Implementing EFL Students' Speed Reading through Online Delivery Mode of Learning

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Abstract

With the new paradigm shift of education, online learning plays more significant role in education. With the diversity of technological tools and high potential of technology, there are many educators who now design online courses in order to respond to the students' needs and encourage the students' learning achievement. The objectives of this study were 1) to implement and study the results of employing online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction to enhance university students' speed reading, and 2) to explore the students' attitudes toward using online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction to enhance university students' speed reading.

The participants were 50 second-year English major students who enrolled ERW2 at the University in the Northern Part of Thailand. The instruments used were open-ended questionnaire, semi-structured interview, online delivery mode of reading instruction package, pre-test, and post-test. The statistics employed for this study was T-test. The findings revealed that the mean level of the students' speed reading achievement before using online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction was 8.86 (2.100) and the mean level of the students' speed reading achievement after using online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction was 11.16 (1.899). It could be observed that the P value was at the significant level at .05. So, it could be summarized that implementing online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction could support the university students' speed reading. Moreover, the students had positive attitude towards online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction.

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Introduction

Education, the most important factor, is one of the common senses of studying age of human being that he should get it done consciously. The motivation of learning is to obtain knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be applied in the future of their lives or jobs efficiently as much as possible. With this in mind, Thailand is concentrated on education since kindergarten to tertiary levels in order to enhance young generations in the community to gain more knowledge and fulfill their academic and professional achievement. Apart from that, The Ministry of Education is recognized the importance of English language and agreed to support young generations to study English language as well.

With the multicultural context, English which is one of the important languages plays the most significant role in many areas: travelling, business, industry, mass communication, especially education. This makes young generations in the society active and enthusiastic to communicate with English language. This is with the reason that it is the crucial tool to communicate and retrieve information to each other.

For education in Thailand, teaching and learning English is emphasized into four language skills: listening, speaking, writing, and reading. However, it is remarkably observed that reading becomes one of the most important skills in language learning from kindergarten to tertiary education. That is because reading is counted as the skill in which students gain information about the world. Moreover, reading can help students become and remain award of their subject, to keep their knowledge and understanding up to date (Fairbairn, G, & Fairbairn, S, 2001).

However, most of the students still face with many problems in reading. According to the preliminary survey, the students revealed that they recognize that reading skill is the most important skill in education. However, they did not understand the information written in the text. They could not analyze the text: identifying the main idea, major, and minor supporting details of the text. They could not differentiate between facts and opinions. Moreover, inferences and critical reading were unclear. Limitation of time was also mentioned. These affect directly to ineffective and slow reading. In terms of teaching and learning, generally, there were three stages of instruction: pre-, while-, and post reading. That is, the students were stimulated their interest, prepared their language for the text, and activated their prior knowledge. Then, they studied reading strategies and ended up with practice. Reading became the complex skill that they were required more time to comprehend and practice. The teacher provided more activities to practice; however, the time to study in the classroom seemed limited. Consequently, studying only in the classroom is not enough for them to study.

Moreover, with the rapid change of technology enhancement of education especially in higher level, it is accepted not to escape from the pressures of globalization. By the same token, it is seemingly observed that there would be a broader perspective and flexibility of teaching and learning, technology is integrated not only blended but also fully online courses endlessly.

Regarding the attributes mentioned above, online learning is one of the beneficial alternatives to improve the students' reading skills. In conjunction with the attempt to improve reading instruction, many teachers and educators are interested in establishing online learning courses to the students. The advanced features of computers and software allow teachers to create multimedia and interactive virtual classrooms that can enhance language skills (Pavavijarn, 2004).

With this in mind, the study is aimed to implement online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction to enhance university students' speed reading. It will add more value to reading instruction, respond to the new trend of education, and support students' speed reading achievement.

Getting to Know Online Learning and Its Potential

Online learning, also known as OL, has been prevalently used in academic setting for learning innovation in the past five years. Even though this popular term is not new, with the new paradigm shift of education, it is remarkably noticed that online learning is still renowned and employed worldwide in all levels not only kindergarten but also tertiary level.

There are many scholars who define online learning diversely. To start with Heater & Fogarty (2002), online learning refers to learning via the internet. It is indeed similar to Dabbagh, Marra, & Howland (2019) that online learning can be described as any learning that takes place using the Internet as a delivery system. In addition, online learning is also represented a type of distance education and web-based learning, e-learning, and online education (Meyer, 2014). Moreover, it supports learning's interaction with content and/or people via the Internet for the purpose of learning (Means, Bakia, & Murphy, 2014).

