

A STUDY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS' READING ATTITUDES AND THEIR READING COMPREHENSION PERFORMANCE

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Received:	17/12/2020	The purpose of the study is to determine the students' reading attitudes and to find the relationship between students' reading attitudes and their reading comprehension performance. The methods used to analyze the data were questionnaires and the reading comprehension test applied to the third-year students at Thai Nguyen University of Information and Communication Technology. Besides, Pearson product-moment coefficients correlation was used to find out the relationship between students' reading attitudes and their reading comprehension performance. The results from the study showed that students' reading attitudes played an important role when learning reading skill and it is also stated that there was a significant relationship between students' reading attitudes and their reading comprehension performance. From the findings, further recommendations were given to improve the students' reading motivations and their reading comprehension performance.
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NGHIÊN CỨU MỐI QUAN HỆ GIỮA THÁI ĐỘ CỦA SINH VIÊN ĐỐI VỚI VIỆC HỌC ĐỌC VÀ KẾT QUẢ ĐẠT ĐƯỢC TRONG BÀI ĐỌC HIỂU TIẾNG ANH

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THÔNG TIN BÀI BÁO	TÓM TẮT
Ngày nhận bài: 17/12/2020	Mục đích của nghiên cứu này là tìm hiểu thái độ của sinh viên đối với việc học đọc và tìm ra mối quan hệ giữa thái độ của sinh viên đối với việc học kỹ năng đọc hiểu và kết quả đạt được. Phương pháp nghiên cứu được sử dụng để phân tích dữ liệu là bảng hỏi và bài kiểm tra đọc hiểu áp dụng cho sinh viên năm thứ 3, trường Đại học Công nghệ thông tin và Truyền thông – Đại học Thái Nguyên. Bên cạnh đó, hệ số tương quan cũng được sử dụng để tìm ra mối quan hệ giữa thái độ đọc của sinh viên với kết quả mà sinh viên đạt được. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy thái độ của sinh viên đóng vai trò quan trọng khi học kỹ năng đọc và nghiên cứu cũng chỉ ra thái độ của sinh viên đối với việc học kỹ năng đọc và kết quả mà chúng đạt được có mối quan hệ mật thiết với nhau. Từ kết quả nghiên cứu, một số đề xuất cũng được đưa ra để nâng cao ý thức học đối với kỹ năng đọc và kết quả mà người học đạt được.
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1. Introduction

It is evident that English teaching and learning play an important role in the development of the society, especially in the technological era 4.0. Therefore, teachers are required to show not only their efforts in designing and developing their teaching methods but also their approaches to help students learn better. In addition, the learners will have to take part in the activities in classroom enthusiastically as well as independent learning which is initially influenced by their attitudes towards English. Besides, the attitudes towards English are considered as a very basic as well as crucial to the success of students' learning process. It is said that students' attitude is one of the main factors that determine their success in the process of language learning. Attitudes towards the target language, its speakers and the learning context may all play some parts in explaining their success or failure. Therefore, researching second language learning, and exploring the relationship between researching and teaching is a key element in what some have referred to as the teacher as 'reflective' practitioner [1]. With the aims of finding students' reading comprehension attitudes, the researcher try to find out her Information and Communication Technology (ICT) students' reading attitudes in order to give the best teaching methods to improve the learners' attitudes and reading comprehension achievement. In fact, it is true that reading English texts is usually important to academic studies, professional success, and personal development. Reading a language, which is not the learner's first language, has considerable difficulty. Therefore, it is stated by Furqon [2] that comprehension as processing words, forming a representation of general main ideas and integrating it into a new understanding. It suggests that comprehension is achieved when a reader successfully extracts the useful knowledge from a text and constructs it into a new understanding of their own. Besides, reading comprehension means that students are likely to understand the purpose and the function of the text, be aware of the main topic, and even understand the meaning of the sentences and the relationship among the sentences in a paragraph or text.

Based on those reasons above, it is very crucial for educators to understand the students' attitudes toward reading which enables the teachers to detect the causes of the weakness of their students in reading. Thus, teachers may be more sensitive to design an appropriate material or create fun reading activities in order to grow or spread students' positive attitudes or alter student negative attitudes to positive attitudes towards reading. Thus, to achieve the goal of mastering the content of the text and complete the enclosed tasks in the reading requirements, the learners should enhance not only their reading abilities but also their reading attitudes. It may be said that the understanding the role of attitude in developing readers is important because boosting reading attitudes is a meaningful initiative for educators and school professionals who wish to narrow the reading gap and eliminate reading failure [3]. Moreover, the existence of the impacts between students' reading attitudes and students' reading achievement is mentioned by the notion of McKenna et al cited by Indah [4] who believed that it is logical that reading attitudes and achievement scores would have an impact on each other because they have found from their studies that the students with the highest achievement scores had higher reading attitudes in general and vice versa.

