

# **The Effects of Morphological Instruction on Reading Abilities of Low Proficiency Adult EFL Learners at a University in Thailand**

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## **Abstract**

This article aims at investigating the effects of morphological instruction, roots and affixes, on the reading abilities in terms of vocabulary and reading comprehension of low proficiency adult EFL learners at a university level in Thailand. The study focuses on whether those students are able to make educated guesses on the meaning of unknown words using their morphological knowledge to help them comprehend better in reading passages. The findings of the study reveal that there was no statistically significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test scores of the control group and the experimental group after morphological instruction on roots and affixes. Similarly, the research found that there was no statistically significant difference in the final exam scores in terms of vocabulary knowledge, reading comprehension and vocabulary-reading sections between the experimental and the control groups. The results could be discussed in two aspects. The first one is that the teaching morphemes (roots and affixes) did not foster the vocabulary development and reading comprehension skills of low-proficient adult EFL learners who have limitation of 2,000 – 3,000 common words. The second one is that both morphological instruction and extensive reading through reading exercises probably supported the low-proficient learners' reading abilities.

**Keywords:** morphology, instruction, reading abilities, low proficiency, adult EFL learners

## **Introduction**

### **Background and significance of the study**

It has been generally recognized that low proficiency adult EFL students were unable to comprehend new passages due to new vocabulary in them. The students had very limited English vocabulary, which led to problems in reading comprehension. This is in turn an obstacle to “lifelong learning,” one of the government’s policies stated in the National Education Act B.E. 2542 (1999). Consequently, those students do not have enough vocabulary knowledge to comprehend the language when they need to search for information through the Internet or other resources which is published in English. This is a serious problem for Thai learners. In addition, reading is the basis of writing and thinking skills that students need to develop in order to prepare themselves for their future work in international business competition. As English has the concept of word building, teaching word parts like roots and affixes may help students enhance their vocabulary quickly. However, some students cannot recognize these kinds of word attributes. Therefore, it is necessary to introduce word analysis, one of several strategies of vocabulary teaching (Teflbootcamp, 2011). Several past studies investigated the effect of morphological instruction. Devine (1986) presented the research findings from many researchers such as Deighton (1959), Dale and O’rourke (1971) by stating

that “knowledge of words and word meanings is crucial. Correlation studies of comprehension factors all highlight the importance of word knowledge” (p. 30). Chawwang (2008) studied the English reading problems of Thai 12<sup>th</sup>-grade students and found that those students had problems in three areas: sentence structure, vocabulary and reading comprehension. The results of the study indicated that the students’ reading problems might come from the Thai teachers’ teaching method. The finding points relating to research conducted by Ruangputtanakul and Tongjai (2006), who stated that “Thai teachers do not use various reading strategies to improve the students’ reading ability, such as using context clues to guess the meaning of the difficult words, using synonyms and key words to guess meaning from context, and using knowledge of affixes and root words to infer the meaning of new words” (p. 67). However, Chuenjundaeng (2006) conducted a study in order to investigate the receptive knowledge of English noun suffixes: -tion, -er, -ment and -ity. The results in this study revealed that the word-building strategy did not help the subjects of this research with low vocabulary knowledge to recognize word families. Due to these controversial findings, this study aims at investigating the effects of morphological instruction on reading abilities of Thai adult learners at university level. The results from this current study may help Thai EFL teachers who teach low proficiency adult EFL learners at a university level to plan their reading instruction, so that they can help improve their students’ reading abilities. The next section discusses vocabulary instruction, morphological instruction, and knowledge of inflectional and derivational morphemes and the relevant literature.

## **Review of related literature**

### **Vocabulary instruction**

In order to help second language learners enhance vocabulary knowledge to at least a minimum level of common words to understand the texts, many L2 reading researchers consider vocabulary instruction as an important component of reading development (Grabe and Stoller, 2002, p.78). Most adult EFL readers who have limited vocabulary and background knowledge encounter a comprehension problem. That problem is a barrier for them to choose to read much. Therefore, they do not develop vocabulary through reading (Curtis and Longo, 1999; Stanovich, 1986). Nation (1990) and Cohen (1987) mentioned the following direct teaching methods to assist ESL/EFL learners in acquiring new words. They are rote memorization, using context to guess vocabulary, mnemonic techniques for vocabulary acquisition, and word analysis skills. Word analysis skill teaches learners roots and affixes and encourages them to use this knowledge to learn new words. Three skills needed in word analysis are recognizing the parts of a word, learning the meaning of roots and prefixes/suffixes, and using root and prefixes/suffixes to create new words and the meaning of new words (Nation, 1990). Nation also states that knowing 14 key words can lead to knowing the meaning to over 14,000 words in English as well. McShane (2005) and Anderson (1999) also stated that teaching word analysis is necessary for ESL/EFL learners whose first language is not English.

