#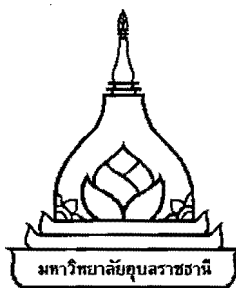 UBRU UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' READING STRATEGIES AND THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARDS USING L1 TRANSLATION IN ENGLISH READING INSTRUCTION

PHANIDA YOMMEE

AN INDEPENDENT STUDY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
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TITLE   UBRU UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' READING STRATEGIES AND THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARDS USING L1 TRANSLATION IN ENGLISH READING INSTRUCTION

NAME   MRS. PHANIDA YOMMEE

THIS INDEPENDENT STUDY HAS BEEN ACCEPTED BY

.... CHAIR

(ASST. PROF. DR. SUPATH KOOKIATTIKOON)

.... COMMITTEE

(DR. TIKAMPORN WUTTIPORNPONG)

.... COMMITTEE

(ASST. PROF. DR. KETKANDA JATURONGKACHOKE)

.... DEAN

(ASST. PROF. DR. INTHIRA SAHEE)

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(ASST. PROF. DR. UTITH INPRASIT)

VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

FOR THE PRESIDENT OF UBON RATCHATHANI UNIVERSITY

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(Mrs. Phanida Yommee)

Researcher

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ภาษาอังกฤษ

โดย : พณิดา ย่อมมี

ชื่อปริญญา : ศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต

สาขาวิชา : ภาษาอังกฤษและการสื่อสาร

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ศัพท์สำคัญ : ทัศนคติ กลวิธีในการอ่าน การแปลในใจ การอ่านภาษาอังกฤษ

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อื่นๆชนิดใด ดีกว่าการใช้การแปลในการสอนการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษ

ABSTRACT

TITLE   : UBRU UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' READING
                STRATEGIES AND THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARDS USING
                L I TRANSLATION IN ENGLISH READING INSTRUCTION

BY   : PHANIDA YOMMEE

DEGREE   : MASTER OF ARTS

MAJOR   : ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION

CHAIR   : ASST.PROF. SUPATH KOOKIATTIKOON, Ph.D.

KEYWORDS : ATTITUDES / READING STRATEGIES / MENTAL
                   TRANSLATION / SECOND LANGUAGE READING

        The aim of this study is twofold. Firstly, to investigate the students' attitudes towards the use of L1 Translation in English reading instruction. Secondly, to determine to what degree mental translation is used while students trying to comprehend a second language (L2) text. To do so, a group of 30 UBRU undergraduate students were asked to answer questionnaire. Twelve items in thequestionnaire plus two pre-questions and English paragraphs were used in this investigation. The results showed that the students had positive attitudes towards the use of the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) in English reading instruction. They believed that translating English into Thai helps them acquire English vocabulary, phrases, and sentence structures. In addition, the students often use mental translation while reading English text. Particularly, when they had problems with difficult sentences, they thought that L1 translation helped them understand English text better and that there were no better methods than using Thai translation in English reading instruction.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter starts with the background and rationale of the study, research questions, purposes of the study, scope of the study and the significance of the study.

1.1 Background and Rationale of the Study

English in the present has become the most commonly taught foreign language around the world. In order to help learning and teaching foreign languages efficiently, many teaching and learning methods have been developed and practiced throughout the centuries. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), around 500 years ago Latin was the famous language to learn in the western countries as "it was the dominant language of education, commerce, religion, and government". At that time,the study of classical Latin and the analysis of its grammar became the model for foreign language study from the 17th to the 19th century because of its emphasis on grammatical rules, syntactic structures and translation of literary texts ("Grammar Translation Method", n.d.).

By the nineteenth century, the method called "Grammar Translation Method" (henceforth, GTM) had been the only one method used to teach Latin to those language learners and had become the standard way of foreign language teaching in school (Richards and Rodgers, 2001; Bonyadi, 2003). In addition, the GTM was increasingly used to teach other foreign languages in educational institutions for "scholarly" purposes (Brow 2007:18). Historically speaking, the GT M is a foreign language teaching tool derived from the classical method of teaching Greek and Latin. This method emphasizes the use of the first language (L1) by requiring student to translate whole text word for word from L1 to L2 (second language) and vice versa. The learners have to memorize numerous grammatical rules, exceptions and enormous vocabulary lists. Even though the GTM "has no advocates" as "it is a method for which there is no theory" (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:7), and the Second Language Acquisition theory and research does not support

its use, it continues to be widely used by language teachers for many years. It has persisted in whole or in part in many language- curricula ("Grammar Translation Method" n.d.). In an English Language Teaching (ELT) situation of GTM, the important goal of learning English used to be the ability of reading and comprehending the literature of the target language .Thus, teaching reading and writing skills of English as a foreigner language were based on the Grammar Translation Method (Griffiths, 2004; Carreres, 2006).

Based on the importance of translation as one of the efficiency strategies in foreign language learning (Jumpelt, 19849 and N.J. Roos, 2000 cited in Mehta, 2010) , it is fair to say that the GTM is widely recognized as the most traditional of all the methods of foreign or second language teaching situation all over the world. It is one of the very useful devices to learn the grammar and vocabulary of a foreign language and to help improving language skills (Kavaliauskiene and Kaminskiene, 2007).

The use of L1 translation in English L2 instruction is very important in the language learning process especially in countries where English has become as the second or foreign language to study. Some investigators such as Kharma and Hajjaj, 1989; Franklin, 1990; Macaro (1995 cited in Macaro, 1997); Dickson, 1996; Swain and Lapkin, 2000; Scott and de la Fuente (2008 cited in Song, 1998), highlighted that most teachers and learners are in favour of the use of L1 in L2 learning. As Jumpelt (1984 cited in Mehta, 2010) says, translation method played an influential role in learning foreign languages in the twentieth century. N.J. Roos (2000 cited in Mehta, 2010) also mentioned that. translation was sometimes referred to as the fifth language skill along with other basic skills (listening, speaking, writing and reading) and that foreign language learners needed it in order to help them learn the foreign language.