Pamuji [5] found that students' attitude toward English gives positive significant correlation on their reading comprehension achievement, and writing achievement. It means that the students who got high attitude toward English tended to get high scores in reading and writing comprehension test. On the contrary, the students who got low scores in the attitude toward English tended to get low scores in the reading comprehension and writing test. Besides, Tunde [6] also suggested that there was a very high, positive and significant relationship between the students' reading attitudes and their reading comprehension performance. These findings implied that negative attitudes to extensive reading could lead to students' poor performance in reading comprehension, which could in turn lead to poor performance in English language.

On the other hand, the results of the 2001 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study stated by Indah [4] declared that poor reading attitudes do not necessarily correlate with low achievement. It means that students' low achievement in reading is not necessarily influenced by students' attitudes. Attitudes cannot be a surface to indicate high achievement levels of ten-year-old students in the United Kingdom. However, these same students had relatively poor attitudes toward reading when compared to other countries.

In addition, the relationship between reading attitudes and reading performance can be seen in the study of Furqon [2], which reveals a correlation between students' reading attitudes and their reading comprehension achievement is 0.620. Besides, she also adds that the better the students' reading attitudes and the mastery of vocabulary, the greater their reading comprehension achievement will be. Similarly, the study of Suri cited by Indah [4] also showed that the coefficient correlation between those variables was 0.589. It meant that there was a strong enough correlation between both variables. In contrast, another finding of the study done by Sallabas [7] states that there is a low-level correlation between students' reading comprehension skills and attitudes towards reading and academic performance.

Although the researchers above have found there are some correlations between reading attitudes and comprehension performance, the researcher of this topic took it as references for more specific research. The researcher focused on the ICT students' reading attitudes and the relationship between students' reading attitudes and their reading comprehension performance in this study. Specifically, the study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What are the students' attitudes towards English reading skill?
2. Is there a significant relationship between students' reading attitudes and their reading comprehension performance?

2. Research methodology

The respondents of the study were 60 third-year students at Thai Nguyen University of Information and Communication Technology, in the first semester, academic year 2020-2021.

The research instrument used in this study was the questionnaire prepared by the researcher. For analysis, the variables were measured using Likert scale. The respondents were rated between students' attitudes in learning reading and students' reading performance based on a five-point rating scale with value 1 = "Always", 2 = "Often", 3 = "Sometimes", 4 = "Seldom", 5 = "Never".

The next research instrument is a comprehension test which is divided into four parts including 40 questions, which assess the ability of understanding the text. It is used to assess the third-year students' performance in learning reading skill. The comprehension test within 60 minutes was given to 60 third year students. The scores of the students were evaluated using the scale with value 1 = "Very high", 2 = "High", 3 = "Average", 4 = "Low", 5 = "Very low".

Another instrument is Pearson product-moment coefficients correlation which was used to find out the relationship between students' reading attitudes and their reading comprehension performance.

Firstly, 60 third year students were randomly chosen from four classes (15 students per class). and they were given briefing about the objectives and procedures of the study. Next, the researcher guided students to answer the questionnaire and to do the comprehension test. Finally, the students' responses and students' score were categorized, tabulated and analyzed with the assistance of the statistician.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Respondents' reading attitudes

It can be noted in Table 1 the perception of respondents' reading attitudes. The data revealed that reading skill is very important for respondents' research and their job in the future with the mean perception of 4.48 and even they identified that reading skill helps them understand more deep major knowledge when reading English materials (WM= 4.32) because it is very necessary for ITC students to update information and understand new technology. It may be implied that the respondents were very much interested in learning reading skill. Reading skill is the most important in four skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing (WM=4.02). However, good reading skill seldom helps them get a good job more easily (WM= 2.54). Moreover, reading skill helps IT students have more deep social knowledge (WM=4.12) and it is easier to learn than other skills (WM=3.35). For these reasons, the respondents spent more time practising reading skill than other skills with the weighted mean of 3.64 and they also identified that success and failure in reading skill depended on the student's ability and perseverance or attitudes. It can be concluded that most students had the different reading attitudes and reading English texts were reflected in each different field and way.