## **Morphological Instruction**

Blachowicz and Fisher (2005) point out that the likelihood of being able to directly teach the meaning of every word to students is slim. Teachers have to provide vocabulary development programs to assist their students in independent word learning. They suggested teaching independent strategies by using clues within words; that is morphological analysis: compound words, incidental morphemic analysis, affixes and root words. In recent years, there have been many studies investigating how morphological instruction contributes to literacy development and acquisition. Morphological instruction has been recommended by published books on reading and spelling instruction (Carlisle, 2010). There are two opposing views on morphological instruction for first language learners. The first one is “stage theory,” which considers that morphological knowledge does not play an important role at an early stage of literacy acquisition. Many studies suggest a different approach for different age ranges. For example, children should be approximately in third grade when they are taught morphology (Henderson, 1985), whereas other research has indicated that it should be taught in fourth grade (Ehri and McCormick, 1998; Moats, 2000), or late elementary and middle school years (Schlagal, 2001). On the contrary, “repertoire theory,” suggests that children are able to use multiple linguistic resources: phonological awareness, orthographic knowledge, morphological awareness, and semantic knowledge in reading and spelling at an early stage.

## **Knowledge of Inflectional and Derivational Morphemes**

### **Knowledge of inflectional morphemes**

Inflectional morphemes are pointed out as grammatical rules which EFL learners have learnt for many years. There are two approaches that account for the inflectional morphological difficulties: competence deficit approach (CDA) and performance deficiency approach (PDA). CDA considers that L2 learners perform errors and variability of inflectional morphemes in spontaneous communication because “the performer has learned a rule, but has not acquired it” (Krashen, 1982, p.86 cited in Jiang, 2004). PDA claims that these morphological difficulties are from a process of individual L2 learners in accessing, retrieving, or controlling their internalized knowledge at performance level, not at competence level (Jiang, 2004).

### **Knowledge of derivational morphemes**

Tyler and Nagy (1989, as cited in Lardiere: 2006), clarified three aspects of knowledge of derivational morphemes (p.73): 1) Relational knowledge - the knowledge where L2 learners recognize semantic relatedness of two words which share a common lexical base such as argue – argument; 2) Syntactic knowledge - the knowledge where L2 learners identify syntactic changes by derivational suffixes, for example, X-ize - ‘Verb’, X-ation - ‘Noun’; 3) Selectional knowledge - the knowledge where L2 learners realize restrictions in forming new words with derivational suffixes. For example, the derivational morpheme ‘ness’ has to follow the adjective word (quiet + ness = quietness).

## Relevant research

Many researchers have conducted studies investigating the effectiveness of morphological instruction for literacy development in terms of vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension. They found two apparently contradictory outcomes.

The most common findings substantiate that morphological instruction fosters the vocabulary development and reading comprehension of second language learners. Zimmerman (1997) conducted a pilot study of reading and interactive vocabulary instruction for U.S. postsecondary L2 students preparing for university entrance and found that after 10 weeks classroom-based study, interactive vocabulary instruction with the study of moderate amounts of self-selected materials and course-created reading led to increased vocabulary knowledge. The consideration of combining reading and interactive vocabulary instruction was recommended. Mochizuki and Aizawa (2000) and Schmitt and Meara (1997), as cited in Hunt and Beglar (2005), reported that knowledge of morphology can contribute to expanding and elaborating learners' vocabulary knowledge. In those studies, learners familiar with English morphology were able to recognize more of the words that they encountered in reading passages. On the other hand, the researchers urged that introducing derivatives should be treated with caution. The researchers cited Laufer (1997) and Bensoussan and Laufer (1984), who stated that deceptively transparent words could easily cause misanalysis, for example, the word "outline", could be interpreted as the meaning of "out of line" in the case of low proficiency EFL learners who have limited vocabulary. Timyam (2008) conducted needs analysis of knowledge in linguistics for English-major students. The subjects were 123 English-major students at the undergraduate and graduate levels in Thailand. The results revealed that students considered morphology as significantly needed. The study suggests that morphological elements should be taught in order to help students know the meaning of unfamiliar words.