Even though online learning seems to be similar as web-based learning, distance learning, or technology-mediated learning, it appears more outstanding than the others. That is to say, it has the potential to be used in many different ways, and can also support deeper levels of learning (Bach, Haynes, & Smith, 2007). Not only it is supported deeper levels of learning, but also it has the power to make education more equitable. It can mitigate barriers imposed by geography, economic and family responsibilities, time constraints, or health and mobility issues. It can make knowledge truly free, with just an Internet or mobile network connection (Mune, 2020). In addition, Carliner (2004) insisted that it is effective regarding to asynchronous instruction which the teacher and students are not online at the same time. This can help reducing learning time by about a third. Moreover, students can skip the lessons they have already known in the classroom.

With this in mind, it is to observe that online learning is referred to a form of education that takes place over the internet. The students attain flexible environment to learn anytime anywhere and support students' variety of learning styles.

At the present time, teaching and learning, especially, English reading is not occurred only in the classroom but outside the classroom. Conventional format of teaching and learning has endlessly renovated. With a diversity of technological facilitated tools, the classroom is designed creatively. Online learning is one of the challenging approaches which take more roles in reading classroom not only in primary but also tertiary levels of education. For teachers, online teaching can add more value of instruction. Teachers can design their reading courses both face-to-face and online formats. This enhances the students to comprehend the lessons and fulfill their academic achievement. For students, online learning knows no time zones, and location and distance are not issues. In asynchronous online learning, students can access the online materials anytime, while synchronous online learning allows for real-time interaction between students and teachers. Students can use the Internet to access up-to-date and relevant learning materials, and can communicate with experts in the field which they are studying (Anderson, 2008).

Generally, online learning can be designed with the authentic academic setting. It is flexible to both teacher and students in order to meet their needs. According to Shirley et al. (2007), online learning can be located into the categories web supplemented, web dependent or fully online, depending on how much online content and learning process is used in any one module.

Online Delivery Mode of Learning Design in Reading Instruction

In order to design online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction to support students' speed reading, it is remarkably important to concentrate on two main key terms: proportion and process. The proportion is the first factor that is highly considered. Allen & Seaman (2010) recommended the types of course classifications representing online delivery meets 80+ percent. That means the course where most or all of the content is delivered online and typically has no face-to-face meetings. The table below shows the course classifications.

Table 1 Types of Course Classifications

Proportion of Content Delivered Online	Type of Course	Typical Description
0%	Traditional	Course with no online technology used – content is delivered in writing or orally.
1 to 29%	Web Facilitated	Course that uses web-based technology to facilitate what is essentially a face-to-face course. May use a course management system (CMS) or web pages to post the syllabus and assignments.

30 to 79%	Blended/Hybrid	Course that blends online and face-to-face delivery. Substantial proportion of the content is delivered online, typically uses online discussions, and typically has a reduced number of face-to-face meetings.
80+%	Online	A course where most or all of the content is delivered online. Typically have no face-to-face meetings.

(Allen & Seaman, 2010)

It is quite similar to Chantanarungpak (2005) who focused on the types of course classifications and divided them into four main types. The table below shows the types of courses:

Table 2 Types of Course Classifications

Proportion of Content Delivered Online	Type of Course	Typical Description
0%	Traditional	Course with 5-10% online technology used; online is conveyed in teaching process, scheduling, and announcements.
5-10%	Informational	Course with 5-10% online technology used; online is conveyed in teaching process, scheduling, and
20-30%	Supplement	Course with 20-30% online technology used; teaching materials, course supplements, websites, and e-mails are delivered online.
50-60%	Blended	Course with online and face-to-face delivery mode. Online resources are used.
90-100%	Distance	Course with online delivery mode and no face-to-face interaction.

(Chantanarungpak, 2005)

Thereupon, it is to articulate that the proportion of online delivery mode of learning is recommended to be 80-100 percent which has no face-to-face delivery mode of instruction.

The second is the process. Typically, online learning is comprised of both synchronous and asynchronous communication processes. This is supported by Clarke & Watts-Taffe (2014) that online teaching and learning can be asynchronous, where interaction is not dependent on time or space. The defining features of completely online experiences are that the teacher and the student do not share a physical proximity and that learning can be done on a flexible schedule determined mostly by the learner (usually within guidelines and time frames established by the teacher). This contributes that synchronous and asynchronous tools support different aspects of communication. That is to say, synchronous tools are performed as a real-time communication in same time different place condition.   Kear (2011) disclosed that synchronous tools allow students to communicate when they are separated in distance and time. They offer possibilities for different kinds of interaction among students and teachers.   The real-time nature of the communication can make the interactions seem more spontaneous and natural than with asynchronous tools. The use of audio, video and tools such as shared whiteboards allows for a wider range of activities, and enables rapid feedback. Moreover, synchronous tools are good for brainstorming ideas, and can be useful for planning and decision-making. Meanwhile, asynchronous tools are enabled some period of time communication in different time different place condition. Students can respond when it is the most convenient for them to do so, decreasing the chances that students will leave the study due to time constraints. The students will also likely have more time to reflect upon their responses, potentially resulting in richer data sets (Paulus, Nina, & Dempster, 2014).

