving IIERI for ten weeks, implying that IIERI was effective in improving the students' overall English reading ability.

4.2 Research Findings in Response to Research Question 1.1

Research Question 1.1 asks, "To what extent does the implemented integrated intensive and extensive reading instruction improve the students' English vocabulary knowledge?" To answer this research question, a paired-samples *t*-test was conducted to measure the students' English vocabulary pretest and posttest scores (the total scores of Test Sections 1, 2, and 3 combined). The mean scores ($\overline{X}$) and the standard deviations (S.D.) of the pre- and post- English vocabulary test scores were calculated and compared in order to examine whether there was a statistically significant difference. The analysis of the results revealed a significant shift in the students' English vocabulary posttest scores after receiving IIERI for ten weeks, implying that the students had made a substantial improvement in their English vocabulary knowledge after participating in the study.

As indicated in Table 2, the paired-samples *t*-test result revealed a statistically significant difference between the students' English vocabulary posttest mean score ($\overline{X}$ = 12, S.D. = 4.34)

TABLE 2

Comparison of the Students' English Vocabulary Knowledge Before and After Receiving the Implementation of the Integrated Intensive and Extensive Reading Instruction (IIERI)

	N	Pretest $\overline{X}$	Pretest S.D.	Posttest $\overline{X}$	Posttest S.D.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Vocab Test Scores	11	5.45	3.01	12.00	4.34	8.67*	10	.000

*p ‹ .01

and the students' English vocabulary pretest mean score ($\overline{X}$ = 5.45, S.D. = 3.01) at the .01 level; the t-value for the comparison of the mean scores of the pretest and posttest was t(10) = 8.67 with p ‹ .01, which is beyond the critical boundary of t = 3.169; and the associated significance level was .000. When subtracting the English vocabulary posttest mean score ($\overline{X}$ = 12) from the English vocabulary pretest mean score ($\overline{X}$ = 5.45), it revealed a margin of improvement of +6.55. These results mean there was an increase in the students' posttest scores of the English vocabulary test sections after receiving IIERI for ten weeks, implying that IIERI was effective in improving the students' English vocabulary knowledge.

4.3 Research Findings in Response to Research Question 1.2

Research Question 1.2 asks, "To what extent does the implemented integrated intensive and extensive reading instruction improve the students' English reading comprehension?" To answer this research question, a paired-samples *t*-test was conducted to measure the students' English reading comprehension pretest and posttest scores (the total scores of Test Section 4). The mean scores ($\overline{X}$) and the standard deviations (S.D.) of the pre- and post- English reading comprehension test scores were calculated and compared in order to examine whether there was a statistically significant difference. The analysis of the results revealed a significant shift in the students' English reading comprehension posttest scores, implying that the students had made a substantial improvement in their English reading comprehension after participating in the study.

TABLE 3

Comparison of the Students' English Reading Comprehension Before and After Receiving the Implementation of the Integrated Intensive and Extensive Reading Instruction (IIERI)

	N	Pretest $\overline{X}$	Pretest S.D.	Posttest $\overline{X}$	Posttest S.D.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Reading Test Scores	11	7.55	3.70	10.91	4.25	5.41*	10	.000

*p ‹ .01

As indicated in Table 3, the paired-samples *t*-test result revealed a statistically significant difference between the students' English reading comprehension posttest mean score ($\overline{X}$ = 10.91, S.D. = 4.25) and the students' English reading comprehension pretest mean score ($\overline{X}$ = 7.55, S.D. = 3.70) at the .01 level; the t-value for the comparison of the mean scores of the pretest and posttest was t(10) = 5.41 with p ‹ .01, which is beyond the critical boundary of t = 3.169; and the associated significance level was .000. When subtracting the posttest mean score ($\overline{X}$ = 10.91) from the pretest mean score ($\overline{X}$ = 7.55), it revealed a margin of improvement of +3.36. These results mean there was an increase in the students' posttest scores of the English reading comprehension test section after receiving IIERI for ten weeks, implying that IIERI was effective in improving the students' English reading comprehension.

4.4 Research Findings in Response to Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asks, "What are the students' opinions towards the integrated intensive and extensive reading instruction?" To answer this question, the researcher performed qualitative analysis of the data obtained from eleven semi-structured one-on-one interviews conducted with each of the eleven students. The research findings revealed that opinions of the eleven students towards IIERI were mostly positive – the students enjoyed having a chance to read the texts that suited their interests and their English ability level; the students enjoyed having a chance to participate in a variety of teaching and learning activities; the students felt that their English language knowledge and skills improved

after receiving IIERI; the students felt that their English reading habits changed in a positive way after receiving IIERI; and the students recognized the benefits of IIERI.