On the other hand, there are still some contradictory arguments against the aforementioned findings. Farsi (2008) conducted a study to investigate morphological awareness and its relationship between vocabulary knowledge and morphological complexity among 54 Omani EFL university students. The result of the study showed that there is no relationship between morphological awareness and vocabulary size and between morphological awareness and ability to cope with word complexity (p. 51). Chuenjundaeng (2006) carried out an investigation of Suranaree University of Technology (SUT) students' receptive knowledge of English noun suffixes: -tion, -er, -ment, -ity. The participants were 167 undergraduate students who were studying English compulsory courses at Suranaree University of Technology in Thailand. The results revealed that the word-building strategy did not help the subjects of this research with low vocabulary knowledge to recognize word families. As in the aforementioned views, there have been arguments about morphological instruction in vocabulary development and improvement in reading comprehension. Hence, this paper investigated the effects of morphological instruction on the reading abilities, vocabulary knowledge, and reading comprehension of low proficiency adult EFL learners.

## Research questions and hypotheses

### Research questions

There were two research questions to be answered in the study:

1. Did low proficiency adult EFL learners improve their reading abilities after morphological teaching?

2. Did low proficiency adult EFL learners in the experimental group achieve better reading abilities in terms of vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension as compared to learners in the control group?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated in relation to the above research questions:

1. The post-test scores of the experimental group will be higher than the pre-test scores.
2. The final exam scores in terms of vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension of the experimental group will be higher than those in the control group.

### **Research methodology**

#### **Subjects**

The subjects of this study were second-year students enrolling in GE1004: English for Communication III during semester 1/2010. The students were assigned into groups by the institution. Four groups were selected, and then they were regrouped based on their grades in GE1003: English for Communication II. The first two groups were high-grade students, A and B, and the other two were groups of C+ (plus) or below. The lower-grade groups were the subjects of this study, so they were considered to be low in their reading proficiency. One of the two low proficiency groups was randomly assigned as the experimental group and the other one as the control group. Each group took GE1004: English for Communication III six hours a week for ten weeks. The Oxford Smart Choice 3 textbook (Wilson, 2007a) designed for EFL students at an intermediate level of English proficiency was used in the course. There are 12 units in the textbook.

#### **Materials**

#### **Research Instruments**

The research instruments used in this study consist of four factors. The first one is the reading placement test developed by Oxford for Smart Choice learners (2007) (See Appendix A) which was used as the pre-test and the post-test to investigate the differences in reading ability between the two groups after the teaching of morphemes. There were 16 items on the tests. The second one is the supplementary lessons and drills for the experimental group developed by the researcher for the teaching of morphemes (roots and affixes) to enhance their reading abilities. The affixes were retrieved from each of the twelve units of the Oxford Smart Choice 3 textbook (Wilson, 2007a). The supplementary lessons were introduced after teaching regular lessons. The drills were assigned as homework. The supplementary lessons and drills were revised after the pilot study was held (See Appendix B and C). The next one is reading exercises from the Oxford Smart Choice 3 workbook (Wilson, 2007b) for the control group, which were selected as supplementary exercises. The topics of reading in the Oxford Smart Choice 3 workbook (Wilson, 2007b) were related to pleasure, information and general understanding. They were assigned to read at home (See Appendix D). The last one is the vocabulary and reading comprehension sections of GE1004's final exam (See Appendix E), which was comprised of six sections: listening, conversation, structure, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing. However, only the scores from the vocabulary and reading

comprehension sections (30 scores each) were used to investigate the differences in reading abilities between the experimental group and the control group.

