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Trends in Teaching Critical Reading in the Thai Context

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Abstract—This study identifies and reviews recent research on trends in teaching methods and teaching levels for teaching critical reading skills in Thailand. Thirteen relevant studies were analyzed, including academic documents and research published between 2011 and 2022. The data were organized into two categories including the teaching methods and teaching levels. The results revealed eight popular teaching methods for teaching critical reading skills, including literature-based instruction, the group reading strategy (GRS), the QUEST analysis method, the multimodal tasks method, the content and language integrated learning (CLIL) model, the program for international student assessment (PISA) reading literacy assessment method, the applied linguistic-based method, and the survey, question, read, recite, record, react, and review (SQ5R) method. Moreover, critical reading is taught at three levels in Thailand: the university level, secondary school level, and elementary school level. This study is for those interested in finding an appropriate method for teaching critical reading in the Thai context.

Index Terms—critical reading, English Language Teaching (ELT), teaching levels

I. INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, the world is constantly changing and developing new innovations and technologies, especially in the educational field. A 21st-century education focuses on providing students with the skills and abilities that they need to succeed in this new and advanced world (Chiruguru, 2020). In 2019, Hugh Delaney, the chief of education for UNICEF Thailand, stated that education policymakers and educators must equip the younger generations with "the kinds of skills that prepare them to live in and shape the society of the future" (p.1). In the educational field, the teaching of 21st-century skills is a popular topic. The US Ministry of Education, Apple, Microsoft, and 20 other organizations and education experts proposed "the 4Cs" to be essential skills for the 21st century (Halvorsen, 2016). The 4Cs are critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication (Chiruguru, 2020). According to Stauffer (2021), critical thinking focuses on solving problems, creativity focuses on thinking outside the box, collaboration focuses on working together to achieve a common goal, and communication focuses on conveying ideas quickly and clearly. These four skills are essential for modern students to succeed in school and the workplace. Therefore, critical thinking skills must be integrated into the classroom, especially in the English language classroom.

According to Halvorsen (2018), promoting the 4Cs is a challenge for English language teachers. In English language teaching (ELT), one important learning skill is critical thinking. Critical thinking skills are fundamental skills for 21st-century learners (Changwong et al., 2018) as students will learn how to think critically about an issue or problem and analyze it from many perspectives with an open mind. Critical thinking skills will also be beneficial for students in learning English in critical reading class. According to Taglieber (2003), critical reading and critical thinking can be differentiated in the following way: critical thinking is a technique for evaluating information and ideas and for deciding what to accept and believe, while critical reading is a strategy for discovering new knowledge and ideas within a text. Thus, critical thinking skills go hand in hand with critical reading skills (Ratanaruamkarn, 2022).

Critical reading abilities have gained significance as an important skill in English language learning. Schnell (1987) describes critical reading skills as reading abilities that rely on the learner's past experiences, the principles for assessment, and the drawing of conclusions. Moreover, Huijie (2010) describes critical reading abilities as "a high-level reading process which entails the ability to read with analysis and judgment" (p.1). According to Kurland (2000), critical reading enables one to discover information and ideas within a text, and it is careful, active, reflective, and analytic reading. This skill provides students with the ability to think about and analyze information critically. That is, it enables learners to consider and evaluate the context with an improved perspective and a critical understanding (Talebi

& Marzban, 2015). Therefore, critical reading can be considered an advanced reading method that encompasses learners' ability to understand, evaluate, analyze, interpret, and question what they have read.

However, students in Thailand continue to struggle with English reading, especially critical reading (Chawwang, 2008). In 1999, Longsombun conducted a study to investigate the English reading difficulties experienced by students in Chonburi, Nonthaburi, Samutprakarn, Samutsakorn, and Prathomtani provinces; they found that the students' critical reading abilities were below the minimum criteria. Best methods for teaching critical reading in Thailand is a crucial issue in ELT because this will determine the knowledge that learners receive and how they develop themselves to become better readers. Consequently, teachers must find appropriate and suitable teaching methods to teach 21st-century students.

