



ວາລະສານການສຶກສາສາດລາວແບບຍືນຍົງ  
ວິທະຍາໄລຄຸສາລະວັນ

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ດຳເນີນການວາລະສານໂດຍ ວິທະຍາໄລຄຸສາລະວັນ

ການສຶກສາປັດໄຈທີ່ສົ່ງຜົນກະທົບຕໍ່ທັກສະການອ່ານພາສາອັງກິດຂອງນັກສຶກສາ ຄະນະ  
ພາສາສາດ ແລະ ມະນຸດສາດ, ມະຫາວິທະຍາໄລສະຫວັນນະເຂດ

**Study of Factors that Affect Learner's English Reading Skill At the  
Faculty of Linguistics and Humanities, Savannakhet university**

ສອນເພັດ ແກ້ວດວງສະຫວັດ<sup>1</sup>, ຈັນທະຈອນ ຂັນທະວົງ<sup>2</sup>, ທິດາພອນ ລຽບວິໄຊນະວັງ<sup>3</sup>, ວານິທອນ ສິດທິໂສ<sup>4</sup>, ທອງເຕີ ໂລວັນແທ້ກ<sup>5</sup>,  
ລັດດາວອນ ແກ້ວມະນີວິງ<sup>6</sup>

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ບົດຄັດຫຍໍ້

ການສຶກສາຄົ້ນຄວ້າສະບັບນີ້ໄດ້ສຳຫຼວດຕົວປ່ຽນຕ່າງໆ ທີ່ສົ່ງຜົນກະທົບຕໍ່ຄວາມສາມາດໃນການອ່ານພາສາ  
ອັງກິດຂອງນັກສຶກສາປີ 3 ທີ່ຄະນະພາສາສາດ ແລະ ມະນຸດສາດ, ມະຫາວິທະຍາໄລສຸພານຸວົງ (SKU). ຈຸດປະສົງ  
ຫຼັກຂອງການສຶກສາແມ່ນເພື່ອກວດຫາປັດໄຈທາງດ້ານພາສາສາດ, ພຶດຕິກຳ, ແລະ ຈິດວິທະຍາ ທີ່ມີອິດທິພົນສູງສຸດ  
ຕໍ່ຄວາມສາມາດໃນການອ່ານຂອງນັກຮຽນ.

ການວິໄຈໄດ້ນຳໃຊ້ຍຸດທະສາດການຄົ້ນຄວ້າແບບປະລິມານ (Quantitative Research Strategy) ໂດຍ  
ໄດ້ເກັບກຳຂໍ້ມູນຜ່ານແບບສອບຖາມມາດຕະຖານທີ່ແຈກຢາຍໃຫ້ຜູ້ເຂົ້າຮ່ວມ. ຈາກນັ້ນ, ໄດ້ມີການນຳໃຊ້ການ

<sup>1</sup> ພາກວິຊາພາສາອັງກິດ, ຄະນະພາສາ-ມະນຸດສາດ, ມະຫາວິທະຍາໄລສະຫວັນນະເຂດ/ ສປປ ລາວ.

<sup>2</sup> ພາກວິຊາພາສາຫວຽດ, ຄະນະພາສາ-ມະນຸດສາດ, ມະຫາວິທະຍາໄລສະຫວັນນະເຂດ/ ສປປ ລາວ.

<sup>3</sup> ພາກວິຊາພາສາອັງກິດ, ຄະນະພາສາ-ມະນຸດສາດ, ມະຫາວິທະຍາໄລສະຫວັນນະເຂດ/ ສປປ ລາວ.

<sup>4</sup> ພາກວິຊາໄອທີ, ຄະນະໄອທີ-ຂໍ້ມູນຂ່າວສານ, ມະຫາວິທະຍາໄລສະຫວັນນະເຂດ/ ສປປ ລາວ.

<sup>5</sup> ພາກວິຊາພາສາອັງກິດ, ຄະນະພາສາ-ມະນຸດສາດ, ມະຫາວິທະຍາໄລສະຫວັນນະເຂດ/ ສປປ ລາວ.

<sup>6</sup> ຫ້ອງການຄຸ້ມຄອງບໍລິຫານ, ມະຫາວິທະຍາໄລສະຫວັນນະເຂດ/ ສປປ ລາວ.

