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Effects of a Task-based Oral Presentation on Thai Undergraduate English Student Teachers' Reading Comprehension

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Abstract
Task-based instruction is widely accepted as an effective teaching method, as it helps improve communicative competence via meaningful tasks. This study investigated effects of a task-based oral presentation on reading comprehension of Thai undergraduate English student teachers majoring in English in the Faculty of Education. Participants were 28 second-year students (16 high reading proficiency and 12 low reading proficiency students). They were selected by the convenience sampling method. The instruments were pre- and post-reading comprehension tests. The scores from the two tests were compared after a 10-week task-based oral presentation. The results from the Paired-sample *t*-test indicated that the oral presentation task significantly improved the students' reading comprehension. An Independent Sample *t*-test was further employed to compare the pre- and post-test scores between the high- and low-proficiency groups. The results revealed that the high proficiency group significantly outperformed the low reading proficiency group. Additionally, in the pre-reading comprehension test, two significant differences at the 0.01 level were found in reading for topics and reading for details. In contrast, a significant difference at the 0.05 level was found in the meaning in contexts. In the post-test, however, a significant difference at the 0.01 level was found only in reading for details. Implementing a task-based oral presentation in a reading class is suggested to help improve students' reading comprehension, especially among students with low reading proficiency.

***Keywords*:** English student teachers, oral presentation, reading comprehension, Thai undergraduate, task-based instruction,

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Introduction

The context of the present study is a Rajabhat University in southern Thailand. Concerning the English major in the Faculty of Education, the program aims to produce high quality English teachers in terms of teaching competence, positive attitudes, up to date knowledge, and cooperative working and problem-solving skills which are required for success in their future careers. As English student teachers, they will transmit the knowledge they have gained at the university to their future students. Therefore, it is necessary for them to acquire all four English language skills during their studies. Among the four skills, reading is a crucial skill they need (Shanahan & Strickland, 2004).

Reading comprehension is an interactive process in which readers try to create meanings by interacting with the text. During the reading process, readers attempt to combine their prior knowledge and perspective with the information presented in the text (Grabe & Stoller, 2013; McNamara & Magliano, 2009). Reading comprehension is considered an important skill for student teachers because they need this skill to help their future students become effective readers. However, the reading comprehension scores from the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2022 revealed that Thai students' scores had declined. Among the eight proficiency levels from Level 1C (the lowest) to Level 6 (the highest), 73.7% of Thai students were at Level 2 and below (OECD, 2023). This implies that effective reading instruction is needed in the classroom. To help their future students become better readers, student teachers need to be able to explain, guide, and model effective reading strategies (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Rosenshine, 1995; Taylor et al., 2002; William et al., 2009).

Apart from the importance of reading comprehension, enhancing student teachers' speaking skills is also necessary to promote communication skills. As speaking is very important in both language learning and daily life, it is a crucial skill for EFL students (Bedding & Inthapthim, 2019). To enhance speaking and promote communication skills, oral presentation can be used as a classroom task. Moreover, oral presentation has gradually become a part of the course requirements at many educational levels, and it is often assigned as a task after reading (Duklim & Musigrungsi, 2018; Jordan, 1997; Underhill, 1987; Zhang, 2009).

Based on the literature review, TBI has been used to improve Thai students' English reading skills. In Arsairach's (2014) study, a TBI reading activity model was developed to improve Thai university students' reading comprehension. The results from the pre-post reading comprehension tests revealed that the model was effective in improving students' reading comprehension. Similarly, Thongpan (2018) developed the PREAT Model: Priming (P), Reading process (R), Encouraging plan (E), Awakening report (A), and Target outcome (T) using TBI and vocabulary learning strategies to enhance Thai student teachers' academic reading abilities, vocabulary knowledge, and strategies. The results from the pre-and post-tests confirmed that the model improved students' reading comprehension and academic reading abilities. In addition, Nguyen (2022) explored the effects of TBI on the reading comprehension of non-English major university students in Vietnam. The results from the pre-and post-tests also reaffirmed that TBI could help students improve their reading comprehension.

Moreover, TBI has been applied in EFL university classes in Thailand to enhance speaking and oral presentation skills. In Yamchai's (2016) study, TBL was used to enhance first-year students' English oral presentation skills. The results from the pre- and post-oral presentation tests showed that the students' English oral presentation skills improved after using TBL. Similarly, Auenthaisong (2017) employed a TBI approach using oral tests to enhance the speaking skills of

first-year students. The results revealed that TBI could promote students' speaking skills. In addition, Satharatthana (2023) applied classroom action research to develop Thai first-year students' English oral presentation skills through TBL. The students worked in groups to prepare PowerPoint slides and deliver oral presentations on various topics. The results also confirmed that the students' oral presentation skills were improved. A more recent study was conducted by Poomchaiya (2024), who investigated the English oral presentation ability of first-year students in the Faculty of Education after implementing an oral presentation task and compared their self-confidence before and after the treatment. The students were assigned to read, discuss, search more information, and present orally. The results revealed that the oral presentation task helped increase students' English oral presentation ability and their self-confidence.