Therefore, the researcher aims to identify and review recent studies of the new trends in teaching critical reading in Thailand. The researcher primarily hopes to provide essential information regarding these studies, including the teaching methods used and the teaching levels in teaching critical reading classes. The teaching methods will be one of the most important instruments to develop and enhance students' critical reading skills effectively and sustainably in Thailand. Thus, the research objectives are to identify and review recent studies of the trends in teaching methods used in teaching critical reading skills in Thailand and studies of the teaching levels in teaching critical reading skills in the Thai context.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the selection criteria for the studies included in this research. The research papers were obtained from three databases: Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), Scopus, and the Thai Journal Citation Index (TCI). In addition, the selected studies were published between 2011 and 2022 in both national and international papers, including academic papers, conference proceedings, and journals.

In the ERIC, Scopus, and TCI databases, the following key terms were used to search for studies aligned with the focus of this review:

- "Critical Reading" + "Thailand";
- "Critical Reading" + "Thailand" + "English Language Teaching (ELT)";
- "Critical Reading" + "Thailand" + "English Language Teaching (ELT)" + "Teaching Methods"

The first search terms of "critical reading" and "Thailand" generated 446 studies in the ERIC, Scopus, and TCI database. The second search terms – "critical reading," "Thailand," and "English language teaching (ELT)" – appeared in 130 papers in the three databases. Finally, the search terms "critical reading," "Thailand," "English language teaching (ELT)," and "teaching methods" resulted in only 35 papers, some of which were more than 15 years old. After careful examination and elimination of studies that were published over ten years ago, the final selected research papers consisted of 13 studies. Consequently, the following 13 selected papers were categorized and summarized.

III. RESEARCH RESULTS

This study identifies and reviews recent studies on the newest trends in teaching critical reading skills in Thailand. Teachers and researchers have used various teaching methods to enhance Thai students' critical reading abilities at different levels. Generally, the data gathered on teaching critical reading can be divided into two main categories: the teaching methods and the teaching levels.

A. Teaching Methods

In Thailand, teaching critical reading in ELT is an important subject. Many English teachers seek popular teaching methods to teach critical reading. The teaching methods must be suitable for 21st-century learners. The analysis of the 13 selected research papers is presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1
TEACHING METHODS

Teaching Methods	Kaow iw attanakul (2021)	Tae Hyun Kw on (2020)	Sangkaew & Buasomboon (2020)	Tangpinijkarn & Modehiran (2018)	Namsaeng & Sukying (2021)	Suaysee & Thienpermpool (2018)	Varaporn & Sitthitikul (2019)	Namsaeng (2022)	Khamkhong (2018)	Sriw antanegyakul (2018)	Promeson & Tonglong (2020)	Doungwilai (2022)	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Literature-Based Instruction	/	/	/	/									4	30.77	1
Group Reading Strategy (GRS)					/								1	7.69	3
QUEST Analysis Method						/							1	7.69	3
Multimodal Tasks Method							/						1	7.69	3
Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) Model								/					1	7.69	3
PISA Reading Literacy Assessment Method									/				1	7.69	3
Applied Linguistic-Based Method										/ /	,		2	15.39	2
SQ5R Method Total											/	/ /	2 13	15.39 100.00	2

As depicted in Table 1, eight teaching methods were employed in different studies. The most frequent was literature-based instruction (f = 4, 30.77%), followed by the applied linguistic-based method (f = 2, 15.39%) and the SQ5R method (f = 2, 15.39%). Moreover, group reading strategy (GRS), QUEST analysis method, multimodal tasks method, PISA reading literacy assessment method, and content and language integrated learning (CLIL) model are at the same level (f = 1, 7.69%).