In addition. Bonyadi (2003) stated that translation is a conscious process of learning that makes students develop their reading abilities because before translating the text, students need to read a text carefully and try to understand the text structure. Bonyadi's idea was supported by some other researchers (e.g. Block, Kern, Jimernez, Garcia, and Pearson) who have positive attitudes towards the helpfulness of L1 translation in L2 reading text as a very useful device for ESL and EFL readers in helping them to understand better L2 text (Bonyadi 2003 cited in Seng and Hashim,

2006) . Furthermore, some researchers claimed that complete deletion of L1 in L2 situation is not appropriate (Schweers, 1999; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Nation, 2003; Butzkamm, 2003 cited in Nazary, 2008). This supports Block and Cook's work, the use of L1 translation in L2 instruction is always present in the mind of ESL and EFL students and it is considered a very useful strategy improving the language learning skills (Block 1986, Cook, 1992 cited in Seng and Hashim, 2006). Moreover, Corde (1981 cited in Liao, 2006) viewed L1 as a valuable resource which learners can use for translation and help them compensate their limits in learning L2. Besides, Condelli and Wrigley (2004) pointed out that students in classes where teachers used students' native language for explaining and providing instructions on class work had faster growth in reading comprehension.

However some academics have denounced the use of Grammar translation method in foreign language teaching for decades (Liao, 2006). For instance, Prodomou (2000) says the use of mother tongue is a "skeleton in the closet". Analogically, Duff (cited in Kavaliauskiene and Kaminskiene, 2007) claimed that the use of GTM in the past was defined as "an uncommunicative, boring, pointless, difficult, and irrelevant" method. It was considered undesirable and was said to be supported only by non-native teachers (Kavaliauskiene and Kaminskiene, 2007). Moreover, Thanasoulas (2002) believed that this method offered very little beyond the learning of grammatical rules assumed to occur during the process of translation from second language to native language .The students were unable to speak fluently after having studied for a long time. Similarly, Kern (1994 cited in Seng and Hashim, 2006) also pointed out that translation can be unproductive when it is done in word by word fashion without integration of meaning. In addition, Marks (2008 cited in Vasatova, 2009) believed that the GTM with its emphasis of the use of mother tongue is not the best way to learn a new language, it is better for learners to use as much target language as possible. He thinks speaking and understanding are more important for language learners than reading and writing.

In the field of language learning, the importance of proficient reading today cannot be overemphasized. The ability to read efficiently is specifically important in educational contexts where reading for study purposes, particularly in the L2, is exercised on a daily basis. In most non native countries, a huge number of ESL and

EFL students still have serious learning problems in reading comprehension
(Klingner and Vaughn, 1996). Most information in English comes through reading.
Accessing information in higher education often needs reading ability in English.
Without reading, nothing can be done in the development of the competence of
listening, speaking, writing and translating (Si-xia, 1996). Reading therefore is the
most important of the four skills particularly in English as a second or foreign
language (Boss cited in Al-Tamimi, 2006, and Si-xia, 1996).

Some researchers reported some factors (i.e. attitudes, nationalities,
differences in background of knowledge, and appropriate strategies used in reading
L2 context) that cause a limitation of language learning skills. According to the
finding of Belmechri and Hummel, 1998, Gardner (1985 cited in Nuchnoi, 1997), the
attitude is a precursor of motivation "Positive attitudes to the target language, and to
the speakers and culture of the language being studied usually enhance learning while
negative attitudes impede it" (University of Leicester, 1998: 11.8). This outcome was
also supported by Oxford (1990) who noted that negative feelings can stunt progress
while positive feelings can make language learning far more effective and enjoyable.
To back this result, Biyaen, (1997 cited in Wiriyachitra, 2009) added that most
learners with negative attitudes towards English lesson have difficulties in language
learning and become passive learners. With respect to reading comprehension, many
reading strategies have been developed and suggested by a number of researchers to
L2 language learners in order to improve comprehension of what they have read
(Feng, 1998). The importance of how, when and which reading strategies should be
best used plays a significant role in reading comprehension in both L1 and L2
reading (Block, 1986; Carrell, 1984; Ericsson & Simon,1993; Garner, 1987; Kletzien,
1991; Olshavsky, 1976-1977; Presley & Afflerbach, 1995 cited in Feng, 1998).

As in many other developing countries in Asia, English as foreign language
in Thailand has a pivotal role not only in educational curriculum but also in many
fields such as business, science and technological progress (Wiriyachitra, 2009). Even
though the Thai government has realized the significance of learning English as a
subject in schools and even though it has been a compulsory subject at some specific
levels (e.g. high schools and universities)for decades ,Thai students still have poor
English proficiency worse than some other Asian countries such as Malaysia, the

Philippines and Singapore (Wiriyachitra, 2009). In 2005 therefore, schools were encouraged to offer intensive English language programs to students (Kwanpech, J (2008), and "http://www.absoluteastronomy.com"). The use of the mother tongue based on the GTM is not new to EFL students in Thailand. It has been introduced in Thai educational system from 1970's up to the present, but most students in former time have failed in acquiring a sufficient level of English as a foreign language (Thinsan, 2010).

There are some obstacles found in English L2 learning in Thailand. Wiroonrat & Thinsan (1999 cited in Thinsan, 2009) stated that the limited knowledge of vocabulary is one of the major problems in English reading classes in Thailand. Some students encounter unknown words every ten second while reading. This interrupts the cognitive process needed for good reading comprehension (Parel, 2004). Similarly, Nuchnoi (1997) discovered in her study that most students who gain a better knowledge of English in their elementary and high schools, understand English more easily when proceeding to university courses of English.

The importance of the role of L1 translation in English L2 reading instruction for Thai students seems worthy of consideration as most substantial formal English reading lessons are being been instructed at high school and university levels. With the previously mentioned studies of GTM in mind, I personally think the sensible use of L1 translation in English L2 reading instruction should be maximized in ESL and EFL classes. As to date, few studies in Thailand have been conducted investigating the differences in attitude of student toward the use of L1 translation in English L2 reading instruction and the use of their reading strategies. Therefore, it is worthy of some further investigation regarding this topic.

1.2 Research Questions

The specific research questions to be investigated in this study are:

1.2.1 What are the attitudes of UBRU undergraduate students towards using Grammar translation Method in English reading instruction?