Table 1. Weighted mean and ranking of attitudes towards reading as perceived by the respondents

Indicators	WM	Rank	VI
1. Reading skill is very important for my research and my job in the future.	4.48	1	Always
2. I find reading skill is the most important in four skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing.	4.02	4	Often
3. Reading skill helps me understand more deep major knowledge when reading English materials.	4.32	2	Often
4. Reading skill helps me have more deep social knowledge.	4.12	3	Often
5. Good reading skill helps me get a good job more easily.	2.54	8	Seldom
6. I spend more time practising reading skill than other skills.	3.67	5	Often
7. Success and failure in reading skill depend on the student's ability and perseverance or attitudes.	3.42	6	Sometimes
8. I find reading skill is easier to learn than other skills.	3.35	7	Sometimes
Average Weighted Mean	3.64		Often

Scale:

4.21 – 5.00	Always	1.81 - 2.60	Seldom
3.41 – 4.20	Often	1.00 – 1.80	Never
2.61 - 3.40	Sometimes		

3.2. Distribution of respondents as to performance rating in reading English comprehension text

Table 2. Distribution of respondents on performance rating in reading English text

Classification	Frequency	Percentage
9 – 10	3	5
7 – 8	23	39
5 – 6	18	30
3 – 4	11	18
2 – 1	5	8
Total	60	100
Mean	5.77	

The performance of the students at Information and Communication Technology University (ICTU) was based on the description of the numerical ratings as follows: 1-2: Very low

performance; 3- 4: Low performance; 5-6: Average performance; 7-8: High performance; 9-10: Very high performance.

It can be seen clearly in Table 2 that majority of the students obtained the numerical ranging between 5 – 6 and 7 – 8. The data also showed the “average” performance of students in reading English as revealed by the mean value of 5.77.

3.3. Correlation between students' reading attitudes and their reading performance

Table 3 showed the significant correlation among the students' performance with this factor. It is very clearly seen that the obtained P-value of 0.013 was lower than the threshold P-value of 0.05 and critical value of attitudes/ motivation (0.013) was also lower than statistical value (0.318) which indicated that there was evidence to state the relationship between them. It also showed that there was a significant relationship between the students' reading performance achievement and the students' reading attitudes. This implied that attitudes or motivation was the factor which helped the students get higher marks or performance.

Table 3. Correlation between students' reading attitudes and their reading performance

Variables tested for Relationship	Statistical Tool	Statistical value	P-value/ Critical value	VI
Reading Attitudes	R	0.318	0.013	Sig.

Legend: If P-value < 0.05, and statistical value > critical value, (Significant) at level of significance 5%.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

From the findings above, it can be seen that for ICT students, especially for the third-year students, it is very important to focus on reading skill because most major materials are in English and it is certainly said that if students want to get higher level in major, they often need to read English texts to study. Therefore, understanding the relationship between students' reading attitudes and their reading comprehension performance is necessary to gain effective teaching and learning. By reviewing the relevant literature on students' reading attitudes and their reading comprehension performance, it could be concluded that most of students had positive attitudes and different opinions toward reading and especially, the students with positive attitudes gained higher scores on reading test than the students with negative attitudes. They said that reading skill is very important for their research and their job in the future with the highest rank and they also stated that reading skill is easier to learn than other skills and for ICT students, they find good reading skill helps them get a good job more easily with the lowest rank 7, 8 respectively. For this reason, ICT students try the best to be able to get higher reading achievement. However, it was found that out of the 60 students, majority of the students obtained the numerical ranging between 5- 6 and 7- 8 and only three students (5%) having good achievement in reading comprehension 9-10.

Moreover, the results also showed that there is a significant relationship between the students' performance achievement and students' attitudes and this result also supports what Indah [4] concluded that there was strong enough correlation between students' attitudes and their reading achievement.

From the results of the study, the researcher presents some suggestions for both the teachers and students. Firstly, a variety of reading activities in combination with games and reading tasks outside the lesson, as well as the constant improvement of reading materials are suggested to contribute interesting reading lessons which lead to the fact that students can have positive reading attitudes or motivation. Secondly, teacher can use technology such as software to monitor, adjust, and evaluate individual students' progress through the results of the computer generated comprehension tests. The software also gives students immediate feedback regarding their progress which tends to increase their motivation to encourage students to read more and

certainly get higher reading performance. Thirdly, teachers need to make efforts to provide reading materials that relate to the students' interests so that they show great excitement when given the opportunity to interact with their peers about reading materials. They delight in sharing the humor, the drama, and the characters they find in their books. Finally, teachers need to provide an environment in which students feel safe about sharing their thoughts and feelings about what they read. Especially, recreational reading which often motivates them to expand their interests and broaden their experiences in reading needs to be viewed as an enjoyable experience by the students in order to develop a more positive attitude about reading. In addition, teachers need to encourage students to have suitable strategies in order to be successful readers and gather needed information from expository texts and tools students can use for multiple topics include guided notes in order to direct students while they read.

At last, it is with great hope that the study will be of worthwhile value to the people who are concerned with the learners' reading attitudes and their reading comprehension performance so that they can give the best solutions for learners.

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