(a). Literature-Based Instruction

In four studies, the researchers investigated the use of literature-based instruction in teaching critical reading. Kaowiwattanakul (2021) used literature-based instruction to improve the critical reading and thinking skills of students of English as a foreign language (EFL) to achieve C1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) level. Furthermore, she examined students' attitudes to using literature activities in developing critical reading and thinking skills. Her results revealed that the EFL students' critical reading and thinking skills improved significantly based on their participation in reader-response theory and that students had positive attitudes toward these activities. Similarly, Kwon (2020) analyzed the effect of literature in intercultural language teaching and learning (ILTL) on Thai students' critical reading skills and cultural awareness, using classroom activities such as comparison and group discussions with guided questions. The data were collected from critical reading quizzes, pretests, posttests, and journals. The results of the research demonstrated that using literature in ILTL develops students' critical reading skills and cultural awareness. Sangkaew and Buasomboon (2020) developed the Analysis, Condition, Data, Eureka, and Apply (ACDEA) literature instructional model to enhance the critical reading skills of Thai students. Tools used in this model include lesson plans, a critical reading skill test, and a questionnaire asking for students' opinions. The results demonstrated that the ACDEA literature instructional model was effective for Thai students, resulting in higher scores; students' opinions of the model were also positive. Another aspect of using literature-based instruction was analyzed by Tangpinijkarn and Modehiran (2018), who investigated the effect of using literature for critical reading instruction on Thai students' critical reading ability. They also studied students' opinions of critical reading instruction using literature. The results revealed that the students' posttest scores in critical reading were higher than their pretest scores and that students had a positive attitude toward critical reading instruction using literature.

(b). Group Reading Strategy (GRS) Method

GRS is another critical reading teaching method. It is a collaborative reading activity and offers individual student contributions to a shared goal in an active learning approach. Namsaeng and Sukying (2021) investigated the influence of GRS on Thai EFL students' critical thinking and examined learners' perceptions of the GRS process. This research used a critical thinking self-assessment questionnaire, a logbook, and semistructured interviews to collect data. The

results revealed that GRS improved the Thai EFL students' critical thinking skills and some of the fundamental characteristics of critical thinking were achieved before others. Therefore, the study demonstrated the increased development of critical thinking skills through the GRS learning process.

(c). QUEST Analysis Method

QUEST analysis is another method of teaching critical reading. According to Barkhuizen (2002), a lecturer from the department of Applied Language Studies and Linguistics at the University of Auckland in New Zealand, QUEST analysis is a teaching method that helps students read texts critically. It helps students read and write critically based on asking questions as follows:

- Q = What <u>questions</u> do you have after reading the article?
- U = What in the article are you unhappy about?
- E = Are there any excellent points that got you excited?
- S = What are the <u>strengths</u> of the article?
- T = What are the most important <u>themes</u> in the article?

These questions move students forward along the path of successful reading and writing. They also foster collaborative instruction in which the teacher provides students with support or solutions to problems. In 2018, Suaysee and Thienpermpool conducted research on using QUEST analysis for developing Thai students' critical reading abilities. The researchers investigated Thai students' critical reading skills before and after using QUEST analysis and surveyed the students' opinions of learning using QUEST analysis. The research instruments consisted of nine lesson plans, questionnaires, and a reflective learning log used to obtain more information about the students' opinions. The study revealed that both the students' critical reading ability and their opinions of QUEST analysis were higher after using the method than before.

(d). Multimodal Tasks Method

According to the New London Group, the term "multimodal" refers to the use of two or more modes of communication (1996). Modes are linguistic, visual, aural, gestural, and spatial (Jewitt, 2008). In short, multimodal learning in education means teaching concepts using multiple modes. Varaporn and Sitthitikul (2019) examined the effects of multimodal tasks on the critical reading ability and perceptions of Thai students. The researchers used reflective journals and semistructured interviews to gain in-depth information about students' perceptions of the multimodal tasks. Students were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups and were assessed with precritical and postcritical reading tests. The results revealed that the experimental group using multimodal tasks outperformed the control group in critical reading test scores. Furthermore, the reflective journals and semistructured interviews evidenced that students generally had a positive perception of the multimodal tasks.

(e). Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) Model

In Thailand, many English teachers develop reading instructional models to enhance students' critical reading skills. These models should be appropriate for the Thai context. The CLIL model promotes critical thinking skills through different custom-made teaching approaches using the CLIL framework. In 2022, Namsaeng reviewed studies using the CLIL model to improve Thai students' critical reading skills. Moreover, she explained the CLIL teaching model's integration with the 4Cs, especially critical thinking theory. The CLIL teaching model comprises three stages: input (content and culture), process (cognition), and output (communication). Teachers should develop CLIL lesson plans embedded with critical thinking skills to improve Thai students' critical skills.