1.2.2 How much mental translation strategy being used when the EFL students are engaging in English reading text?

1.3 Purposes of the Study

This study has two main aims:

1.3.1 To find out the attitudes towards the use of the Grammar Translation Method in English reading instruction of the UBRU undergraduate students.

1.3.2 To examine how much mental translation strategy being used when the EFL students are engaging in English reading?

1.4 Scope of the Study

This is a case study which examines the attitudes of only the UBRU Undergraduate students toward Grammar Translation Method in English reading instruction and the reading strategies used by these students. The study will not touch upon the attitudes of using GTM in L2 instruction of other skills. Also, the reading strategies under investigation will focus only on the question of how much the students use mental translation when engaging in English reading. The EFL students are defined as students coming from a region where English is not spoken as a second language and they are studying a language only in class (Kern, 1994 and Hawras, 1996). The UBRU undergraduate students who participated in this study therefore should be considered "EFL" students.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The findings on how the second language learners think about L1 translation in L2 reading instructions and on how much they use mental translation strategy in reading English will hopefully benefit ESL/EFL reading pedagogy.

CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter describes some of the language learning methods and approaches related to second language reading and teaching. The features and typical techniques of Grammar Translation Method will be emphasized. A brief description of other methods specifically used in L2 instructions will also be briefly described in this chapter. The second part focuses on strategy use in comprehension of L2 reading process. The last part discusses research works which related to the use of Grammar Translation Method in L2 reading instruction and the use of reading strategy

2.1 Methods of Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages

Throughout decades, several types of methods and approaches have been developed and practiced in foreign language teaching and learning field. Some of them have come and gone in and out of fashion, but some of them have been used to date (Griffiths and Parr, cited in Griffiths, 2004). The most well-known traditional methods are: Grammar Translation Method, the Direct Method (Natural Method), the Audio-lingual Method. Some alternative methods are Communicative language teaching, Audio-Lingual Method, and Silent Way.

2.1.1 Grammar Translation Method

As mentioned in chapter I, the Grammar Translation Method derived from the classical method of teaching Greek and Latin. This method emphasises heavily on grammar and translation teaching particular in reading and writing. Very little attention is given to listening and speaking and almost none to pronunciation (Richards, Platt and Platt, 1992 cited in Griffiths, 2004; Richards and Rodgers, 2001).Vocabulary is taught in the form of isolated word lists. Readings in the target language are translated directly and then discussed in the native language and

student's native language is used as a medium of teaching (Larsen–Freeman, 2000 and Thuleen, 1996). Diane Larsen-Freeman provided descriptions of some common techniques associated with the grammar translation method as follows:

1) translation of a literary passage (from target language to mother tongue)
2) reading comprehension questions (finding information in a text)
3) antonyms, synonyms (finding antonyms and synonyms for words or sets of words)
4) fill in the gaps (filling in gaps in sentences with new words or items of a particular grammar)
5) memorization (memorising vocabulary lists or grammatical rules)
6) use words in sentences (students create sentences to illustrate that they know the meaning and use of new words)

(Dianne Larsen –Freeman, 2000: 4 -17)

Although the GTM has no theoretical supporters,and also has been criticised as a theorylessness or having no theory (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:7) that can be derived from relevant subjects such as linguistics, psychology, or educational theory, many aspects of its use are still widely used in L2 instruction in the present (Brown, 2007; Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

2.1.2 Some Alternative Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching

Beside the GTM, there are some other approaches and methods specifically used in second language instruction such as Direct Method, Audio-Lingual Method, Communicative language teaching, and Silent way Approach.

The Direct Method, the so called 'natural method' is a method that emphasizes the use of target language (L2) and using native language is avoided in classroom. It also devalues grammar and translation and argues that the GTM should not be taught in second language classes but the second language itself must be learned as the first language. Therefore, speaking is being taught at first then followed by reading and writing. Correct pronunciation and grammar are also emphasized in this method (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

Audio-Lingual Method is a method based on the principles of direct method. It focuses on pronunciation because the learners must learn how to speak the

language while grammatical rules are neglected and students learn vocabulary in context (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

Another method is Communicative language teaching. It is a method that allows students to learn the language by themselves and teachers are just helping when any problems occurred. Even though, grammar is still important in this method, it emphasizes real life situations and communication in context not in reading (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

Similarly, Silent way is an approach in which the teachers are supposed to be silent while students co-operate with each other in solving language problems and producing language as much as possible. Pronunciation is emphasised in the first part of the lesson. Sentence structure and vocabulary will be practiced after that. The students are monitored in their progress and guided by teachers only when they make mistakes (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

2.2 Reading Comprehension Strategies in Second or Foreign language Teaching

In the late 1970's many L2 researchers had begun to investigate the importance of the strategies ESL learners used in reading (Song, 1998). Reading strategies indicate how the language learners understand a task, what they actually do when they try to understand the text and how they make sense of what they read (Block, 1968 cited in Song, 1998). A number of researchers such as Garner, (1987); Pressley, Beard EL-Dinary, & Brow (1992) have conducted research on reading strategies that L2 English readers used in reading comprehension (cited in Song, 1998). They found out that good readers are more aware of the strategies they use than poor readers and that they use strategies more flexibly and efficiently. Good readers are able to use clues to link new information to information they already read. They are able to separate between main issues and side-issues and use suitable strategies to make the text they have read understandable (cited in Song, 1998).

Among the various types of reading strategies, mental translation strategy has become one of those strategies that L2 students often use when they are reading L2 texts as an important device in reading comprehension process (Kern, 1994). Mental translation had been defined by Kern as the "mental processing of L2 words, phrases, or sentences in L1 forms while reading L2 texts" (Kern, 1994: 442).

2.3 Related Research works on Grammar Translation Method and Reading Strategies

In the mid-and late nineteenth century, most L2 language researchers and teachers were of the opinion that L1 should be prohibited in the classroom, but recently the attitude towards using a mother tongue when learning a foreign language has undergone a positive change (Kavaliauskiene and Kaminskiene, 2007). A number of studies have considered the attitudes of L2 readers and L2 reading instructors toward the use of L1 in the classroom. (Nazary, 2008). For example, Prodromou, (2002 cited in Nazary, 2008) investigated the reaction and attitude of 300 Greek students with different levels of proficiency toward the use of L1 in L2 classes. His study showed that students at higher levels of study had negative attitudes toward the use of L1 in their classroom, but that lower level students showed more tendency to accept the use of their mother tongue.