### Data collection

The data collection composed of five processes. First, the subjects in both groups took the pre-test: the Oxford Smart Choice Reading Placement Test (2007) on the first day of the course. Second, for the experimental group, supplementary lessons were conducted in class in order to introduce roots and affixes learned in the lessons. Supplementary drills were assigned for homework. The correct answers were discussed in the following lesson. Next, the supplementary exercises which were not relevant to morphological instruction from the Oxford Smart Choice 3 workbook (Wilson, 2007b) were assigned for homework for the control group. The correct answers were discussed in the following lessons. Then, the subjects in both groups took the post-test: the Oxford Smart Choice Reading Placement Test (2007) on the last day of the course. Finally, the subjects in both groups took GE 1004's final exam provided by the institution.

### Data analysis

The statistical analysis of paired t-test was used to analyze and compare the mean scores of the pre-test and the post-test of the experimental group. In addition, the independent sample t-test was used to analyze and compare the mean scores of the post-test and the vocabulary and reading comprehension sections of GE 1004's final exam between the experimental group and the control group. Moreover, the statistical KR21 analysis was used to investigate the reliability of the questions in the vocabulary and reading comprehension sections of GE 1004's final exam.

### Findings and discussion

The vocabulary and reading comprehension scores in the final exam were analyzed to investigate the differences in the reading abilities of the subjects in both groups. The reliability of the questions in the vocabulary and reading comprehension sections of the final exam was investigated by using KR21. It was found that the reliability of the questions in the vocabulary questions was 0.83, and the reliability of the reading comprehension questions was 0.76. The reliability of both the vocabulary and reading comprehension questions was 0.88. The results indicate that the questions in those two sections of the final exam have highly positive reliability.

### Results for Question 1: Did low-proficiency adult EFL learners improve their reading abilities after morphological instruction?

**Table 1: Paired Sample t-test of the pre-test and the post-test of the experimental group**

		<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<b>Experimental group</b>	<b>pre</b>	41	5.34	0.065	0.948
	<b>post</b>	41	5.32		

\* $p < 0.05$

According to Table 1, a paired sample t-test was used to compare the mean scores of the pre-test and the post-test in the experimental group; there were no statistically significant differences in the mean scores between the pre-test and the post-test at the significant level 0.05.

**Table 2: Independent Sample t-test for the comparison of post test result between the experimental group and the control group**

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<b>Experimental group</b>	41	5.32	1.950	.414
<b>Control group</b>	23	6.22		

\* $p < 0.05$

According to Table 2, the independent sample t-test was used to compare the mean scores of the post-test between the control group and the experimental group after the eight-week period. It was found that there were no statistically significant differences in the mean scores of the post-test between the control group and the experimental group at the significant level 0.05.

**Results for Question 2: Did low-proficiency adult EFL learners in the experimental group achieve better reading abilities in terms of vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension as compared to learners in the control group?**

**Table 3: Independent Sample t-test for the comparison of reading abilities in terms of vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension between the experimental group and the control group**

		<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>Experimental group</b>	41	8.90	0.509	0.612
	<b>Control group</b>	23	9.22		
<b>Reading</b>	<b>Experimental group</b>	41	11.56	0.258	0.798
	<b>Control group</b>	23	11.83		
<b>Final</b>	<b>Experimental group</b>	41	20.46	0.422	0.675
	<b>Control group</b>	23	21.04		

\* $p < 0.05$

Regarding the final exam scores, the independent sample t-test was used to compare the mean scores of vocabulary, reading comprehension and vocabulary-reading comprehension sections between the control group and the experimental group. The findings revealed that there were no statistically significant differences in the mean scores of vocabulary, reading comprehension and vocabulary-reading comprehension sections between the two groups at the significant level 0.05.

## Discussions and conclusions

The results from the study revealed that there was no significant difference in the pre-test, the post-test and the final exam scores for the vocabulary, reading comprehension and vocabulary-reading comprehension sections between the control and the experimental groups. From this point of view, it seems that teaching morphemes: roots (or bases or stems) and affixes did not foster the reading abilities of low proficiency adult EFL learners. The results from the study revealed that there was no statistically significant difference in the pre-test, the post-test and the final exam scores: vocabulary, reading comprehension and vocabulary-reading comprehension sections between the control and the experimental groups. This finding supports Farsi (2008) in that if students' morphological awareness and vocabulary size are limited, the relationship between the two constructs could not be established. From the results of the study, 41 subjects in the experimental group could be divided into 3 subgroups. The first subgroup consists of 18 students whose post-test scores were less than the pre-test. The second one is 18 students whose post-test scores were higher than the pre-test. The last one is 5 students whose pre-test scores were equal to the post-test one.

