

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 RATIONALE**

Reading is one of the most important and needed skills for Thai people, especially Thai students. They use reading skills to read texts and other reading materials. Apart from these, they also use reading skills to surf the internet.

According to Anderson (1999, p. 1), reading is an active and fluent process which involves readers and reading materials in building meaning. A success in reading occurs when the readers combine printed words with their background knowledge and experiences. They, in doing so, use a wide range of strategies to make meaning from the printed information.

For students studying Business English, the ability to read is an essential skill if they are to gain access to the world of business nowadays. Clearly, they should be able to read all business English texts. Therefore, reading strategies should be taken into consideration.

Numerous studies have been concerned with the reading strategies among learners of English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Carrell and Eisterhold (2002, p. 76) state that reading strategies can be classified as bottom-up and top - down. Additionally, Eskey (as cited in Upton, 1997, p. 10) observes that less proficient L2 readers tend to focus more on bottom- up strategies while more proficient readers tend to use a greater mix of bottom- up and top- down strategies. Kern (as cited in Upton, 1997, p. 2) looks at the role of translation as a cognitive strategy in the L2 reading comprehension process. The result of this study reveals that the use of translation to aid comprehension decreases as proficiency increases.

Reading strategies are useful for teachers to investigate in order to know what reading strategies students employ and what strategies students should improve. Also, the teachers must be responsible for promoting the use of such strategies among their students both inside and outside the classrooms.

## 1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this study was to ascertain the reading strategies in English comprehension of first-year students majoring in Business English at Hatyai University.

## 1.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1.3.1 The subjects in this study were 36 first-year Business English students. They were studying the Reading in Business English course in the academic year 2004.

1.3.2 The study concentrated on the reading strategies the students used for reading English texts.

## 1.4 BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

1.4.1 This study assumed that all subjects honestly answered every questionnaire item.

1.4.2 The subjects all had similar background knowledge and experience in reading English texts.

## 1.5 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Reading strategies : the techniques or activities that the readers report using in order to achieve the goal of comprehension before, during and after reading English texts.

Strategies : the learning techniques, behaviors, problem- solving or study skills.

Reading comprehension : the active process in which readers recall, relate and construct new or incoming information with prior knowledge stored in their mind.

Business English students : the first-year students who are studying the Reading in Business English course at Hatyai University.

English as a Second Language (ESL) : the situation where a learner studies the English language as a medium of instruction in his/her school or university as well as communication in his/her community.

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) : the situation where the learner studies the English language as a medium of instruction in his/her school or university.

#### 1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted to identify the types of strategies for learning English as a foreign language employed by first- year Business English students at Hatyai University in the academic year 2004.

The finding of the study should be useful for increasing teachers' awareness of reading strategies used by Business English students. The result of the study will be useful for teachers to help their students enhance their reading proficiency by teaching them appropriate strategies. Moreover, the study may pave the way towards further research on how to improve the English reading course in the program.

#### 1.7 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This study is divided into five chapters

Chapter one consists of the rationale, objectives of the study, scope of the study, basic assumptions, definitions of terms, and significance of the study.

Chapter two is a review of related literature.

Chapter three presents the procedure of the study and the data analysis.

Chapter four presents and discusses the data obtained.

Chapter five consists of a summary of the study, discussions, conclusions, and recommendations for further research.