Nevertheless, in order to design online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction, proportion and process are highly endorsed. 80-100% is claimed to be an appropriate proportion of online learning. Synchronous and asynchronous communication tools are integrated in order to fulfill the educational mode of learning: same time different place and different time different place conditions.

Online Learning in ESL Reading Classroom

Generally, reading is like a social process which involves the willingness on the part of readers and authors to communicate with each other (May, 1990). Apart from that, reading can be compared to a computational flowchart that organizes and presents graphically the information known or hypothesized about it and how that information is related within the model. And it is said that reading is as a kind of information processing system and a kind of expert decision-making system (Birch, 2015).

For ESL reading, it is not as easy as it is presented. There are many factors affecting to the difficulty of learning to read in another language. These can be linguistic differences, individual difference, and sociocultural difference (Farrell, 2009).

In order to become successful in ESL reading, online delivery mode of learning can support the information processing system. There were many experts who succeeded in applying online delivery mode of learning in reading classroom. To begin with, Fitzgerald (2009) studied the effects of online instruction

on reading comprehension achievement of students with learning disabilities. The findings revealed that the students improved their oral reading mean average scores from an instructional level (90%-95%). Moreover, Ciampa (2012) investigated the effects of an online reading program on Grade 1 students' engagement and comprehension strategy use. The results from the study indicated that all of the participants increased their comprehension scores from pre-test to post-test after using the online e-book reading program, enjoyed the e-book reading experience, and frequently read the online e-books at home in their free time.

Objectives of the Study

There were two objectives of the study:

1. to implement and study the results of employing online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction to enhance university students' speed reading
2. to explore the students' attitudes toward employing online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction to enhance university students' speed reading
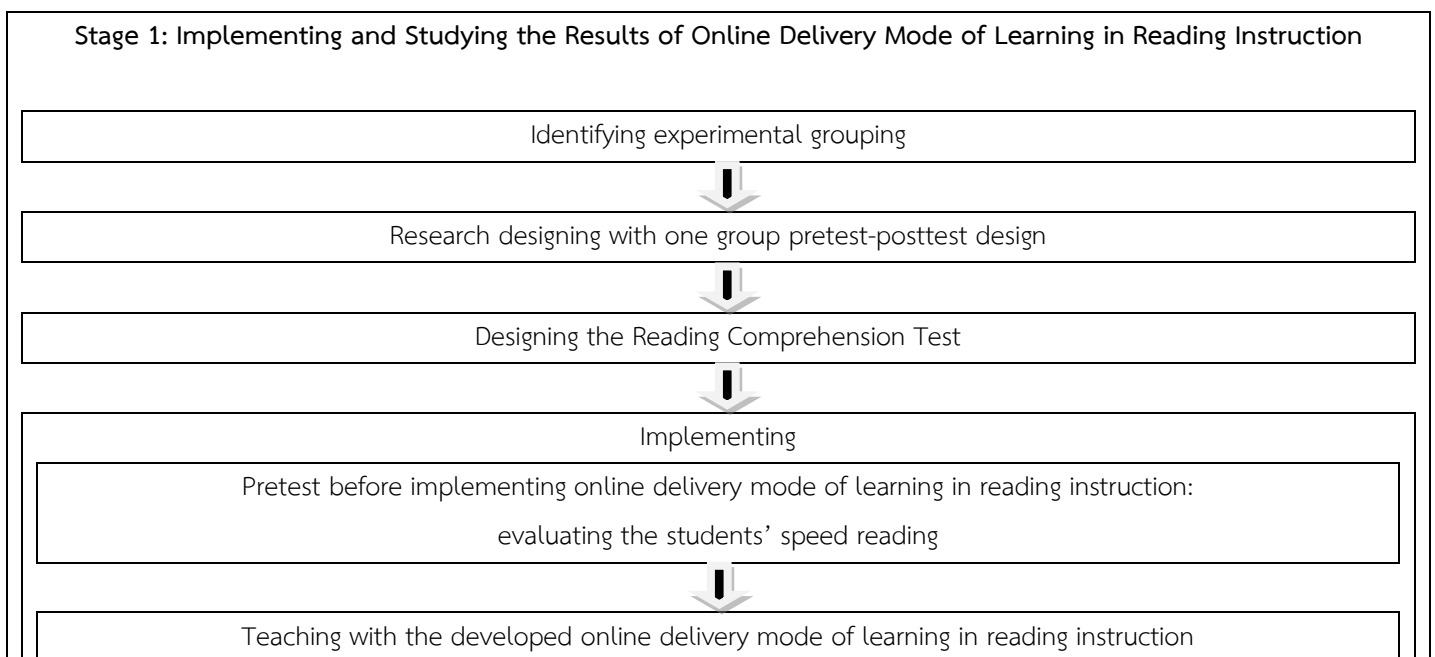
Research Procedures