ວິເຄາະການຖົດຖອຍແບບຄູນ (Multiple Regression Analysis) ເພື່ອສອບທຽບອຳນາດໃນການຄາດຄະເນຂອງປັດໄຈເອກະລາດທັງໝົດເກົ້າປັດໄຈ.

ຜົນການວິໄຈພົບວ່າ: ຂອບເຂດຄຳສັບ (Vocabulary Range), ຄວາມຖືກຕ້ອງຂອງໄວຍາກອນ (Grammar Accuracy), ນິໄສການອ່ານ (Reading Habits), ແລະ ຄຳຄິດເຫັນຈາກຄູສອນ (Teacher Feedback) ລ້ວນແຕ່ເປັນຕົວຄາດຄະເນໃນທາງບວກທີ່ສຳຄັນຕໍ່ທັກສະການອ່ານພາສາອັງກິດຂອງນັກສຶກສາ. ໃນຂະນະດຽວກັນ, ຄວາມວິຕົກກັງວົນໃນການອ່ານ (Reading Anxiety) ແມ່ນມີຜົນກະທົບໃນທາງລົບ. ຢ່າງໃດກໍຕາມ, ຜົນການວິເຄາະສະແດງໃຫ້ເຫັນວ່າ: ການຝຶກອ່ານ (Reading Practice), ຄວາມສອດຄ່ອງຂອງເນື້ອໃນ (Coherence), ແຮງຈູງໃຈ (Motivation), ແລະ ການມີຊັບພະຍາກອນ (Resource Availability) ແມ່ນບໍ່ມີຄວາມສຳຄັນທາງສະຖິຕິ.

ອີງຕາມຜົນການວິໄຈນີ້, ການເພີ່ມຄວາມສາມາດໃນການອ່ານຂອງນັກຮຽນຮຽກຮ້ອງໃຫ້ມີທັກສະທາງດ້ານພາສາທີ່ດີເລີດ, ການມີສ່ວນຮ່ວມໃນການອ່ານເປັນປະຈຳ, ແລະ ການສະໜັບສະໜູນທີ່ເປັນປະໂຫຍດຈາກຄູສອນ. ການສຶກສາໄດ້ສະເໜີແນະໃຫ້ປັບປຸງການຝຶກອົບຮົມຄຳສັບແລະໄວຍາກອນ, ພ້ອມທັງສ້າງສະພາບແວດລ້ອມໃນຫ້ອງຮຽນທີ່ສົ່ງເສີມ ແລະ ປາສະຈາກຄວາມວິຕົກກັງວົນ ເພື່ອປັບປຸງທັກສະການອ່ານພາສາອັງກິດໃຫ້ດີຂຶ້ນ.

**ຄຳສຳຄັນ:** ຄວາມສາມາດໃນການອ່ານຄຳສັບພາສາອັງກິດ, ຄຳສັບ, ຄຳເຫັນຂອງຄູສອນ, ນິໄສການອ່ານ, ໄວຍາກອນ.

### Abstract

This study examined the variables affecting third-year English reading proficiency at Souphanouvong University's (SKU) Faculty of Linguistics and Humanities. Finding the most important linguistic, behavioral, and psychological factors influencing pupils' reading proficiency was the goal of the study. Data were gathered using a standardized questionnaire given to participants as part of a quantitative research strategy. Nine independent factors were examined for predictive power using multiple regression analysis.

The findings showed that:

While reading anxiety had a negative impact, vocabulary range, grammar accuracy, reading habits, and teacher feedback were all significant positive predictors of students' English reading skill. The results showed that reading practice, coherence, motivation, and resource availability were all statistically insignificant. According to these results, enhancing kids' reading comprehension requires excellent language proficiency, regular reading engagement, and helpful teacher assistance. To improve English reading skills, the study suggests improving vocabulary and grammatical training as well as establishing classroom conditions that are encouraging and anxiety-free.

**Keywords:** English reading proficiency, grammar, vocabulary, reading habits, teacher feedback.

### Introduction

English has emerged as a universal language and a vital instrument for professional growth, education, and communication. Reading is essential for learning new information,

comprehending scholarly writings, and improving general language proficiency. Students who read English well can access academic resources and develop critical thinking skills necessary for success in higher education. However, many students at Savannakhet University (SKU) struggle to acquire proficient reading abilities, hampered by limited vocabulary, poor grammatical understanding, and a lack of effective reading methods. Furthermore, external variables such as the classroom setting and instructional strategies significantly impact students' reading performance.