Also, Nazary (2008) conducted the attitude and degree of awareness toward the use of L1 (Farsi) of 85 Iranian university students in their English classroom. His study assumed that the students should use their first language in their classroom. Surprisingly, his study had the unexpected result that most Iranian students showed a negative view and rejected the use of L1 in their English classes but 78% of the participants supported the use of L1 for explaining new words and grammatical rules. His findings were of similar results to those of Prodromou's (2002) which revealed that students with different language abilities have different attitudes towards the use of L1 in L2 classes.

Hsieh (2000 cited in Liao 2006) discovered that his Taiwanese college students had a very positive attitude towards the use of L1 translation in English reading. They believed using L1 translation enhances their reading comprehension, reading strategies, vocabulary learning and cultural background knowledge. The results showed that 85 % of 52 participants believed that translation helps them pay attention to the meaning and sentence structure of English reading text. 73 % of students stated that translation helps them learn the importance of Chinese language. 65% of them thought that they learned multiple English meaning from translation and about 62% said that translation helps them in learning new vocabulary and extending their reading skills.

Additionally, Schweers, (1999 cited in Nazary, 2008) conducted a study with EFL Spanish students and investigated their attitudes toward using L1 in the English L2

classroom. He found that 88.7% of Spanish students who studied English as a foreign language preferred L1 instruction in the class because they believed it assisted language learning. Likewise, Burden (2001 cited in Nazary,2008) found out positive attitudes of 290 students and 73 teachers at five universities that the use of L1 was useful for their English learning. They thought it helps in explaining new vocabulary, giving instruction of grammar and promoting general understanding of the language.

With regard to the reading strategies used in English L2 instruction, some related research has been conducted mainly to find out what strategies ESL/EFL learners use. Block (1986 cited in Seng and Hashim, 2006) for instance, conducted a study with the purpose of identifying and describing reading comprehension strategies of ESL students designated as non-proficient readers. She grouped their comprehension strategies into two groups: a) general strategies such as anticipating content, recognising text structure, questioning information in the text and, b) local strategies for instance paraphrasing, rereading solving vocabulary problems. Her study showed that students used many of strategies to understand L2 reading text. Her investigation was similar to Sarig (1985 cited in Seng and Hashim, 2006) who found out that a group of ten high school Hebrew speaking students used about hundred and thirty strategies while reading English as a foreign language.

Seng and Hashim (2006) found out in their study that L1 played an important role for the readers in understanding L2 text. These students used mental translation when they had problem in understanding L2 text such as difficulties with vocabularies or unfamiliar words. In addition, they also used mental translation to check and confirm their understanding in L2 text.

Another study was done by C.M. Goh and Poh Foong (1997) on the language learning strategies used by 175 ESL students from the People's Republic of China. These students were tested to measure their reading and listening comprehension. The test-result showed that the students used metacognitive strategies, that is the executive processes that regulate and manage learning and include strategies for planning, monitoring and evaluating (Benchmark Education, 2001) more frequently than the other strategies. Most students of high proficiency used cognitive strategies—the strategies that help the learners to use all their mental processes such as skimming, finding synonym and making guesses (The Gale Group,2009)— in understanding the L2 language. In addition,

their study reported the interesting result that memorization—it is one of the common learning techniques associated with the GMT that helps storing or recalling new information (Dianne Larsen –Freeman, 2000)—was the least frequently used strategy among 175 Chinese students.

A similar study was investigated by Phakitt (2002) on **"A Closer Look at Gender and Strategy Use in L2 Reading"** with 384 Thai university students. He examined gender differences in cognitive and metacognitive strategy use of the students when doing an EFL reading comprehension test. He found out that there were no gender differences in either reading performance or the use of cognitive strategies. Male students however, reported significantly higher use of metacognitive strategies than female.

Concerning the use of mental translation strategy in L2 reading comprehension, only few investigations were conducted concerning the role of L1 in L2 reading comprehension. Kern (1994) investigated the role of mental translation as a cognitive strategy in L2 reading comprehension process with 51 students. He pointed out that the mental translation strategy was frequency used to understand L2 text when students were engaging in L2 reading. He also found that the students used mental translation strategy in order to help maintaining concentration and keeping information active while reading .In addition his finding showed that most students often used mental translation strategy when they had specific problems to comprehend such as unknown words or unfamiliar structures.

Hawras, (1966 cited in Upton, 2001) had a look in the same topic as Kern by using Spanish students with a different language proficiency level. His findings were similar to Kern, but he added that mental translation strategy was more likely useful to the more advanced students than to the less advanced students. However, Hawras also stated that for the beginning language learners, "mental translation is not just the major, but the only comprehension tool at the student's disposal" (Hawras, 1996: 65 cited in Upton, 1997). Similarly to Kern, Upton (1997, 1998 cited in Upton and Lee-Tompson, 2001) studied 11 native speakers of Japanese studying at a U.S. university. He noted that the ESL students with lower L2 proficiency used L1 more often when (a) they confronted unknown words, (b) tried to understand more in L2 text, and (c) wanted to summarize or confirm the information they had already understood.

In order to comprehend the L2 text, Upton (1997) concluded in his study that less proficient ESL readers relied heavily on mental translation. Upton and Lee-Thompson's (2001) study confirmed the findings of Kern (1994) and Upton (1997). They found out the similar results that the 20 ESL students in their study who had three different English proficiency levels (intermediate, advanced and post-ESL students) used L1 to understand L2 text, and to wrestle with meaning or structure. Their study also shows that that the higher proficiency L2 readers used mental translation less than the lower proficiency students, but the most of higher proficiency students did use mental translation to confirm their comprehension on what they have already understood in L2 text.

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology used in this study. It consists of the participants, instruments, procedure, and data collection and analysis.

3.1 Participants

Approximately 30 UBRU undergraduate students were selected to fill in the questionnaires in this study. They were the first year students majoring in Business English. According to the information of their former studies in the semesters of a school year 2010: "A Paragraph Reading Strategies I" and "Paragraph Reading Strategies II, the average grades were C and D. Therefore, it could reasonably be concluded that their English proficiencies were low and their abilities in English reading comprehension were poor.