In this study, the research procedures were divided into two stages as follows:

Stage 1: implementing and studying the results of online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction to enhance university students' speed reading

Stage 2: exploring the students' attitudes toward employing online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction to enhance university students' speed reading

From the above, it could be presented in the form of the figure as follows:

Stage 1: Implementing and Studying the Results of Online Delivery Mode of Learning in Reading Instruction
Identifying experimental grouping
⬇
Research designing with one group pretest-posttest design
⬇
Designing the Reading Comprehension Test
⬇
Implementing
Pretest before implementing online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction: evaluating the students' speed reading
⬇
Teaching with the developed online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction

Pretest before implementing online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction: evaluating the students' speed reading
Data analyzing: Comparing students' speed reading before and after implementing online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction

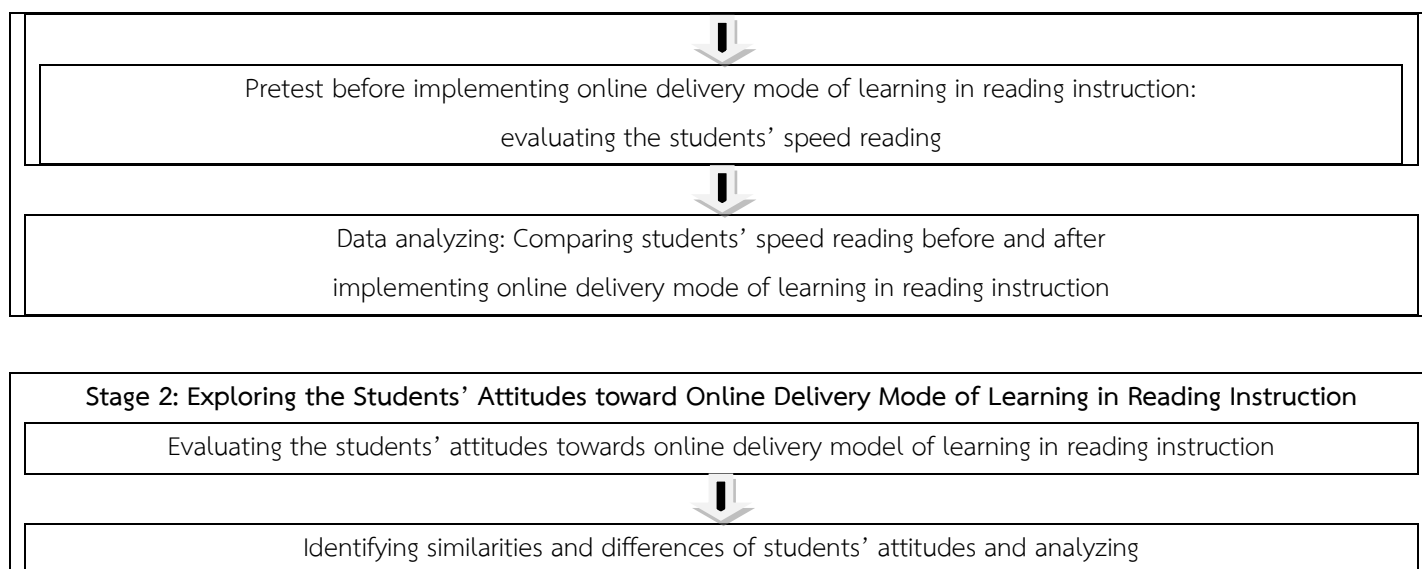| |
|---|
| **Stage 2: Exploring the Students' Attitudes toward Online Delivery Mode of Learning in Reading Instruction** |
| Evaluating the students' attitudes towards online delivery model of learning in reading instruction |
| Identifying similarities and differences of students' attitudes and analyzing |

Figure 1 Research Procedure

Before implementing online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction, the researcher first surveyed and studied basic information about the students' problems in English reading and the teachers' state and problems of teaching and learning reading. In addition, theoretical concepts and related studies relevant to online learning and ESL reading were studied. Then, the online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction was sketched and examined the effectiveness by experts. The pilot study was conducted for the feasibility of implementation and revised.