Regarding the implementation of a task-based oral presentation in a reading class, very few studies have been found. Fikni and Ningrum (2021) investigated the effect of an oral presentation on Grade 11 Indonesian students' responses to reading texts. A set of comprehension questions related to the text was asked, and students presented their answers orally. The results from the pre- and post-oral tests indicated that oral presentation improved the students' reading comprehension. Similarly, Houda and Sara (2017) investigated the effect of oral presentation as a reading assignment on second-year Algerian students' reading comprehension. Short novels were assigned for students to read, summarize, and present orally. The findings from the pre- and post-reading comprehension tests confirmed that the students' reading comprehension improved.

Even though the research studies conducted in various contexts have confirmed that TBI helps improve both reading comprehension and oral presentation skills, no research has been conducted on the effects of a task-based oral presentation on Thai EFL undergraduate students' reading comprehension. Thus, there is a research gap that needs to be further explored. Accordingly, this study aims to investigate the effects of a task-based oral presentation on Thai undergraduate English student teachers' reading comprehension.

In particular, the question addressed in this study is: Is there a significant difference between Thai undergraduate English student teachers' reading comprehension before and after the implementation of a task-based oral presentation?

Literature Review

Reading and Reading Comprehension

Many experts in the field of reading propose definitions of reading and reading comprehension in various acceptable ways. Smith (1973) defines reading as an act of communication in which information is transferred from a transmitter to a receiver. Brunan (1989) further defines reading as a two-way interaction in which information is exchanged between the reader and the writer. Moreover, Brumfit (1980) defines reading as one of the most complex activities, involving perceptual, linguistic, and cognitive abilities. While Brumfit emphasizes the reader's abilities, Goodman (1976) further states that reading is a psycholinguistic guessing game as well as a communication between the reader and the writer. According to Widdowson (1979) and Liu et al. (2018), linguistic elements such as syntax, morphology, and lexis are encoded in the printed text.

In terms of reading comprehension, Birsh (2009), Pressley (2001), and Tompskins (2011) state that reading comprehension is one of the reader's abilities to understand the text they are reading. Readers create meaning by interacting with text through the combination of prior knowledge and experience, current information in the text, and their perspectives related to the

text (Duke & Bennette, 2003). According to Grabe (2004), reading comprehension is an interactive process between readers and writers. Writers attempt to share specific information through letters written in texts, and readers attempt to comprehend what the texts are about. Perfetti (2007) adds that phonology, linguistic knowledge, fluency, word recognition, and background knowledge are also relevant to reading comprehension. Reading comprehension occurs when readers gain ideas or knowledge presented through printed texts, and it is the interaction between words and readers that leads to comprehension (Rayner et al., 2001; Tompkins, 2011). Grabe (2009) as well as Share and Stanovich (1995) confirm that reading comprehension may be impossible if readers do not have reading automaticity and effective word recognition.

In short, reading comprehension is viewed as the ability to understand written material by combining prior knowledge with linguistic knowledge. It is also seen as an interactive process between writers who convey meaning and readers who interpret it. Effective comprehension depends on factors such as phonology, fluency, word recognition, and background knowledge. It is considered that without automaticity and strong word-recognition skills, comprehension is difficult.

Reading Instruction

In order to promote reading instruction, direct or explicit teaching is recommended by many experts as an effective instructional method (Rosenshine, 1995; Taylor et al., 2002). More precisely, teaching reading directly or explicitly can be defined as an interaction between teachers and students that occurs in a meaningful context when new information is conveyed (Duke & Pearson, 2002).

In terms of reading instruction, Blair and Rupley (1988) mention that the heart of reading instruction is to explain, model, and guide readers explicitly or directly in what they should do to become successful readers. In other words, reading instruction involves demonstrating to students how to apply strategies while reading and asking them to follow. In particular, modeling acts as an explicit teaching strategy that teachers use in reading classes for the purpose of demonstrating how to do when readers have to interact with texts (Duke & Pearson, 2002).

Thus, successful reading instruction involves explaining and demonstrating reading strategies, providing guided practices, and modeling how to interact with texts. In this regard, students understand what to do and how to do it to become proficient readers.