3.2 Method Used

A questionnaire of 12 questions was used to investigate the UBRU undergraduate students' attitudes toward the use of L1 in L2 reading instruction. The questionnaire given to the participants consisted of three parts. Part one deals with the participants' information such as name, family name, age and proficiency levels. Part two consists of 9 statements and two pre-questions about the student's attitudes towards the use of L1 translation in English L2 reading. Part three involves the paragraphs of an English text and 3 statements regarding the mental translation strategy used in English L2 reading.

3.3 Procedure

Before the questionnaires were given to the subjects, a short introduction of the project and its significance for classroom teachers and students, there was a short passage for the students were required to read right before they answered the questionnaire on

their reading strategies. The purpose was to provide the subjects the best recollection for introspective data on the subjects' reading strategies. In addition, students were encouraged to add any comments and share their suggestions. In order to help the students understand clearly, the questionnaire was given in Thai.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

The participants 'data were collected and the mean score for each questionnaire items was computed into percentage for detailed discussion.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to test students' attitudes towards the use of Thai translation in English reading instruction, the participants were asked to answer two pre-questions about the use of Thai translation in English reading instruction. The responses are presented in Table 1. Most of the participants were in favour of the use of Thai in English reading class by their teacher. The 29 out of 30 students (97%) thought the teacher should translate English sentences into Thai while teaching English reading. Only 1 out of 30 participants (3%) disagreed with the use of Thai language in English reading class.

4.1 Table 1 Pre- Questions concerning the Attitudes toward the use of Thai translation in English reading Instruction

Question+ Statements	Percentage (%)
* 1. Do you think the teacher should use Thai translation in English reading instruction? A.NO	3%
B.YES	97%
**2. If you answer B. "YES", please choose the following. (You may circle more than one answer). A.　It helps me understand the text better.	90%
B.　It helps me learn sentence structures of English	48%
C.　It helps me learn English vocab better.	79%

Note: The percentage in the 2nd pre-question (**) was calculated from 29 participants because one of them gave a NO answer.

Regarding the reasons why those 29 students supported the teacher's use of Thai translation in English reading instruction in the second pre-question, most students

had more than one reason. The statement A was the one most students agreed with. They think that it helps them to understand text better. It scored 90% positives. The statement C scored 80 % and B had the lowest scored: 48 %. Overall, most of students believed that Thai translation used in English L2 reading instruction by the teacher had a positive effect on their English reading learning. They thought that it helped them to understand, learn English vocabulary and sentence structure better. The student who gave a NO answer, only one student out of 30, stated that students should be allowed to try to learn and understand English language by themselves and teachers should not translate English sentences into Thai while teaching English reading.

Table 4.2 below shows the participants' responses to the questions regarding the reasons why they supported the use of the GTM in English reading instruction. The results are posted on a Linkert Scale of 1 to 6.

4.2 Table 2 Attitudes toward the use of Thai translation in English reading Instruction

Statements	1*	2*	3*	4*	5*	6*
1. It is useful if the teacher uses Thai language during the English reading class to: 1.1 explain the meaning of difficult words	-	-	-	10%	40%	50%
1.2 explain English grammatical rules	-	-	10%	13%	27%	50%
1.3 explain differences between Thai and English sentence structures	-	-	7%	10%	30%	53%
1.4 explain the meaning of difficult English sentences	-	-	3.3%	7%	27%	63%
2. The teachers should translate every English sentence into Thai during English reading instruction.	3.3%	3.3%	27%	37%	17%	13%

4.2 Table 2 Attitudes toward the use of Thai translation in English reading Instruction (continued)

Statements	1*	2*	3*	4*	5*	6*
3. The teachers should translate only difficult English sentences into Thai during English reading instruction.	-	7%	3.3%	23%	33.3%	33.3%
4. The teacher's translating English sentences during English reading instruction makes me feel relaxed in class and more motivated to study.	-	-	10%	10%	40%	40%
5. The teacher's translating English sentences during English reading instruction helps me practice English reading skills.	-	3.3%	3.3%	20%	60%	13.3%
6. The more difficult the English reading texts are, the more I would like the teacher to use Thai translation during English reading instruction.	-	3.3%	3.3%	27%	40%	27%
7. I enjoy the teacher's use of Thai translation a lot during English reading instruction.	-	3.3%	20%	17%	37%	23%
8. There are other methods that can help me learn and practice English reading better than the teacher's use of Thai translation.	-	-	26%	30%	27%	17%

Note: * Linkert Scale 1-6: 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Quite Disagree, 3= Slightly Disagree, 4= Slightly Agree, 5= Quite Agree, 6= Strongly Agree

The result of the first statement in Table 2 showed that most participants had positive attitudes towards the use of Thai translation in English reading instruction. They

responded "strongly agree" with 4 sub-statements of the 1st statement: *1.1) it is very useful when teacher uses Thai language to explain the meaning of difficult words* (50%), *1.2) to explain English grammatical rules* (50%), *1.3) to explain the differences between Thai and English structures* (53%), and *1.4) to explain the meaning of difficult English sentences* (63%). None of them chose "quite disagree" or "strongly disagree" with 4 sub-statements.

As regards the 2nd statement: *"the teachers should translate every English sentence into Thai during English reading instruction."* most participants (37%) rated 4 on the Linkert Scale indicating slight agreement. About 27% of them slightly disagreed and 3.3% strongly disagreed with statement. 3.3% of them strongly agreed with the statement, they thought using L1 translation is useful but the teacher should not translate every sentence.

Most subjects quite agreed or strongly agreed with the 3rd statement: *"The teachers should translate only difficult English sentences into Thai during English reading instruction"*. They rated 5 (33.3%) on the Linkert Scale, 6 (33.3%), and 4 (23.3%) to the statement. The 4th statement, *"The teacher's translating English sentences during English reading instruction makes me feel relaxed in class and more motivated to study."*, was rated with 5 (40%) "quite agree" on the Linkert Scale and 6 (40%) "strongly agree". None of them chose "strongly disagree" with this statement.