The analysis of the students' answers item by item shows that some students had background knowledge of word families. For example, passage-1 in the tests states that "Paula is from Boston, but she lives in New York. She is 28, and she teaches chemistry at a high school." Question no. 1 was to check their vocabulary knowledge; that is "Paula is ....." The correct answer is "a teacher" which 82.93% of the subjects chose, but 17.07% did not. The percent of choosing the correct answer was the same amount in both the pre-test and the post test. This shows that most students could have had background knowledge of these two morphemes: 'teach' and '-er' when they came to take the tests. On the other hand, 17.07% group that answered the question incorrectly indicates that the subjects could have had vocabulary knowledge less than minimum level 2,000 - 3,000 common words. Therefore, they could not construct a connection of their pre-existing vocabulary to new morphological knowledge (Farsi, 2008). The 18 students whose post-test scores were higher than the pre-test showed their progress in reading comprehension. They could choose correct answers to those questions in the *Smart Choice Placement Test* (2007) for specific details in each passage. In the *Smart Choice Textbook 3* (Wilson, 2007a), there are many morphological words such as 'commercials', 'animation', 'animated', etc. It seems that those students could activate and apply their morphological knowledge while reading, which leads to reading comprehension.

Another example is that it is noticeable that most students chose 'b' to answer question item no 15 in the Oxford smart choice placement test A (2007), which was the wrong answer: *Adam and Carolyn have produced some movies in collaboration with NGOs*. They referred the sentence in the passage, "We would love to collaborate with NGOs." The results reveal the percent of wrong answers as 48.78% and 52.17% in the experimental and control groups respectively. For the verb *have produced*, the morpheme "--(e)d" with "have" indicates the present perfect tense. It means Adam and Carolyn had already experienced working with NGOs. It is apparently contradictory to the verb *would like to* in the passage which implies that they haven't worked with NGOs yet. As the concept of competence deficit approach (CDA) suggests, learners may know all the rules about inflectional morphemes. They have learned the rules, but have not acquired them (Krashen, 1982 as cited in Jiang, 2004). It seems that they did not master grammar pattern; in this case, the knowledge of inflectional morphemes relate to grammatical control and its meaning (Jiang, 2004).



From another point of view, the findings may indicate that both morphological instruction and extensive reading through reading exercises supported their reading abilities. The comprehensible input hypothesis claims that adult EFL learners can acquire language through extensive reading. Extensive reading develops their vocabulary knowledge, grammar competence, and reading comprehension (Krashen, 1982). This hypothesis reveals why the findings of this study contrast to Carlisle (2010) in indicating that morphological instruction possibly supports vocabulary development and improves reading comprehension (Nagy, 2007). When compared to the results of this study, it also identifies that there were 13 students in the control group whose post-test scores were higher than the pre-test. Analyzing item by item, it was found that those students could choose the correct answers responding to comprehension in the passages 1-3 rather than the fourth one. It implied that they gained vocabulary knowledge and reading strategies through given reading exercises. The results of the post-test of the experimental group exposed that the subjects found difficulties in terms of critical reading. Most of them selected wrong answers when they confronted those mentioned questions. Compared to the control group, the final exam vocabulary scores of the experimental group had higher percent of correctness of 17 items, whereas the control group accounted for the rest; 13 items. In contrast, the control group had higher percent of correctness of 18 items in the reading part of the final exam while the experimental group had only 12 items. It seems that the experimental group which was taught morphological awareness got better scores in the vocabulary part while the control group which was provided supplementary reading exercises did better in the reading part. This point needs to be investigated further.

In conclusion, even though the current study shows that morphological instruction in terms of roots (or bases or stems) and affixes did not bring a significant difference from extensive reading of the control group, the morphological instruction is still important and must be taught in reading classrooms (Richards, 1976; Nation, 2001, as cited in McCarten, 2007; Nagy and Townsend, 2012). From the results of this study, it is possible that morphological instruction should be integrated with extensive reading and other reading strategy instruction in order that low-proficiency adult EFL learners can interweave all aspects of knowledge to enhance their reading abilities (Matsuoka and Hirsh, 2010; Nagy and Townsend, 2012).