Oral Presentation

Oral presentation is considered not only a necessary skill in learning, but also in the workplace. Coffelt et al. (2016) mention that employers prefer candidates who have the ability to present orally, so they have a greater chance of being hired. Almutairi and Alfarwan (2024) further state that to produce effective communication, speaking acts as a primary verbal language skill to form meaningful speech that conveys ideas, thoughts, and feelings. In the context of English language teaching (ELT), one of the most effective tools for improving speaking and communication skills is oral presentation (Duklim & Musigrungsi, 2018). Jordan (1997) and Underhill (1987) assert that giving oral presentations have become part of genuine and communicative production for academic and professional purposes among university students. In addition, Baker (2000) adds that when students receive information from learning resources, they need to be able to transmit that information through oral presentation.

In the field of EFL, oral presentation, rather than basic communication, acts as a challenging form of communication in the classroom. In addition, it is widely considered as one of the most effective tools for improving students' speaking and communication skills, while traditional teaching methods at the university level tend to rely on formal lectures, and students are rarely actively involved in the learning process (Wallance, 2004). Students should be allowed to participate actively through assigned classroom activities, especially academic oral presentations, which are considered a necessary skill and an important trend for university students to master. (Chen, 2002).

It can be concluded that oral presentation is directly related to oral communication skills and should be applied in English classes (Al-Issa & Al-Qubtan, 2010; Duklim & Musigrungsi, 2018; King, 2002; Truong & Storch, 2007).

Integrating Reading Comprehension and Oral Presentation

According to Foster (2006), students who enjoy reading tend to be good writers or presenters in both written and spoken language. Oxford (1990) raises the issue that language learning separated from content learning through segregated skills instruction does not guarantee success in academic communication, career-related language use, or everyday conversation. In addition, Sanchez (2000) mentions that producing oral language is considered students' output. That is, when students read printed texts, they identify and note key information on paper. When they need to present those ideas, they can either rewrite them in clear written language or present them through spoken language in the form of an oral presentation.

According to Dale (1969), when oral presentation is assigned as a task at the end of a reading activity, two skills – reading and speaking are involved, which helps students learn the language in an integrated manner.

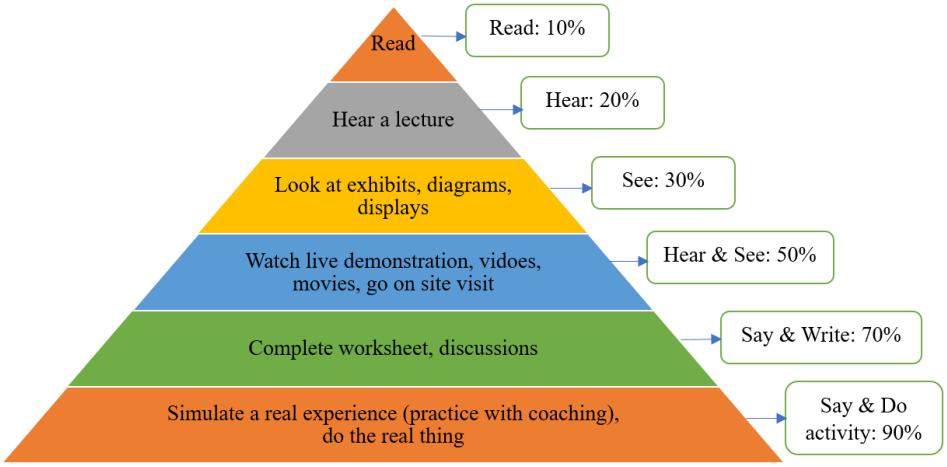


Figure 1. The pyramid of learning (Adapted from Dale, 1969, p.108)

Task-based Instruction

Task-based Instruction (TBI) has been proposed and has received considerable pedagogical attention in the field of foreign language pedagogy. The main goal of TBI is a pedagogical shift from teacher-oriented to more learner-oriented teaching (East, 2012). In fact, TBI was first developed by Narayanaswamy Sankaran Prabhu in Bangalore, southern India. This teaching

method has become one of the well-known language instructions, based on the belief that learners acquire the target language through tasks rather than by focusing on the grammatical functions of the language (Alwahibee & Al-Mutairi, 2024; Prabhu, 1987). Swan (2005) later proposed principles of TBI that are widely accepted in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT). These principles emphasize that natural language use should be the primary focus and that designed activities should allow students to learn meaning rather than the forms of language. In addition, student-centered learning should be promoted, and teacher-centered instruction should be minimized.