TABLE 4

Students' Opinions of the Integrated Intensive and Extensive Reading Instruction (IIERI)

Category	Students' Comments
Enjoyment of Texts	*"They (IR texts) were fun. I got to read tales as well as non-fictions."* *"I think they (IR texts) were fun. There were various knowledge and viewpoints."* *"They (IR texts) were fun and easy to understand. They were appropriate to kids."* *"They (ER texts) were fun. Because there were activities that let me select the texts, so, I selected the texts that I really wanted to read."* *"They (ER texts) were fun. There were varieties of contents and many story characters and they gave a lot of knowledge."* *"They (ER texts) were appropriate." "The vocabulary was not too difficult. And also, I learned and knew new words at the same time."*
Enjoyment of Tasks and Activities	*"It was fun because there were many different activities – not repetitious."* *"I felt fun because when reading in-class, I got to read with other classmates and when reading out-of-class, I got to read, to make questions, and to summarize what I had read by myself."* *"It was fun. In class, I read with friends. Out of class, there was a drawing task which I really enjoyed. For out-of-class reading, I liked both reading and drawing."* *"Yes, I enjoyed it. There were always friends to work together and to talk with. And also, the teacher was always there to teach and guide me. It was fun – not boring."* *"I think I got to have some fun both inside and outside the classroom. It allowed me to gain knowledge both inside and outside the classroom."*

English Vocabulary Improvement	*"It is like difficult words now become easy – I can read and understand them better. Words that had been taught and learned, which I met many times, I can remember them well."* *"It made me understand English more than in the past. Some words that I did not know before, now I know them. In terms of English reading and pronunciation, I know the correct pronunciation and many other things. For example, I can read out words that I did not know before. And, I liked it when I met unknown words, I could ask the teacher. I think I know many words now – much more than before."*
English Reading Skills Improvement	*"In the past, I could not read English much. But after studying, I could read and understand English much better."* *"At the beginning of the study, I could not read and understand anything at all. But after I learned and acquired some reading strategies, I started to be able to read and understand better. I can read more and understand more."*
English Writing Skills Improvement	*"It (the student's English) is better – I am better at writing and also, vocabulary."* *"Some English words that I could not write before, now I can write some of them because I got to practice writing English sentences and English vocabulary when I got home from school. What I studied with you made me write English better."* *"Writing, too. Before, I often wrote English incorrectly. Now, I am starting to be able to write English words and sentences more correctly. Sometime is right, sometime is wrong."*
English Speaking Skills Improvement	*"…, I got to practice myself when I was assigned to give a presentation in front of the class."* *"Some of my relatives cannot speak Thai well. I have to speak the same language as them. In the past, I could not speak with them and could not understand them much. After studying, I can communicate with them better."* *"I can communicate in English better. I know more vocabulary."*

English Reading Habits	*"I feel more enjoyed. It (English reading) is not boring as in the past because now, I can read and understand better. I understand English more. I know how to read and work with the texts more. I also can read and understand the meaning more."*
	"For those who cannot study and understand English or who cannot use English fluently or who cannot do it well, if they have a chance to study this way, in which there are fun stories that make them want to read more, then they will learn to read and then, when they can read better, they will feel proud of themselves and thus, want to read again."
	"I read more than the past. In the past, I liked playing. But after studying, if the text is fun, I will read it."
	"I can read and understand much better and I can read and comprehend the texts faster."
Usefulness	*"I use your reading strategies when reading English books. I use them when I read cartoon books in my free times. I apply them so that I can read and understand the story."*
	"It (IIERI) made me work on English tasks and assignments more easily. In the past, I could not understand English words much. But now, I can understand more. This makes it easier for me when doing the work."
	"I can use or apply what I had learned and know when studying and learning English – a lot. I may meet some words that I do not know the meaning in future English classes, but then, I may be able to get the meaning using reading strategies."
	"I can use it (knowledge of reading strategies) to build up my knowledge in the future. For example, I can find main ideas of the texts or specific details in the texts if the teachers in other schools ask me to do."
	"Studying this way, it provided me with knowledge that can be used in my future, higher study and also, for taking the O-NET. Because in the O-NET, there would be similar types of English and there would be similar questions requiring us to find the answers – it would probably be the same as what we did in class, so when it is really the time for taking the exam, I should be able to do it better."
	"I think if I apply it (the gained knowledge) when taking the final exam, I will probably get a better grade because you taught me so many things – I can use words or reading strategies like finding details in the exam."