Likewise, the 5th statement showed that most students quite agreed with the statement: *"The teacher's translating English sentences during English reading instruction helps me practice English reading skills"*. 60% of them rated 5 "quite agree" on the Linkert Scale 20 % rated 4 "slightly agree" and 13.3 % of them strongly agreed with the statement. The 6th statement showed that 40% of the participants quite agreed with the statement: *"The more difficult the English reading texts are, the more I would like the teacher to use Thai translation during English reading instruction"*. Most of them rated 5 on the Linkert Scale. About 27% of them slightly agreed and strongly agreed. Similarly, 37% of the students quite agreed with the statement saying that they enjoyed the teacher's use of Thai translation a lot during English reading instruction. And 23% of them strongly agreed with the statement.

Unexpectedly, the result from the 8th statement shows that only 27% of the students slightly disagreed with the statement: *"There are other methods that can help me*

learn and practice English reading better than the teacher's use of Thai translation".
30%, 27% and 17% of them agreed with this statement. It had been expected that most students would have had a strong disagreement and would have rated 1 or 2 on the Linkert Scale for this statement, but none of them did. According to the question number 9[th:] *"What are other methods do you think the teacher should use during English reading instruction besides translating English sentences into Thai?"* no suggested method was provided by the participants. Some of them did suggest some activities and ideas that are useful in general when learning English but were not relevant to English reading instruction. Those suggested ideas were: a) the teacher should speak English with students and use easy English to explain the text, b) the teacher should use English songs and c) students should speak English in the class .In short, most students offered no method than using Thai translation.

In summary, this positive attitude towards the use of Thai translation in English reading instruction as reflected by the results of the Pre-questions in Table 1 has been confirmed by the answers given to the Statements of Table 2: the Linkert Scale boxes 4,5 and 6 get consistently higher percentages than the boxes 1,2 and 3. Only the answer to the statement number 8 was not consistent in this respect.

A total of 74 % of the students stated that there were other better methods than the Thai translation method in helping them with their English reading. However, when asked in the 9th question to suggest those other better methods, none of the students could think of any and the suggested activities and ideas given were not relevant to the question. It probably was because they did not really understand the statement. More reasonably, the students may sincerely believe that there could be other methods or activities that were better than the GTM used in English reading instruction, but they probably did not know what those methods were or themselves could not think of any.

As mentioned earlier in chapter 1, the reading strategies under this investigation would focus only on the question of how much the students use mental translation when engaging in English reading. The students were asked to read a short English passage before answering the questionnaires. The findings are presented in Table 3 below.

4.3 Table 3 English Reading Strategies

Statements	1*	2*	3*	4*	5*	6*
1.I always use mental translation when reading English text.	-	3.3%	3.3%	13.3%	40%	40%
2. When I read, I mentally translate every sentence into Thai.	-	-	10%	50%	23%	17%
3. I mentally translate only some difficult sentences, but with simple sentences I understand the sentences automatically without mentally translating them into Thai.	-	-	17%	40%	20%	23%

Note:* Linkert Scale 1-6: 1= Strongly Disagree,2= Quite Disagree, 3= Slightly Disagree, 4= Slightly Agree, 5= Quite Agree, 6= Strongly Agree

According to the results in Table 3, most participants showed high frequency of using mental translation when they were reading a given short English passage.To answer the first statement from table 3: *"I always use mental translation when reading English text."* most subjects responded "quite agree" (40%) and "strongly agree" (40%) to the statement. Only 3.3% marked "slightly disagree" and "quite disagree" with the statement. Follow by the result from the 2nd statement: *"When I read, I mentally translate every sentence into Thai.*", about 50% of the participants rated 4 "slightly agree", 23% rated "quite agree" and only 17 % of them "strongly agree" with the statement. Regarding the last statement, most students rated "slightly agree" (40%), followed by "quite agree" (20%) and 23% of them "strongly agree". As a conclusion, the results from the three statements were as expected, none of the students strongly disagreed and only 3.3% quite disagreed with the given statements concerning their use of mental translation when reading English sentences.

The outcome from this study confirms previous results from other researchers. For example, Prodromou (2002 cited in Nazary, 2008) claimed that the lower the level of proficiency in L2 students the more they prefer the use of their mother tongue as a helping tool in L2 learning. The UBRU undergraduate students from this study stated that the use of Thai by their teacher helped them to understand English text.

In terms of improving reading comprehension by using L1 translation, Bonyadi (2003) ; Burden,2001 (cited in Nazary, 2008) stated that L1 translation made students develop their reading abilities in order to try to understand L2 texts better. Likewise, Hsieh's (2000, cited in Liao, 2006) study found out that Taiwanese students thought that translation helped them in learning vocabulary and improving reading comprehension. Added to that, the students from Nazary 's (2008) study thought that the use of L1 helped them understand new words and grammatical rules. Most students from the UBRU also believed that using L1 translation in English reading class was very useful in explaining the meaning, grammatical rules and English sentence structures.

Seng and Hashim, (2006) found out in their study that L1 played an important role for the ESL readers in understanding L2 text. These students used L1 translation when they had problems (e.g. as difficulties with vocabularies or unfamiliar words) in understanding L2 text. In addition, they also used L1 to check and confirm their understanding in L2 text. Accordingly, some researchers (e.g. Block, Kern, Jimernez, Garcia, and Pearson) believed that positive attitudes towards the benefits of L1 translation in L2 reading helped ESL and EFL learners understand L2 text better (Bonyadi 2003 cited in Seng and Hashim, 2006) . Liao (2006) also found out some similarities from his investigation of 351 students in the belief and strategy use of translation in English learning. His students used translation to learn English vocabulary words, grammar, idioms and phrases. They also used the translation to check their understanding in English reading. To support those outcome, the result from this study showed that 90% of the UBRU undergraduate students thought that the use of L1 translation in reading instruction helped them to understand L2 text better. Therefore, it could reasonably be said that the L1 translation plays a significant role in their reading process.

The results from this investigation moreover show that the UBRU undergraduate students believed that using Thai translation in English reading helped them feel relaxed in class. They were more motivated to study and they thought that it also helped them practice English reading skills. This supports the findings of Belmechri and Hummel, 1998; Gardner,1985 cited in Nuchnoi, 1997) who claimed that attitude is a precursor of motivation and that positive attitude to the target language motivates learners and enhances learning. As the present study shows, 77% of students from this

study thought that the use of L1 translation by their teacher during English reading instruction made lessons more enjoyable. This outcome supports some results of Biyaen, (1997 cited in Wiriyachitra, 2009) who stated that positive attitudes could make language learning far more effective and enjoyable.