Definitions of Task

According to Lin and Wu (2012), a task can be defined as a piece of work completed for oneself or for some reward. Some types of activities that can be considered tasks include filling out a form, booking an airline ticket, borrowing books from a library, typing a letter, and writing a report. In other words, a task refers to something people do in their everyday lives. Additionally, Bachman and Palmer (1996) and Skehan (1998) agree that a task is an activity in which meaning serves as the primary goal. To achieve a particular goal in a specific context, real-world activities need to be addressed.

Building on definitions of task into classroom practice, Willis (1996) defines a task as an activity assigned by teachers, either in class or outside the classroom, in which learners use the target language for a communicative purpose or goal in order to achieve an outcome. This is a real-world task. In the same way, Bygate (2006) and Nunan (2004) state that a task is a classroom activity in which students comprehend, manipulate, produce, and interact with the target language. To complete a task, learners focus primarily on meaning rather than forms. Ellis (2003) further states that learners are required to plan before doing the work, and a task can promote both receptive and productive skills.

In brief, a task is an activity assigned by a teacher in a classroom in which learners use the target language to complete a goal. In addition, the goal of task is to focus on meaning rather than form. To complete a task, both receptive and productive skills are involved.

Procedures of Task-based Instruction

The widely accepted procedures of TBI were proposed by Willis (1996) and Ellis (2003). Regarding the procedures of TBI, they are divided into three phases as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Task-based instruction procedures*

Pre-task Phase		
Introduction to Topics and Tasks		
- The teacher presents the topic to the class and highlights useful words and phrases.		
Task-cycle Phase		
Task	Planning	Report
- Students do the task in pairs or groups. - The teacher monitors; mistakes do no matter.	- Students prepare to report. - Accuracy is important, so the teacher stands by and gives advice when necessary.	- Students exchange ideas written or verbal form - The teacher listens and gives suggestions.
Language Focus Phase		
Analysis	Practice	
- The teacher identifies errors and corrects them.	- Students practice the correct forms either under the teacher's supervision or independently.	

Note: TBI procedures adapted from Willis (1996) and Ellis (2003)

Method

In this study, a quantitative research design was adopted. Data obtained from the pre- and post- reading comprehension tests were used to measure the students' reading comprehension after the implementation of a task-based oral presentation.

Participants

In this study, 28 second-year English major students studying in the Faculty of Education at a Rajabhat University in southern Thailand were selected as participants using a convenience sampling method. The students were assigned into two groups based on their scores on the pre-reading comprehension test. Students whose scores were higher than the mean score (M = 15.57) were assigned to the high reading proficiency group, while twelves students whose scores were lower than the mean scores were assigned to the low reading proficiency group. All students enrolled in a course entitled 'Integration of Academic Reading and Development of English Teacher Association' during the first semester of Academic Year 2024.

Research Instruments

Pre- and Post-Reading Comprehension Tests

The pre- and post- reading comprehension tests contained a total of 30 items (3 passages with 10 items each). The three selected reading passages were in the field of education. The test items and choices in the pre- and post- reading comprehension tests were reshuffled to avoid a memory effect. The questions were four-option multiple-choice items covering six types of reading comprehension: reading for topics (3 questions), reading for details (12 questions), meaning in contexts (6 questions), making references (3 questions), making inferences (3 questions), and reading for main ideas (3 questions). The pre- and post-tests were validated by three experts in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) based on the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC). With this regard, the IOC values of the pre- and post- reading comprehension tests were at 1.00.

Reading Materials

Eight reading passages related to education were selected from the IELTS academic reading comprehension section. All of the passages were modified to reduce complex structures and unfamiliar vocabulary. Then, the eight reading passages were evaluated by using the Flesch Reading Ease formula to ensure that they match the reading ability level of university students.

As the participants in this study were university students, the difficulty levels of the reading passages ranging from 33 - 49 (classified as difficult) proposed by Zhang (2021) were considered appropriate for university students to read.

Research Procedures

The study lasted for 10 weeks. Week 1 included the pre-test and an introduction to the objectives of the study. The three phases of TBI: pre-task/ pre-reading, task-cycle/ during-reading, and task-cycle/ post-reading, as well as the language focus phase, were also introduced in Week 1. Week 2 consisted of a demonstration lesson implementing a task-based oral presentation. Weeks 3-9 comprised the main lessons of the study. Week 10 was the post-test. Each week lasted 3.20 hours. The data collection procedures are briefly presented in the following figure.