Reading is the result of contact between the reader and the writer's mind, a process of constructing meaning through complex linguistic expertise. Grellet (1999) identifies two main motivations for reading: enjoyment and knowledge. Oberholzer (2005) and Pang (2003) assert that comprehension of the main idea is the most crucial component of reading any text. To facilitate independent reading, Wilkinson and Son (2011) emphasize strengthening the stage of comprehension. Various theories suggest that teachers should employ diverse activities to pique interest (Brown, 2001), while flexible techniques and prior knowledge are essential to ensure text comprehension (Dole et al., 1991; Alderson, 2000).

In the ASEAN region, English is the official working language that promotes regional integration in commerce, education, and diplomacy. Member states, including Laos, are urged to improve student English proficiency to increase competitiveness in the regional labor market. At SKU's Faculty of Linguistics and Humanities, reading proficiency is a prerequisite for English majors. Despite the emphasis on English text comprehension in the national curriculum, many Laotian pupils still face difficulties due to insufficient exposure and L1 interference. Teachers have observed that students' reading proficiency varies significantly, yet there is little research explicitly examining the factors affecting this ability at SKU.

This study fills a significant research need by examining internal and external factors that affect English reading skills at SKU. The conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between independent variables—internal factors (vocabulary, grammar, motivation) and external factors (classroom environment, teacher feedback)—and the dependent variable of English reading skills. By investigating these elements, the findings will offer evidence-based insights to improve teaching tactics and promote curriculum revisions. Ultimately, this study aims to help students reach higher levels of reading competency to access contemporary knowledge and global collaborations

## **Research Methodology**

### **Design of Research**

This study used a descriptive survey method with a quantitative research design. The goal was to look at the internal and external factors influencing students' English reading proficiency at Savannakhet University's Faculty of Linguistics and Humanities. The survey approach was chosen because it makes it possible to gather information on students' attitudes, actions, and experiences with English reading in a methodical manner. Trends, mean scores, and the degree of agreement on different parameters were examined using descriptive statistics.

### **Population and sample group**

All Year I–III students enrolled in Savannakhet University's Faculty of Linguistics and Humanities in academic year 2019-2020 made up the study's population. Participants who had

taken English classes and were actively reading scholarly texts were chosen using a purposive sampling technique. With a total sample size of 120 students.

### **Research Tool**

A structured questionnaire that was updated and altered from other studies (August & Hakuta, 2005; Nation, 2009) to meet the context of English reading skills served as the data gathering tool. Three components comprised the questionnaire:

- 1) Age, gender, academic year, and prior experience learning English are examples of demographic data.
- 2) Internal factors include things like motivation, self-confidence, reading techniques, grammar proficiency, and vocabulary knowledge.
- 3) External factors include things like the classroom setting, teaching strategies, instructor comments, and educational materials.

A **five-point Likert scale** was used to measure students' perceptions:

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

The questionnaire was validated by three experts in English language teaching and applied linguistics to ensure content validity. A pilot test was conducted with 10% of the sample to check reliability, which was confirmed with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.95

### **Data Collection Procedure**

The researcher followed these steps to conduct the study:

First, the researcher created the questionnaires based on the ideas after reading the literature review and associated material multiple times.

After that, the researcher sent the questionnaires to the specialists to ensure they were relevant and useful.

Subsequently, the researcher asked the faculty dean for permission to conduct the study. Once the permission was obtained and all the questionnaires had been revised or edited, the researcher gave the questionnaires to the participants and explained their purpose, how to answer, and other details to ensure accurate data. The participants had in in at least 2 weeks to complete the questionnaire (11-25, October 2019).

Ultimately, the investigator computed, examined, and documented the study's findings.

### **Data Analysis**

The predictive ability of several independent variables on the dependent variable, pupils' English reading proficiency, was investigated using multiple regression analysis. Data screening and testing of assumptions including normality, linearity, and multicollinearity were done before analysis began. To ascertain each factor's relative impact, standardized beta coefficients ( $\beta$ ), t-values, and significance levels ( $p < .05$ ) were employed. The total explanatory power of the predictors was shown by the model's R<sup>2</sup> score.