The findings further show that most participants in this study often mentally translate English into Thai when they were reading English text .They did not translate every sentence into Thai but only when they had problems with difficult sentences. The results are in accord with those by Kern (1994); Hawras (1996); Upton and Lee-Thompson (2001); and Upton (1997) who discovered that the students often used mental translation when they had specific reading comprehension problems such as unknown words or unfamiliar structures. For beginners like these first year UBRU undergraduate students who had low English proficiency, their mental translation of English sentences was not to be dispensed with when engaging in reading English sentences.

Therefore, mental translation is an effective tool that helps L2 readers ,especially those with relatively low English proficiency, understand L2 text as argued by several researchers such as Hawres (1996 cited in Upton, 1997); Upton (1997); Kern (1994); Upton and Lee- Thompson, (2001).

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

5.1 Conclusion

The findings from this study suggest, however, that Thai translation can be a significant help in English reading instruction for the UBRU undergraduate participants. They had positive attitudes towards the use of the Grammar Translation Method in English reading instruction. They believed that teachers' use of translation plays a positive important role in their English learning process. The data further indicate that the majority of the participants supported the use of Thai translation in English reading instruction. They believed that translation into Thai helped them acquire English vocabulary, phrases, and sentence structures. They also thought that it aided them to understand English reading better and that there were no other methods better than using Thai translation in English reading instruction.

5.2 Pedagogical Implications

As mentioned, the Grammar Translation Method relies heavily on the use of the mother language as a useful tool for L2 instruction (Richards and Rodgers, 2001; Larsen–Freeman, 2000; Brown, 2007; Thuleen, 1996; Kavaliauskiene and Kaminskiene,2007; Block,1986; and Cook,1992 cited in Seng and Hashim, 2006). The results from this study confirm the hypothesis that the use of L1 translation plays an important role in the L2 reading process. It helps ESL and EFL learners especially those with low English proficiency understand the L2 text better. Even though the teachers' use of L1 translation in reading classes helps students to acquire the English language, there should also be some other activities based on translation method that teachers may use in English reading instruction. Heavy use of grammar translation method such as translating every sentence in L2 text to students might be boring for students. So other activities such as playing translation games or using other media to help the instruction might encourage students and create better atmosphere in English reading instruction.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

THE QUESTIONNAIRES

I: personal information

□ □Name & Family Name: _____

□ □Age :_____

□ □Sex : Male ( ) Female ( )

4. Nationality _____

□ □Education (Put a mark in front of the following that describe your education) :

    5.1 Undergraduate

       Major: _____Year_____

    5.2 Graduate :   ( )MA ( ) PHD

       Major _____Year in the program_____

II: Attitudes toward the use of Thai translation in English reading Instruction.

Do you think the teacher should use Thai translation in English reading instruction?

    A. NO

    B. YES

* If you answer A."NO", please explain your reason(s):

....

....

**If you answer B."YES", please choose the following. (You may circle more than one answer).

    A. It helps me understand the text better.

    B. It helps me learn sentence structures of English.

    C. It helps me learn English vocabularies better.

Please rate the following statements on the six-point Linkert Scale:

      1= Strongly Disagree

      2= Quite Disagree

      3= Slightly Disagree

      4= Slightly Agree

      5= Quite Agree

      6= Strongly Agree

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.It is useful if the teacher uses Thai language during the English reading class to: 1.1 explain the meaning of difficult words						
1.2 explain English grammatical rules						
1.3 explain differences between Thai and English sentence structures						
1.4 explain the meaning of difficult English sentences						
2. The teachers should translate every English sentence into Thai during English reading instruction.						
3. The teachers should translate only difficult English sentences into Thai during English reading instruction.						
4. The teacher's translating English sentences during English reading instruction makes me feel relaxed in class and more motivated to study.						
5. The teacher's translating English sentences during English reading instruction helps me practice English reading skills.						
6.The more difficult the English reading texts are, the more I would like the teacher to use Thai translation during English reading instruction.						
7. I enjoy the teacher's use of Thai translation a lot during English reading instruction.						
8. There are other methods that can help me learn and practice English reading better than the teacher's use of Thai translation.						

9. What are other methods do you think the teacher should use during English reading instruction besides translating English sentences into Thai?

....

....

III: English Reading Strategies

Please read the following paragraphs and rate the following statements and questions on the six-point Likert Scale:

1= Strongly Disagree

2= Quite Disagree

3= Slightly Disagree

4= Slightly Agree

5= Quite Agree

6= Strongly Agree

<div align="center">

Skyjack!

By Tim Vicary

</div>

When people use guns to take what they want, how do you stop them? If you give them what they want, they will be happy—and they will use their guns again, and again. If you don't give them what they want, then they will be angry—and they will kill. It is not easy to decide what to do.

In this story, the person who has to decide is the Prime Minister, the head of the government. But the Prime Minister is also an ordinary person, just like the rest of us—a person with a family and children.

How can you think clearly, if someone is pointing a gun at your family? What do you do? You take advice, you talk to the hijackers, you find out what they want, you keep everybody calm, you try to move slowly. But terrorists don't like waiting, and sooner or later, you have to decide what to do.

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.I always use mental translation when reading English text.						
2. When I read, I mentally translate every sentence into Thai.						
3.I mentally translate only some difficult sentences, but with simple sentences I understand the sentences automatically without mentally translating them into Thai.						

<div align="center"><u>แบบสอบถาม</u></div>

<u>I: ข้อมูลส่วนตัว</u>

1.ชื่อ-นามสกุล _____

2.อายุ_____

3.เพศ: ชาย (   ) หญิง (   )

4.สัญชาติ_____

5.ระดับการศึกษา (โปรดกาเครื่องหมายกากบาท(   )หน้าหัวข้อข้างล่างพร้อมระบุรายละเอียด)

      5.1 กำลังศึกษาในระดับปริญญาตรี

         วิชาเอก..ปีที่..........................

      5.2 สูงกว่าระดับปริญญาตรี: ....ปริญญาโท/ ....ปริญญาเอก

         วิชาเอก..ปีที่..........................