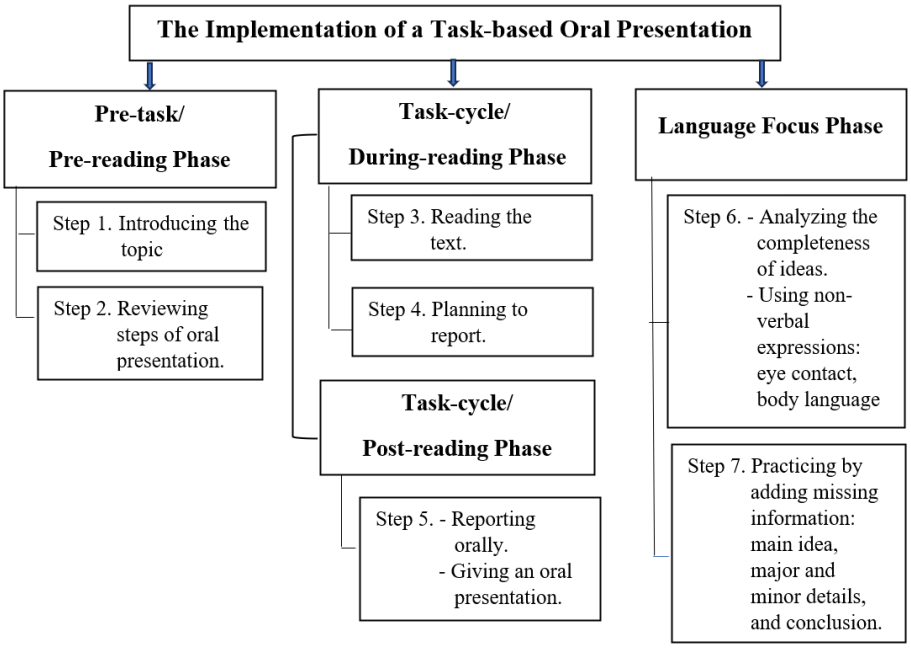


Figure 2. The implementation of a task-based oral presentation

Data Analysis

To answer the research question, the overall scores from the pre- and post- reading comprehension tests of the whole group and the two reading proficiency groups, as well as their scores for each type of comprehension question, were analyzed using the SPSS program.

The results of this study were analyzed by means and standard deviations. Paired Samples *t*-test was conducted to determine whether there were significant differences between the pre- and post- reading comprehension scores, as well as the scores of each type of comprehension question, of the whole group before and after the implementation of the task-based oral presentation. To further analyze the data, an Independent Samples *t*-test was used to examine whether there were significant differences between the high reading proficiency group and the low reading proficiency group in overall reading comprehension scores and in each type of comprehension question before and after the implementation of the task-based oral presentation.

Results

Thai Undergraduate English Student Teachers' Reading Comprehension before and after the Implementation of the Task-based Oral Presentation

Table 2 presents the results collected from the pre- and post- reading comprehension tests.

Table 2. *Paired sample t-test of the pre- and post-reading comprehension tests*

	M	SD	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-reading comprehension test	15.57	3.20	5.97	0.00
Post-reading comprehension test	18.75	2.62		

*$p < 0.01$

As presented in Table 2, there was a significant difference in the mean scores of the students' reading comprehension between the pre- and post-reading comprehension tests at the

0.01 level (t = 5.97, p = 0.00). The mean score of the post-reading comprehension test (M = 18.75, S.D. = 2.62) was significantly higher than that of the pre-reading comprehension test (M = 15.57, S.D. = 3.20).

Table 3 compares the findings collected from the pre-reading comprehension test between the high reading proficiency group and the low reading proficiency group.

Table 3. *Independent samples t-test of the pre-reading comprehension test of the high proficiency group and the low proficiency group*

	M	SD	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Higher proficiency group	17.87	1.85	8.08	0.00
Lower proficiency group	12.50	1.56		

**p<0.01*

As shown in Table 3, there was a significant difference in the mean scores of the students' reading comprehension between the high proficiency group and the low proficiency group in the pre-reading comprehension test at the 0.01 level (t = 8.08, p = 0.00). The mean score of the high proficiency group (M = 17.87, S.D. = 1.85) was significantly higher than that of the low proficiency group (M = 12.50, S.D. = 1.56).

Table 4 presents the findings from the pre-reading comprehension test of the six question types of the high proficiency group and the low proficiency group.

