

Student Response to Use of Reading Assistant Software for English Language Learners in Thailand

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to examine student's response to the use of Computer Aided Language Learning (CALL) system, Reading Assistant (RA). RA is a computer-based reading program with voice recognition, offering learners a placement test, and then providing access to a library of over 300 level appropriate book titles. Students first listen to the book being read, answer prompts and quiz questions, and then record their voice as they read the book aloud, before taking a quiz. In a "yes or no" survey, over 95% of participants (n=205) stated that the use of RA improved their English proficiency in the skills of reading, listening, and speaking. Independent t-tests also demonstrated a significant difference in speaking proficiency among students who used Reading Assistant for a minimum of 90 minutes per week (n=15) and those who read paper books using traditional classroom reading methods (n=19). Two student focus groups (n=8 and n=9) concluded that students believe the use of RA improved English language proficiency more quickly than traditional classroom methods. In conclusion, training with Reading Assistant has shown to be an effective method to increase ESL students' English language proficiency, as well as a positive student experience.

Keywords: *ESL, English language, reading, speaking, Computer-Aided Language Learning*