<u>II: ทัศนคติต่อการแปลภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาไทยในการสอนการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษ</u>

คุณคิดว่าครูควรใช้ภาษาไทยเพื่อแปลประโยคภาษาอังกฤษในการสอนการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษหรือไม่

      ก. ไม่ควรใช้

      ข. ควรใช้

* ถ้าคุณตอบข้อ "ก. <u>ไม่ควรใช้</u>" กรุณาระบุเหตุผล:

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**ถ้าคุณตอบข้อ "ข. <u>ควรใช้</u>" กรุณาระบุเหตุผลโดยวงกลมตัวเลือก ก ,ข , และ ค

(ตอบได้มากกว่า 1 ข้อ)

      ก.การใช้ภาษาไทยแปลภาษาอังกฤษช่วยให้ผม/ดิฉันเข้าใจเนื้อหาที่เรียนได้ดีขึ้น

      ข.การใช้ภาษาไทยแปลภาษาอังกฤษช่วยให้ผม/ดิฉันเรียนรู้โครงสร้างประโยคภาษาอังกฤษ

      ค.การใช้ภาษาไทยแปลภาษาอังกฤษช่วยให้ผม/ดิฉันเรียนรู้คำศัพท์ได้ดีขึ้น

<u>กรุณาประเมินข้อความในตารางข้างล่างโดยกาเครื่องหมายถูก (√)ในช่องตัวเลือก 1 ถึง 6</u>

1= ไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง

2 = ไม่เห็นด้วย

3 = ไม่ค่อยเห็นด้วย

4 = เห็นด้วยหนิดหน่อย

5 = ก่อนข้างเห็นด้วยทีเดียว

6 = เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง

ข้อความ	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.การใช้ภาษาไทยมีประโยชน์เมื่อครูผู้สอนใช้เพื่อ: 1.1 อธิบายคำศัพท์ใหม่						
1.2 อธิบายกฏไวยากรณ์ภาษาอังกฤษ						
1.3 อธิบายความแตกต่างระหว่างโครงสร้างภาษาไทยและ ภาษาอังกฤษ						
1.4 อธิบายความหมายของประโยคที่ยากในชั้นที่เรียนการอ่าน ภาษาอังกฤษ						
2.ครูควรแปลประโยคภาษาอังกฤษทุกประโยคเป็นภาษาไทยในระหว่าง การสอนการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษ						
3. ครูควรแปลประโยคภาษาอังกฤษ เฉพาะประโยคที่ยากเท่านั้นเป็น ภาษาไทย ระหว่างการสอนการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษ						
4. การที่ครูใช้ภาษาไทยแปลประโยคภาษาอังกฤษในระหว่างการสอน การอ่านภาษาอังกฤษทำให้ผม/ดิฉันรู้สึกผ่อนคลาย และยังเป็นการ กระตุ้นให้อยากเรียนมากขึ้น						
5. การที่ครูใช้ภาษาไทยแปลประโยคภาษาอังกฤษระหว่างการสอนการ อ่านภาษาอังกฤษเป็นวิธีการที่มีประโยชน์ต่อการฝึกทักษะการอ่าน						
6. ยิ่งเนื้อหาภาษาอังกฤษยากขึ้นเท่าไหร่ ผม/ดิฉันยิ่งอยากให้ครูใช้ ภาษาไทยแปลประโยคภาษาอังกฤษ เป็นภาษาไทยในการสอนการอ่าน ภาษาอังกฤษมากขึ้น						
7. ผม/ดิฉันพึงพอใจมากเมื่อครูใช้ภาษาไทยแปลประโยคภาษาอังกฤษ ในระหว่างสอนการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษ						
8.มีวิธีการสอนการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษอื่นๆอีกที่ช่วยให้ผม/ดิฉันอ่าน ภาษาอังกฤษได้ดีกว่าการที่ครูผู้สอนใช้ภาษาไทยแปลประโยค ภาษาอังกฤษ						

๙. มีวิธีการอื่นๆชนิดใดที่คุณคิดว่าครูน่าจะนำมาใช้ในการสอนการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษ แทนการแปลจากประโยค ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาไทย

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III: กลวิธีในการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษ

อ่านข้อความข้างล่างนี้ แล้วกรุณาประเมินข้อความในตารางข้างล่างโดยกาเครื่องหมายถูก (√)ใน ช่องตัวเลือก 1 ถึง 6

1= ไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง

2 = ไม่เห็นด้วย

3 = ไม่ค่อยเห็นด้วย

4 = เห็นด้วยหนิดหน่อย

5 = ค่อนข้างเห็นด้วยทีเดียว

6 = เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง

Skyjack!

By Tim Vicary

When people use guns to take what they want, how do you stop them? If you give them what they want, they will be happy—and they will use their guns again, and again. If you don't give them what they want, then they will be angry—and they will kill. It is not easy to decide what to do.

In this story, the person who has to decide is the Prime Minister, the head of the government. But the Prime Minister is also an ordinary person, just like the rest of us—a person with a family and children.

How can you think clearly, if someone is pointing a gun at your family? What do you do? You take advice, you talk to the hijackers, you find out what they want, you keep everybody calm, you try to move slowly. But terrorists don't like waiting, and sooner or later, you have to decide what to do.

ข้อความ	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.เวลาที่อ่านภาษาอังกฤษ ผม/ดิฉันมักจะแปลประโยคภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาไทยในใจ						
2.เวลาที่อ่านภาษาอังกฤษ ผม/ดิฉัน จะแปลประโยคภาษาอังกฤษทุกประโยคเป็นภาษาไทยในใจ						
3.ผม/ดิฉันแปลในใจเฉพาะบางประโยคที่ยาก แต่กับประโยคที่ง่ายผม/ดิฉันจะเข้าใจทันที โดยไม่ต้องแปลเป็นภาษาไทยในใจ						

VITAE

NAME	Phanida Yommee
DATE OF BIRTH	January 02, 1967
PLACE OF BIRTH	Srirattana District, Sisaket Province, Thailand
EDUCATION BACKGROUND	2002 – 2006 B.A in English (Bachelor of Arts, 1st Class Honors) Ubonratchathani Rajabhat University, Ubonratchathani, Thailand.
WOKING EXPERIENCES	1995-2008 An agent for the American International Assurance Company, Sisaket Province.
	2003– 2009 A teacher at the Jenny & Ellie English School, Sisaket province.