Table 4. *Means and standard deviations of the pre-reading comprehension test of the six question types of the high proficiency group and the low proficiency group*

Types of Questions	Pre-test				Sig (2-tailed)
	High (n = 16)		Low (n = 12)		
	M	SD	M	SD	
*1. Reading for topics	2.00	0.73	1.25	0.06	0.00
*2. Reading for details	7.00	1.54	4.85	1.31	0.00
**3. Meaning in contexts	3.56	1.03	2.83	0.57	0.03
4. Making references	2.00	0.63	1.75	0.96	0.41
5. Making inferences	1.75	0.93	1.08	0.79	0.57
6. Reading for main ideas	1.56	0.51	1.00	0.73	0.25

**p<0.01 **p<0.05*

As seen from Table 4, there were significant differences at the 0.01 level in the pre-reading comprehension test in reading for topics and reading for details between the two groups (t =2.86, p = 0.00 and t = 4.35, p = 0.00). The high proficiency group's mean score of reading for topics (M = 2.00, S.D. = 0.73) was significantly higher than that of the low proficiency group (M = 1.25, S.D. = 0.06). The mean score of reading for details among the high proficiency group (M = 7.00, S.D. = 1.54) was also significantly higher than that among the low proficiency group (M = 4.85, S.D. = 1.31). In addition, there was a significant difference at the 0.05 level in the mean scores for meaning in contexts (t = 2.19, p = 0.03). The high proficiency group's mean score (M = 3.56, S.D = 1.03) was significantly higher than that of the low proficiency group (M = 2.83, S.D. = 0.57)

However, no significant differences were found between the two groups in the other question types. As shown in the table, there was no significant difference in making references (t = 0.82, p = 0.41), with the high proficiency group (M = 2.00, S.D. = 0.63) and the low proficiency group (M = 1.75, S.D. = 0.96). Similarly, no significant differences were observed for making

inferences (t = 1.99, p = 0.57), with the high proficiency group (M = 1.75, S.D. = 0.93) and the low proficiency group (M = 1.08, S.D. = 0.79), or reading for main ideas (t = 2.38, p = 0.25), with the high proficiency group (M = 1.56, S.D. = 0.51) and the low proficiency group (M = 1.00, S.D. = 0.73).

Table 5 compares the results collected from the post-reading comprehension test between the high reading proficiency group and the low reading proficiency group.

Table 5. *Independent samples t-test of the post-reading comprehension test of the high proficiency group and the low proficiency group*

	M	SD	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
High proficiency group	19.68	2.89	2.36	0.02*
Low proficiency group	17.50	1.56		

$p<0.05$

Table 5 presents the Independent Samples *t*-test of the high reading proficiency group and the low reading proficiency group on the post-reading comprehension test. As can be seen from the table, there was a significant difference in the post-reading comprehension test at the 0.05 level (t = 2.36, p = 0.02) in the mean scores of the two groups' reading comprehension. The mean score of the high proficiency group (M = 19.68, S.D. = 2.89) was significantly higher than that of the low proficiency group (M = 17.50, S.D. = 1.56).

Table 6 presents the findings from the post-reading comprehension test of six question types of the high proficiency group and the low proficiency group.

Table 6. *Means and standard deviations of the post-reading comprehension test of the six question types of the high proficiency group and the low proficiency group*

Types of Questions	Post-test				Sig (2-tailed)
	High (n = 16)		Low (n = 12)		
	M	SD	M	SD	
1. Reading for topics	2.25	1.06	2.41	7.79	0.65
*2. Reading for details	8.00	1.31	6.08	2.02	0.00
3. Meaning in contexts	3.43	1.03	3.33	1.07	0.79
4. Making references	2.25	0.68	2.08	0.99	0.60
5. Making inferences	1.93	0.99	2.16	0.57	0.48
6. Reading for main ideas	1.81	0.40	1.41	0.66	0.06

$p<0.01$

As seen from Table 6, there was only a significant difference at the 0.01 level in the post-reading comprehension test in reading for details between the two groups (t = 3.03, p = 0.00). The high proficiency group's mean score of reading for topics (M = 8.00, S.D. = 1.31) was significantly higher than that of the low proficiency group (M = 6.08, S.D. = 2.02).

However, there were no significant differences in the remaining questions between the two groups. As shown in the table, no significant differences were found between the two groups in reading for topics (t = -0.45, p = 0.65), with the high proficiency group (M = 2.25, S.D. = 1.06) and the low proficiency group (M = 2.41, S.D. = 7.79); meaning in contexts (t = -0.26, p = 0.79), with the high proficiency group (M = 3.43, S.D. 1.03) and the low proficiency group (M = 3.33, S.D. = 1.07); making references (t = -0.52, p = 0.60), with the high proficiency group (M = 2.25, S.D. = 0.68) and the low proficiency group (M = 2.08, S.D. = 0.99); making inferences (t = -0.70,

p = 0.48), with the high proficiency group (M = 1.93, S.D. = 0.99) and the low proficiency group (M = 2.16, S.D. = 0.57); or reading for main ideas (t = 4.94, p = 0.06), with the high proficiency group (M = 1.81, S.D. = 0.40) and the low proficiency group (M = 1.41, S.D. = 0.66).