### **Pedagogical implications**

The findings on the effects of morphological instruction on reading abilities of low-proficiency adult EFL learners in terms of vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension suggest that not only morphological instruction but also extensive reading should be implemented in order to support adult EFL learners' vocabulary development and reading comprehension (Krashen, 1982; Grabe and Stoller, 2002; Matsuoka and Hirsh, 2010). With respect to the notion of morphological instruction, the direct pre-teaching should be provided and instructed together with various collocations in order to scaffold language learners' new vocabulary acquisition (Matsuoka and Hirsh, 2010). In the light of extensive reading outside classroom, it helps adult EFL learners enhance their pre-existing vocabulary knowledge to a number of 2,000 – 3,000 common words, and with morphological instruction that helps them expand their vocabulary bank to a minimum level of 10,000 word families as required to understand university level texts (Walter, 2003) as well as the required syntactic and selectional knowledge of morphology. However, extensive reading should be for pleasure or relevant to adult EFL learners' lives. As reading for pleasure decreases their anxiety, topic familiarity makes them feel comfortable while reading (Krashen, 1982; Chio, 2009; Matsuoka

and Hirsh, 2010). In addition, reading aloud between teachers and students should be implemented in order to encourage students' confidence both in word pronunciation and decoding skills. When adult EFL learners have more confidence and low anxiety, they will not only improve their vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension but also acquire the language that they learn (Krashen, 1982). Last but not least, critical thinking should be developed while teaching reading.

## 5.5 Limitations of the study

The present study was limited by the group sizes of the subjects; these were assigned by the institution; so it was impossible to control them. In addition, it would be easier to analyze the data if an investigation of vocabulary knowledge of the 2,000 – 3,000 common words in the word list was conducted. Moreover, the morphological instruction was designed based on vocabulary in the textbook. For this reason, the instruction focused on the meaning of roots (or bases or stems) and affixes rather than syntactic and selection knowledge. Therefore, syntactic and selectional knowledge should be emphasized in the period of morphological instruction in order to facilitate both vocabulary and grammatical development (Lardiere, 2006). Another additional limitation was the final exam as it was intended to be used as a part of grading for the course and was designed to assess students' achievement. When writing the test items, the course teachers made test items to measure the most important skills and knowledge attained in the course. The number and type of test items written was determined by the content taught in the course. Although the parts of the reading comprehension and vocabulary were used in the data analysis of this study; in many test items, it seems that the students needed other reading strategies in accompany with morphological knowledge to increase their proficiency in both vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension e.g. collaborative strategic reading (Vaughn, Klinger, Swanson, Boardman, and et al., 2011). In this study, as a result of small group size, the students in comparison group had opportunities in group discussion more than the experimental group. Furthermore, the research was conducted under time constraints; this is why the researcher did not have time for follow-up and discussion with individual subjects to check how much he or she used morphological knowledge while reading.

## 5.6 Recommendations for further study

This study was conducted under the aforementioned limitations. Therefore, based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made for further research on this topic: 1) the sample should have a similar group size between the control and the experimental groups; 2) there should be a longer period of time, in regard to morphological instruction; 3) research could include an investigation of vocabulary knowledge of the 2,000 – 3,000 most commonly used English words; 4) the implementation of morphological instruction, together with other reading strategies, should be investigated.

### Note:

<sup>1</sup> National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. In McShane (2005), NICHD, 2000 refers to the *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read*.

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## APPENDIX A

### An example of Oxford reading placement test for Smart Choice learners

#### Placement Test A – Reading

Read the text. Choose the best answer to complete the sentence.

Paula is from Boston, but she lives in New York. She is 28, and she teaches chemistry at a high school. Paula is usually busy during the week: she teaches every morning and afternoon, plays tennis three times a week, and helps at the local library twice a week. But she tries to see her family in Boston every weekend.