## **Result and Discussion**

### **Students' Perceptions of Factors Affecting English Reading Skills**

To find out which factors significantly affect Year III students' English reading proficiency at Souphanouvong University's Faculty of Linguistics and Humanities, multiple regression analysis was used. Nine predictor variables were included in the model, and the

findings made it abundantly evident that not all of the characteristics had an equal impact on students' reading ability.

Vocabulary Range was the most significant and powerful positive predictor of reading proficiency among the variables ( $\beta = .421, p = .000$ ). This implies that pupils who have a greater vocabulary are better able to understand more difficult passages, identify word meanings, and read texts efficiently. This result supports previous studies showing that vocabulary is the cornerstone of effective reading comprehension.

Grammar Accuracy was the second largest factor ( $\beta = .287, p = .001$ ), suggesting that pupils with better grammatical comprehension are better able to generate meaning at the sentence and discourse levels. Understanding grammar well facilitates the decoding of syntactic structures and improves one's capacity to follow a text's logical flow.

Writing/Reading Habit ( $\beta = .195, p = .004$ ) also made a beneficial contribution, indicating that students can become fluent and comfortable with various writing styles through regular exposure to reading resources. Additionally, a significant predictor was Teacher Feedback ( $\beta = .173, p = .012$ ). Teachers that provide constructive criticism can help students strengthen their areas of weakness, increase their self-esteem, and maintain their motivation for reading assignments.

Writing/Reading Anxiety, on the other hand, showed a negative and statistically significant effect ( $\beta = -.149, p = .022$ ). Stressed-out, anxious, or fearful students find it difficult to concentrate and understand what they are reading, which eventually affects their reading ability. This emphasizes how crucial it is to lower anxiety through encouraging teaching methods and techniques for boosting self-esteem.

However, there were no statistically significant predictors for Coherence/Cohesion ( $\beta = .108, p = .105$ ), Motivation ( $\beta = .091, p = .226$ ), Writing Practice ( $\beta = .057, p = .381$ ), or Writing Resources ( $\beta = .033, p = .609$ ). Despite their potential advantages, the findings indicate that these characteristics had no discernible impact on the sample's reading performance. For instance, pupils may possess resources but not make full use of them, or they may be motivated but yet lack effective tactics.

Overall, these findings indicate that linguistic competence (vocabulary and grammar) and learning behaviors supported by teachers are the key contributors to students' reading success. The regression results provide valuable evidence for educators to prioritize vocabulary instruction, structured grammar activities, consistent reading habits, and supportive feedback, while also addressing anxiety that may hinder students' reading performance.

### **Proposes recommendations for improve English reading proficiency**

The results of the study show that students' English reading abilities are greatly influenced by both internal (vocabulary knowledge, grammar proficiency, reading strategies, motivation, and self-confidence) and external (classroom environment, teaching strategies, teacher feedback, and availability of learning resources) factors. Several suggestions for improving reading competency can be provided in light of the perceptions of the students.

The findings imply that it is crucial for pupils to concentrate on their own personal growth. Limited vocabulary had the highest mean among internal factors ( $M = 4.42, S.D. = 0.61$ ), suggesting that students firmly believe that learning new words is the most important reading comprehension issue. In order to learn new terms, students are advised to read widely, keep vocabulary diaries, and employ context-based learning techniques. Additionally, students

should use systematic reading techniques including skimming, scanning, summarizing, and content prediction, as indicated by their poor grammatical proficiency ( $M = 4.35$ ,  $S.D. = 0.65$ ) and ineffective reading strategies ( $M = 4.28$ ,  $S.D. = 0.67$ ). Strengthening grammar with specific activities can further improve comprehension accuracy. Additionally, poor motivation ( $M = 4.20$ ,  $S.D. = 0.70$ ) and low self-confidence ( $M = 4.15$ ,  $S.D. = 0.72$ ) make it clear that in order to improve engagement, students should develop a positive attitude toward reading, set realistic reading goals, and look for peer collaboration.

## Discussion

### Objective 1: To Identify the Factors Affecting English Reading Skills

According to the study's findings, among SKU Year III students, Vocabulary Range and Grammar Accuracy were the most reliable indicators of English reading skill. This supports the findings of Laufer (2017) and Nation (2013), who highlighted vocabulary depth as a critical factor in determining reading comprehension. The results of the current study are corroborated by Alderson's (2000) discovery that grammatical comprehension enhances text comprehension and makes it easier to perceive sentence relationships.