Discussion

This study investigated the effects of a task-based oral presentation on reading comprehension of Thai undergraduate English student teachers across two reading proficiency levels. The findings revealed that the implementation of a task-based oral presentation effectively enhanced the students' reading comprehension, especially among the low reading proficiency group. The findings align with several prior studies conducted in Thailand and other EFL contexts.

The findings of this study are in line with those found in Fikni and Ningrum's (2021) study. In their study, students were required to answer a set of questions related to the text verbally. The results highlighted that oral presentation enhanced Grade 11 Indonesian students' responses to reading text. Similarly, the study by Houda and Sara (2017) indicated that short novels assigned for students to read, summarize, and present orally improved second-year Algerian students' reading comprehension.

A possible explanation could be that the three phases of TBI adapted from Willis (1996) and Ellis (2003) can effectively enhance reading comprehension by scaffolding learners' engagement with texts before, during, and after reading. The Pre-task/ Pre-reading Phase incorporates task-oriented activities designed to activate students' background knowledge and develop skills necessary for task performance, thereby enhancing students' readiness and familiarity with task requirements (Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004; Willis, 1996). The Task-cycle/ During reading/ Post-reading Phase provides opportunities for meaning-focused communication rather than linguistic accuracy (Ellis, 2003), which can help students prepare and deliver a task in a low-anxiety environment. In the Language Focus Phase, language features observed during a task such as vocabulary, key ideas, and grammatical structures are explained. Therefore, these three phases of TBI create a coherent instructional sequence that transforms reading into an active, strategic, and meaning-driven process and leads to the improved of reading comprehension (Alderson, 2000; Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004).

Another explanation could be that a task-based oral presentation integrates multiple language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These four skills are developed integratively within a single communicative activity, reflecting the holistic nature of real-world language use (Norbaevna & Yuldashevna, 2019). In this study, students were not only required to understand the content but also to interpret, summarize, and present it to others. By preparing for an oral presentation task, students had to read attentively by identifying key ideas (main ideas and supporting details) and organizing information coherently, which can deepen their reading comprehension. Such integration allows students to process information at various linguistic levels, reinforcing vocabulary, grammar, and discourse structures encountered in reading texts (Richards & Rodgers, 2004).

A further explanation is that metacognitive strategies may play a critical role in improving reading comprehension among low proficiency students by enabling them to regulate and control their reading processes more effectively. In this study, students were required to plan, monitor, and evaluate their understanding while preparing the information from the text in order to give an oral presentation. These types of metacognitive strategies help build comprehension (Madebo & Gutema, 2024). It has been noted that when metacognitive strategies are explicitly taught, students

demonstrate significant improvements in reading comprehension and strategic behavior (Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990).

The findings of this study, however, contradict those reported by Houda and Sara (2017). Houda and Sara found that the teachers did not use an oral presentation as a task due to a belief that the main advantage of oral presentations is to build L2 proficiency more effectively in ESL context than EFL context. A possible explanation for this discrepancy is the difference in instructional context, pedagogical beliefs, and task implementation in Houda and Sara's study. This belief may have led teachers to underutilize oral presentations in reading instruction, assuming that their benefits would be limited in environments with restricted target language exposure (EFL). In the context of the present study, however, oral presentations can benefit undergraduate English student teachers by preparing them for their future careers and supporting their ability to read academic texts and effectively transmit ideas to their future students.

Regarding the two reading proficiency groups, the results indicated that the student teachers in the high proficiency group significantly outperformed those in the low proficiency group at the .01 level in the pre-test and at the .05 level in the post-test. This indicates that the student teachers' reading proficiency levels affected their reading comprehension. These findings confirm that language proficiency plays a critical role in reading comprehension performance (Grabe, 2009; Nation, 2001).

Moreover, it is noticeable that prior to the implementation of the task-based oral presentation, the high proficiency students demonstrated superior performance across the three types of comprehension questions (reading for topics, reading for details, and meaning in contexts). After the implementation of the task-based oral presentation, however, only reading for details showed a statistically significant difference at the .01 level in the post-test.