Today she is visiting her parents, and she is doing one of her favorite things: sitting in the kitchen, talking to her mother, and having coffee and cake. Her mother's cake is her favorite food and the kitchen in her parents' house is her favorite place in the world. Their house is pretty big. It has four bedrooms, two bathrooms, a large living room, and a kitchen. The kitchen is not large, but it is really cozy. Paula and her mother can sit there and talk for hours.

Right now, they are talking about Paula's sister, Carla. She is a chef and has a cafe in Boston, just across from a very nice park. Paula sometimes helps her during her visits. She's going to the cafe later today, but first she will finish her cake.

1. According to the text, Paula is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a) a chef
  - b) a librarian
  - c) a student
  - d) a teacher
2. According to the text, Paula \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a) can play tennis
  - b) doesn't like cake
  - c) has a cafe
  - d) works three days a week
3. According to the text, Paula's parents \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a) don't live in New York
  - b) have only one daughter
  - c) live in an apartment
  - d) never see her on weekends

## APPENDIX B

### Supplementary lesson – Unit 1

<b>Prefixes</b>	
un- (not)	unfriendly, unkind, untidy
<b>Suffixes</b>	
-ese (a native of, the language of)	Burmese, Taiwanese, Vietnamese
-an, -ian (native of, relating to)	Mexican, Laotian, Cambodian
-er (one who, that which)	footballer, manager, customer
-tion (act, result, or state of), -al (relating to)	instructional, educational, generational
-ship (state of, office, quality)	friendship, partnership, ownership
<b>Related prefixes in Unit 1</b>	
un- (not)	unusual
Do you know someone with an <b>unusual</b> hobby? (p. 7)	
<b>Related suffixes in Unit 1</b>	
-ese (a native of, the language of)	Japanese, Chinese
Have you been studying <b>Japanese</b> for many years? (p. 6) I've been studying <b>Chinese</b> . (p. 6)	
-an, -ian (a native of, the language of)	Russian, American
Have you learnt <b>Russian</b> for long? (p. 6) She watches <b>American</b> Idol. (p. 9)	
-er (one who, that which)	golfer, teenager
She's also the best female <b>golfer</b> of all time. (p. 9) She's a normal <b>teenager</b> . (p. 9)	
-tion (act, result, or state of), -al (relating to)	exceptional
At the age of ten, she shot a 64. (If you don't know a lot about golf, that's <b>exceptional</b> ! (p. 9)	
-ship (state of, office, quality)	championship
He won his first national <b>championship</b> . (p. 9)	

## APPENDIX C

## Unit 1 - Exercise

Fill in the blank with appropriate words


unhappy	American	Asian	Portuguese	reader
friendship	educational	footballer	unlock	partnership

1. Beckham is a famous \_\_\_\_\_.
2. An active \_\_\_\_\_ reads three or four books a month.
3. She finally managed to \_\_\_\_\_ the door and we were able to go inside.
4. We have different \_\_\_\_\_ background in this class.
5. “\_\_\_\_\_ Idol” is a reality television competition to find new solo singing talent in America.
6. Someone said, “\_\_\_\_\_ is one mind in two bodies.”
7. Thailand is one of South-east \_\_\_\_\_ countries.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ desserts are usually quite sweet and high in egg content.
9. Central and The Mall have formed a \_\_\_\_\_ to run a new business.
10. What’s wrong? You look \_\_\_\_\_ today.

## APPENDIX D

### More than a Hobby

Send us an e-mail about your favorite hobby. Here are some from your fellow readers.




I guess I've always been interested in cars. When I was a teenager, even before I was old enough to drive, I used to work on the engines of old cars owned by a friend of mine. Later, I started buying old cars myself and combining the parts from two or three cars to make one good car. Then I'd sell it and use the money to buy another couple of old cars... When I left college, I was ready to start my own business. I still love cars, but I don't work on them any more, I'm too busy running the business.

(Brian, Georgia, 29 years old)

My parents are always bugging me to get off the computer, but I got hooked on computer games when I got some for my twelfth birthday. I love games that use strategy and skill. You also need excellent hand-eye coordination, and you need to be brave and take risks. I started taking part in championships about three years ago, and I've got into the top ten each time. The prize money is very good—if you win!