	"And normally, when I was free, I would spend my free time playing games. But when there were texts to read or worksheets to do, I got to spend my free time on reading more." *"It was also useful for my daily life. I could talk about them (the texts) with my friends. In my free time, I got to read."*

Table 4 presents the students' positive opinions towards receiving IIERI as in the following aspects:

Regarding the texts, the students had fun and enjoyed engaging in reading English texts that were varied in genres and topics, that matched their different reading interests, and that were readable and comprehensible.

Regarding the tasks and activities, the students had fun and enjoyed having a chance to do various, not repetitious tasks and activities and the most preferred ones were drawing and coloring, pair-work and group-work activities. Asides from being with friends, the students valued assistance and support from their teacher (the researcher). The students also reported that they received knowledge and experienced enjoyment when engaging in reading English texts and in completing related reading tasks and activities both inside and outside the classroom.

Regarding the effects of IIERI on the students' English language knowledge and skills development, the students reported that their English vocabulary knowledge, their English reading skills and ability, and their English writing as well as their English speaking improved after receiving IIERI. The students reported that they learned and knew more English words, they could read and comprehend English texts better, they knew how to successfully apply reading strategies while reading, and they could read, write, and speak English better as a result of receiving skills-practice opportunities and having possessed greater English vocabulary knowledge.

Regarding the changes in the students' English reading habits, the students reported that after receiving IIERI, they enjoyed reading English texts more; they read English texts more; and they could read and comprehend English texts faster than the beginning of the study.

Regarding the usefulness of IIERI, the students perceived IIERI to be useful for practicing English reading, for learning English in other classes, for taking school and national English exams, and for making good use of time.

5. DISCUSSION

The main research finding of this study was the increase in the students' English reading ability posttest scores after receiving IIERI for ten weeks, revealing that the students' English reading ability including their English vocabulary knowledge and their English reading comprehension improved after the study. This shows that IIERI works effectively in developing and improving Thai primary students' English reading ability in terms of both the students' English vocabulary knowledge and the students' English reading comprehension. This research finding confirms the pedagogical principles of Hedge (2000), Brown (2007), Anderson (2008), and Grabe and Stoller (2013) in that providing both intensive and extensive reading instruction can help learners develop and enhance their reading ability and skills in the target language. This research finding is also congruent with the findings of previous research studies conducted by Kaewinta (2012), Pattasesang (2016), and Panprom and Adipattaranan (2017): Kaewinta (2012) found that after involving sixth grade students in learning target grammar and reading strategies and in ER for seven weeks, the students' English reading comprehension increased at an average level and the students' English vocabulary knowledge increased at a good level; Pattasesang (2016) found that after involving sixth grade students in task-based language learning plus ER for ten hours, the students scored better in the English reading ability posttest; and Panprom and Adipattaranan (2017) found that after involving ninth grade students in ER activities for twenty lessons, the students' English reading ability and English vocabulary knowledge was enhanced. All these findings reinforce the importance of employing ER (see Day & Bamford, 1998). Apart from the similar findings, this study places a greater emphasis on connecting IR with ER – IIERI focuses on the explicit teaching and learning of target vocabulary, phonology, and reading strategies during IR instruction and on providing plenty opportunities for the students to read extensively and to apply and practice the received knowledge and skills out of class. The quantitative research findings of this study support the claim of Hedge (2000) and Anderson (2008) in that providing and establishing an explicit linkage between IR and ER instruction can lead to the development and improvement in the learners' reading ability and skills in the target language.

Other important research findings were the students' positive opinions towards IIERI. The students enjoyed having a chance to read reading materials that differed in genres and topics and that matched their interests and English ability levels. This research finding is consistent with Day and Bamford's (1998) ten principles for adopting ER, suggesting that reading materials used for ER should be various and interesting matching the readers' different reading interests and reasons for reading. This way, the students' reading enjoyment and motivation to read are likely to increase. This opinion of the students is similar to the findings of Maneekhao and Tepsuriwong's (2016) study, showing that Thai students had different reading interests and preferred reading English texts of various types and topics. In addition, the students reflected that they enjoyed reading materials which were easy and comprehensible. This viewpoint of the students reaffirms the finding of the study of Maneekhao and Tepsuriwong (2016), suggesting that Thai students preferred to read English reading materials that were at the right level – reading materials should not be too difficult to read and comprehend. Day and Bamford (1998) point out that second and/or foreign language learners should be provided with reading materials that match their linguistic competence regarding the areas of grammar and vocabulary and that second and/or foreign language learners will have success with ER when they are able to read and comprehend reading materials without much difficulty. At this point, it is possible to conclude that to successfully engage students in reading extensively and to increase the students' English reading enjoyment and engagement, reading materials should be various, interesting, attractive, and level-appropriate matching the students' different reading interests, ages, and ability levels.