An explanation for the improvement could be that successful reading for a topic relies heavily on top-down strategies, which are fostered by meaning-focused tasks (Ellis, 2003; Grabe, 2009). Moreover, the reading strategies used during the three phases of TBI might help improve the low-reading-proficiency students' global comprehension. In this study, the students were encouraged to apply reading strategies during the three phases of TBI. Cognitive strategies such as skimming, scanning, and making predictions allow readers to focus on global meaning rather than decoding every unfamiliar word (Hilmi, 2024; Nation, 2001; Nassaji, 2003). According to Duke and Pearson (2002), a single strategy on its own cannot guarantee to be effective or adequate for readers to comprehend a text. Additionally, low proficiency students who repeatedly use cognitive strategies during reading tasks may gradually increase automaticity and efficiency in processing texts (Perfetti, 2007).

Similarly, in terms of meaning in contexts, it was found that the low reading proficiency students improved the scores substantially, indicating no significant difference between the two groups in the post-test. According to Ellis (2003), focusing on the meaning of completing a task involves contextual interpretation. Thus, the low-proficiency students might have used contextual clues to help them interpret the information.

One possible explanation for the significant difference in reading for details between the two groups in the post-test might lie in differences in the reading strategies used. High proficiency readers employ a wider range of reading strategies and use them more frequently, flexibly, and effectively than low proficiency readers (Anderson, 1991; Kern,1997). Moreover, in reading for details, readers need to locate specific information within a text, which can be quite demanding for low proficiency readers who may still struggle with limitations in vocabulary and syntactic

complexity used in the text. When readers focus more on lower-level linguistic processing, this can constrain their higher-level comprehension of details in reading (Alderson, 2000; Grabe, 2009; Koda, 2005).

Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the effects of a task-based oral presentation on Thai undergraduate English student teachers' reading comprehension. The findings suggest that a task-based oral presentation is an effective model that can be used to help improve students' reading comprehension, especially among low reading proficiency students. As mentioned by Nunan (1989), the main goal of TBI is to use a target language to comprehend, produce, manipulate, and interact with meaning, with a focus on meaning rather than form. Additionally, Coffelt et al. (2016) as well as Mishara and Muralikrishna (2007), propose that an oral presentation is a required skill for university students to transmit the information effectively. Therefore, TBI can be an effective teaching method, and oral presentations can be assigned as a task in a reading class to improve EFL students' reading comprehension. The findings of this study help broaden the existing research and theoretical perspectives on TBI and reading strategy instruction and raise the possibility that a task-based oral presentation could be used as an effective teaching approach in EFL reading classes.

Pedagogical Implications

This study provides several valuable pedagogical implications for EFL reading instruction, particularly for students with low reading proficiency. To begin with, the findings underscore the need to integrate TBI through oral presentation tasks into university-level EFL curricula. In addition, its successful implementation requires teacher training. Providing EFL teachers with opportunities to develop their skills in effectively implementing a task-based oral presentation with a special focus on task design, classroom management, and different types of assessment aligned with TBI can enhance their ability to apply this approach more effectively. Moreover, teachers should keep in mind that TBI can help promote low proficiency readers' motivation to learn to read, as they are encouraged to participate in group activities in class. In addition, providing a supportive classroom environment can increase the engagement and motivation of students with low reading proficiency. To help low proficiency students prepare for a task, teachers can explicitly model and scaffold cognitive reading strategies, such as skimming, scanning, and inferencing, as well as metacognitive strategies, such as planning, summarizing, and highlighting key ideas during the three phases of reading. Incorporating these reading strategies into a meaningful task, such as an oral presentation, enables students to regulate their reading processes while engaging in authentic communication. This method is particularly beneficial for low-proficiency EFL learners, as it supports strategic reading development and enhances comprehension through repeated and guided practice within a communicative context (Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004).

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

The limitations of this study and suggestions for future research are as follows. First, a convenience sampling method was used to select the participants, the study was conducted with a relatively small number of participants in a specific setting. To generalize whether the implementation of a task-based oral presentation improves EFL students' reading comprehension, future research should apply this teaching model in reading classes with larger sample sizes and

across multiple research contexts to validate the generalizability of the findings of the present study. Second, the high and the low reading proficiency groups in this study were divided based on their mean score of the pre-reading comprehension test. It is suggested that future research use a standardized test to divide students into different proficiency groups. Third, while a task-based oral presentation proved effective in this study, integrating TBI with tasks related to other skills, such as writing, speaking, or critical thinking is a crucial area for further research. Finally, as reading strategies played an important role in improving reading comprehension of both high and low reading proficiency groups, as discussed above, future research might investigate reading strategy awareness before the intervention and the reading strategy to use after the intervention, especially among students with low reading proficiency.

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