(Terry, Illinois, 19 years old)



I've been collecting bicycles since I was ten years old. Not real bicycles, but anything that has a picture of a bicycle or is in the shape of a bicycle: postcards, calendars, posters, toys. I have two rules: it must be under five dollars, and it must be small enough to store in my closet. Right now, I have about 200 items in my collection. For the last year, I have been concentrating on postcards of bicycles because they take up less space. I don't think my collection is ever going to be worth much or anything. I just like the idea of having a collection that no one else has.

(Lisa, New Jersey, 15 years old)

UNIT 1 • I'VE BEEN HANGING OUT.

### Reading

**1** Read the text on page 5 quickly. Check (✓) the true sentences.

- ☐ Brian's hobby turned into a business.
- ☐ Terry needs a computer for her hobby.
- ☐ Lisa's hobby is expensive.

**2** Read the text again. Complete the sentences.

- Brian has been working with cars since he was a teenager.
- Brian has had his own business since \_\_\_\_\_.
- Terry has been playing computer games since \_\_\_\_\_.
- Terry has been playing in competitions for \_\_\_\_\_.
- Lisa has been collecting items with pictures or in the shape of bicycles for \_\_\_\_\_.
- Lisa has been concentrating on postcards for \_\_\_\_\_.

**3** Answer the questions. Choose the correct answer.

- What does Brian do with cars? a. He collects them. b. He sells them.
- Why does Terry like computer games? a. They're challenging. b. They're easy.
- Why does Lisa like her collection? a. It's unusual. b. It's valuable.

**4** Complete the sentences. Use the underlined words in the text.

- My boss is always bugging me to spend less time on the phone.
- We tried three different colors, but they looked weird.
- I don't like competitions.
- I got hooked on text messaging and now I can't stop.
- Maybe one day my collection will be worth a lot of money.

**5** What do you think?

- Which of these hobbies do you like or dislike most? Why?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What is your hobby? Why do you like it?  
\_\_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX E

## An example of reading comprehension in a GE1004's final examination

**Nathan Oman: The Boy Who Cried Wolf?**

Previously we posted an interview by **Nathan Oman** talking about his latest project with Hollywood. This same interview is making hot topic at various Thai forums on the internet. Are they talking about how proud they are about his Hollywood movie? No, they're not. Instead Netizen are curious as to why his interview is totally different to what he said last time.

Most importantly, this new movie "**The Prince of Red Shoe**" starring *Bruce Willis* and *Christina Ricci* is unknown according to Google. How is it possible that blockbuster project with big name stars is not listed on Google and Bruce Willis and Christina Ricci fans are not aware of it?

Is Nathan a big fat liar? Or is this movie a top secret Hollywood project that no one knows about? Below is a sample of what Nathan said in his last interview which doesn't match up to his current interview.

**Old interview**

*"My character's name is C Kie and Bruce Willis is my teacher. Christina Ricci is like my helper and I guess I can say that I'm the leading character in the movie"*

**New interview**

*"In the movie I play as Inhum, a 15 year old fisherman"*

**Old interview**

*"The first time I saw Bruce Willis I was speechless, like a crazy fan I asked him to take a photo with me (laughs)"*

**New Interview**

*"When Bruce Willis walked up to me I was very excited. I couldn't even lift my camera up to take a photo with him because no one does that"*

At this stage we don't know if Nathan is lying or not, but netizen does have a point, if this movie is 50% complete how come no one knows about it? Nonetheless the bottom line is – Thai netizens sure are great detectives!

Source: <http://dirtii-laundry.net/2009/07/18/nathan-oman-the-boy-who-cried-wolf/>

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>111. According to the passage, who is Nathan Oman?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An actor</li> <li>A dancer</li> <li>A sailor</li> <li>An operator</li> </ol> | <p>113. What does the word "Netizen" mean?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A person who is Neterland's citizen.</li> <li>A person who uses a net in the Internet.</li> <li>A person who is a frequent user of the Internet.</li> <li>A person who never talk anything.</li> </ol> |
| <p>112. What does the word "speechless" mean?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk nothing</li> <li>Talk a little</li> <li>Talk much</li> <li>Talkative</li> </ol> | <p>114. What does the word "blockbuster" mean?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a very dangerous adventure movie</li> <li>a very high standard movie stars</li> <li>a very popular and/or successful production</li> <li>a very popular and/or successful musical</li> </ol>       |