In line with research by Grabe and Stoller (2011), who maintained that regular reading exposure improves fluency and develops learners' lexical and structural knowledge, reading habit also shown a substantial positive link with reading performance. The results showed that among SKU Year III students, the best positive predictors of English reading competency were Vocabulary Range and Grammar Accuracy. This is in line with Nation (2013) and Laufer (2017), who highlighted the importance of vocabulary depth in determining reading comprehension. In a similar vein, Alderson (2000) discovered that grammatical comprehension enhances text comprehension and makes it easier to analyze sentence relationships, which validates the results of the current study.

Additionally, reading habits shown a strong positive correlation with reading performance, which is in line with research by Grabe and Stoller (2011), who claimed that regular reading exposure improves fluency and increases students' lexical and structural knowledge. Nevertheless, reading outcomes were not substantially predicted by motivation, coherence skills, reading practice, or writing/reading resources. Carrell (1991), who pointed out that motivation by itself does not ensure comprehension progress without appropriate technique application, reported similar nonsignificant results. This suggests that although kids may be eager to learn, they may not have access to adequate, high-quality reading materials. Overall, the findings support the notion that improving reading skills requires more than just general drive or the availability of resources; it also requires linguistic proficiency and appropriate learning contexts.

### Objective 2: To Propose Recommendations for Improve English Reading Proficiency

The results of the study offer instructors and students a number of practical suggestions for improving reading proficiency. It is necessary to focus on internal variables for children, including vocabulary, grammar, motivation, and reading skills. Extensive reading and context-based activities are essential components of vocabulary learning (Nation, 2009; Cobb, 2007; Laufer, 1997). To improve comprehension, it is essential to practice grammar and apply reading methods such as summarizing, predicting, and inferencing (Afflerbach et al., 2008; Byrne,

1988). Building self-confidence and intrinsic motivation is also crucial, in line with Deci & Ryan (2000) and Gardner (1985). The study emphasizes the necessity of taking the initiative to develop internal talents. Students should concentrate on improving their grammar, expanding their vocabulary, and using efficient reading techniques like summarizing, scanning, and skimming. Furthermore, improving self-confidence and motivation is essential for consistent reading practice and comprehension development.

## Conclusion

The results of this study showed that a number of interconnected factors affect the English reading competency of third-year students at Souphanouvong University's Faculty of Linguistics and Humanities. These factors, which together accounted for a sizable amount of the diversity in reading ability, included vocabulary range, grammar accuracy, reading habits, and teacher feedback. This suggests that improving children's reading comprehension requires both linguistic proficiency and productive learning practices. On the other hand, it was discovered that reading anxiety had a detrimental impact on students' performance, proving that emotional obstacles might impede learning.

The lack of statistical significance for other criteria, such as motivation, coherence, reading practice, and resource availability, suggests that although these components are important, they might not be able to accurately predict competency in the absence of good basic language skills. In order to improve English reading outcomes in higher education contexts, the study emphasizes the significance of emphasizing vocabulary and grammar training, encouraging healthy reading habits, and creating supportive, anxiety-free learning environments.

## Recommendations:

### Pedagogical Implications

1. Emphasize Core Vocabulary and Grammar: Instruction should be designed to focus on expanding vocabulary through Extensive Reading and practicing complex grammar, as these two factors are the most crucial for reading ability.
2. Foster Reading Habits and Teacher Feedback: Instructors should promote Reading Habits by assigning extensive reading tasks and providing constructive Teacher Feedback to build confidence and address weaknesses.
3. Reduce Reading Anxiety: Supportive and Anxiety-free environments should be created in the classroom to prevent emotional barriers from hindering reading comprehension.

### Suggestions for Future Research

1. Investigate Non-Significant Factors: Further research should be conducted to explore the reasons why factors such as Motivation, Coherence/Cohesion, and Reading Practice were not statistically significant predictors of students' reading ability at SKU, despite being crucial components of reading.
2. Study Intervention Effectiveness: Quasi-experimental research should be conducted to test the efficacy of targeted training programs focusing on Vocabulary and Grammar in improving reading skills.

## Acknowledgements

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