Regarding the teaching and learning activities, the students reflected that they preferred drawing and coloring activities as much as pair-work and group-work activities. Such activities match the nature of young learners and thus, should be included so that the learners' motivation to engage in learning and reading increases. It is worthwhile to point out that in this study, when the students recognized the importance and benefits of receiving IIERI and of engaging in reading extensively, this could increase their learning attention and classroom participation.

Furthermore, the students reflected that their English language knowledge and skills improved after receiving IIERI. These qualitative research findings confirm the quantitative research findings of this study –

IIERI led to the improvement in the students' English reading ability in terms of both their English vocabulary knowledge and their English reading comprehension. These findings confirm the findings of Charumanee (2014), Pattasesang (2016), and Wisaijorn (2017), discovering that Thai students had positive attitudes towards ER and that Thai students believed that engaging in ER activities could improve their English language knowledge and skills. These findings also correspond to the claim of Day and Bamford (1998), Hedge (2000), Brown (2007), Anderson (2008), and Grabe and Stoller (2013) that providing reading instruction that combines IR and ER is one way to develop and improve reading ability and skills of language learners.

6. CONCLUSION

This study reveals the effectiveness of integrating intensive reading instruction and extensive reading instruction in English instruction for developing and improving English reading ability of Thai students at primary education levels, whose English proficiency is at the beginner level. This study proves that to some extent, integrating IR with ER can improve English reading ability including English vocabulary knowledge and English reading comprehension of Thai primary students and this instructional method is favorable to the students.

This study strengthens established theories and principles on teaching a second and/or foreign language reading. In summary, both IR and ER are effective teaching approaches for developing the reading ability and skills of language learners and both IR and ER should be provided in a language program. In this study, the researcher has found out that young low proficiency learners of English (primary students learning English as a foreign language in a formal school) could obtain great benefits from receiving English instruction that employed and linked IR with ER. The students' English language knowledge and skills as well as the students' motivation to learn and to read English increased after being engaged in reading various interesting English texts and in doing various enjoyable reading tasks and activities in and out of class. Plus, the researcher found that involving the students in appropriate IR and ER activities led to positive changes in the students' English reading habits and was useful for the students and for their life-long learning.

To carry out effective English reading instruction, it is important for teachers to ensure that they explicitly teach and train students in all aspects of English and related skills necessary for effective reading in order for students to be able to work with a text and to achieve successful comprehension of a text while reading. Key words as well as difficult and/or unknown words, important phonological and grammatical aspects, and useful reading strategies such as activating and using background knowledge, guessing meanings using contextual clues, questioning, making predictions, skimming, and scanning are essential knowledge and skills that should be taught to students. Teachers may use short reading texts apart from textbook passages along with some reading tasks and activities to teach and train students in all of these areas. At the same time, teachers must provide adequate opportunities for students to read English and to apply and practice their developed English knowledge and skills in and out of class. This can be done by letting students freely select and independently read longer but easier reading texts that match their reading interests and purposes for reading. Follow-up reading tasks and activities like the ones carried out in class can be used for further skills practice as well as for monitoring the students' reading engagement and improvement. As stated earlier, reading materials as well as tasks and activities need to be varied and interesting, supporting the students' different needs and interests. Additionally, reading materials as well as tasks and activities need to be level-appropriate, suiting the students' current English ability level. Besides, teaching and learning activities need to be flexible as different students have different abilities and different learning styles. Drawing and coloring pictures, games, competition activities, and pair-work and group-work activities are feasible and favorable to young learners and thus, should be provided. Following the above suggestions, teachers may be able to teach and train students in English reading better and may be able to successfully engage students in reading and in learning English. Therefore, the findings of this study can serve as a guide to school administrators and English language teachers to use IR and ER to develop and improve Thai primary students' English language knowledge and skills, especially English reading ability and to use IR and ER to motivate Thai primary students to read and to learn English.

In this study, the number of the research participants was small. Future research should include larger numbers of research participants from the same and/or different contexts to obtain more conclusive

findings that can be generalized to a larger population. Despite this limitation, researchers and readers can adapt and apply elements of IIERI to other English language teaching and learning contexts in schools at the sixth grade or different grade levels and maximize the use of it.

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