Stage 1: implementing and studying the results of online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction to enhance university students' speed reading

After the online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction was evaluated by the experts and revised, it was implemented in English Reading and Writing 2 classroom. The participants were first completed the pre-test to evaluate their speed reading, then implemented. After that, the post-test was administered. There were 7 units: 1) Introduction to Critical Reading, 2) Critical Reading Strategies, 3) Making Inferences, 4) Identifying the Writer's Purposes, 5) Identifying Facts and Opinions, 6) Identifying Author's Point of View and Mood, and 7) Identifying Author's Tone and Attitude.

Stage 2: exploring the students' attitudes toward employing online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction to enhance university students' speed reading

The students were required to explore their attitudes towards studying with online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction. The semi-structured interviews were conducted. Then the researcher identified similarities and differences of students' attitudes and finally analyzed.

Findings

With two objectives of this study, the research findings were presented in two main parts as follows:

1. to implement and study the results of employing online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction to enhance university students' speed reading

2. to explore the students' attitudes toward online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction to enhance university students' speed reading

Finding One

The findings to implement and study the results of employing online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction to enhance university students' speed reading

The online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction was implemented in English Reading and Writing 2 Classroom, at the University in the Northern Part of Thailand. The T-test Dependent Sample was used for evaluating the students' speed reading achievement. It was shown in Table 3 as follows:

Table 3 The Average Score for the Comparison of the Students' Speed Reading Achievement by Using Online Delivery Mode of Learning in Reading Instruction by Pre-test and Post-Test Scores

Scores	N	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	t	P
Scores for Pre-test	50	8.86	2.100	14.175	.000
Scores for Post-test	50	11.16	1.899		

*Significant level at .05

From the table above, the mean level of the students' speed reading achievement before employing online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction was 8.86 (2.100) and the mean level of the students' speed reading achievement after using online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction was 11.16 (1.899). It could be observed that the P value was at the significant level at .05. So, it could be summarized that implementing online delivery mode of reading instruction could support the university students' speed reading.

Finding Two

The findings to explore the students' attitudes toward online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction to enhance university students' speed reading

After the online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction was implemented, the researcher conducted a semi-structured interview in order to explore the students' attitudes towards online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction. The semi-structured interview was consisted of three main questions:

1) What is/are the students' opinion (s) towards studying with online delivery mode of learning?

2) What do the students think about learning reading via online which can motivate them to read faster?

3) What do the students think about the flexibility of studying with online delivery mode of learning?

It was found that for the students' opinions towards studying with online delivery mode of learning, the students revealed that studying with online delivery mode of learning is quite beneficial for them to improve their speed reading. Online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction provided conveniences to them. That is to say, they could study anytime anywhere without any restrictions. They could express their reading performance both in synchronous and asynchronous communication modes. They also supported that even it is 100% online, it seems they did not study alone. It is to clarify that the teacher acts as a facilitator who stimulate their curiosity and prior knowledge. In addition, they get teacher's support anytime when they need more clarification and explanation. Moreover, the format of the lessons encouraged them to be eager to study. The online program that the research applied was user friendly and colorful.

For the students' ideas towards how online delivery model of learning in reading instruction motivates to read faster, they expressed that there was more than one time to access to study in online delivery mode of learning. When they studied, they could move forward and backward in order to study and practice. Online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction was highly motivated them to read faster.

Last but not least, the flexibility of studying with online delivery mode of learning in reading is also concentrated on. They agreed that online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction was very flexible for them to study. They could study anytime anywhere with portable mobile phones, I- pads, or other electronic devices. Apart from that, they had more time to recall their background knowledge, build up new strategies, and practice whenever they would love to.

Conclusion and Implications

Online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction is proposed to be one of the challenging ways to apply in the reading classroom. One finding from the implementation of online delivery mode of learning in reading instruction has shown that the students gain more achievement of developing their speed reading. Their reading skill can improve endlessly; that is to say, the students can spend unlimited time to follow each reading stage: pre-, while-, and post reading. Moreover, the other finding revealed that online delivery mode of learning is provided same time different place and different time different place conditions which facilitate the students to learn. It is flexible to study anytime anywhere with internet access. So, it is recommended to design this kind of intervention in reading instruction.

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