(f). PISA Reading Literacy Assessment Method

The PISA reading literacy assessment method is another teaching method for improving Thai learners' critical reading abilities. Khamkhong (2018) examined Thai EFL students' skill development when using the PISA reading literacy assessment method in his classroom. He used the PISA reading literacy assessment framework (PRF) to enhance students' critical reading and thinking skills. The researcher also used PRF-based reading lessons, PRF-based reading tests for pretest and posttest, and questionnaires. He found that students who were taught using the PISA reading literacy assessment method had improved critical reading scores and were satisfied with the lessons and the instructions.

(g). Applied Linguistic-Based Method

The nature of teaching languages should be based on linguistic knowledge, and many instructors use the applied linguistic-based method in their teaching. Teaching critical reading can help students read and think logically and systematically, and the applied linguistic-based method helps them understand the nature of language and communication. Moreover, it focuses on the accuracy of the language. Sriwantaneeyakul (2018) examined Thai students' critical reading and translation abilities by using the applied linguistic method, including pragmatic, syntactic, and semantics to have a better understanding of the text. This research employed a mixed-methods sequential explanatory design to investigate the differences in Thai-English translation ability between students with a high level of critical reading and students with a low level of critical reading. It also examined the relationship between translation

ability and critical reading skills. The study found a significant difference between the Thai-English translation ability of students with strong critical reading skills and students with poor critical reading skills. A significant correlation between translation ability and critical reading skills was also found. Similarly, Pantito (2020) reviewed studies of the development of teaching critical reading through reading strategies based on the applied linguistic method. The researcher recommended various strategies, teaching techniques, technical terms, terminology, and reading improvement for Thai language teachers.

(h). SQ5R Method

In recent years, the SQ5R method has been used in English classes in Thailand, especially in critical reading classes. It developed from SQ4R to become the SQ5R method. According to Khummasorn, SQ5R is a reading method designed to help students gain more knowledge from what they read. It consists of seven stages: survey, question, read, recite, reflect, record, and review (2015). Phaengsopha and Jongkonklang (2020) investigated the use of the SQ5R method in teaching critical reading to Thai students. The research tools were eight lesson plans and a test to measure students' critical reading abilities. The results demonstrated that Thai students taught using the SQ5R method had higher average scores. Similarly, Doungwilai (2022) examined the effects of using the SQ5R reading process on Thai students' critical reading skills. In this research, the researcher used critical reading lesson plans using the SQ5R model, reading practices, and questionnaires. The results found that students' critical reading abilities were significantly higher than before and students were satisfied with the critical reading learning management using the SQ5R model with reading practices.

B. Teaching Levels

In Thailand, critical reading is one of the required compulsory subjects at both school and university level. The 13 selected research papers indicate that many researchers have conducted studies on teaching critical reading at three levels: university level, secondary school level, and elementary school level (see Table 2).

	TEA		BLE NG I		LS											
Teaching Levels	Kaow iw attanakul (2021)	Tae Hyun Kw on (2020)	Sangkaew & Buasomboon (2020)	Tangpinijkarn & Modehiran (2018)	Namsaeng & Sukying (2021)	Suaysee & Thienpermpool (2018)	Varaporn & Sitthitikul (2019)	Namsaeng (2022)	Khamkhong (2018)	Sriw antanegyakul (2018)	Pantito (2020)	Phaengsopha & Jongkonklang (2020)	Doungwilai (2022)	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
University Level	/		/		/	/	/	/	/	/	/			9	69.24	1
Secondary School Level		/		/										2	15.38	2
Elementary School Level												/	/	2	15.38	2
Total														13	100.00	

As presented in Table 2, critical reading was taught to Thai EFL students at three levels in these studies. Most were concerned with teaching critical reading skills at the university level (f = 9, 69.24%). An equal number of studies examined teaching at the secondary school level and elementary school level (f = 2, 15.38%).

(a). University Level

Notably, many recent studies concern teaching critical reading at the university level. Most universities in Thailand teach critical reading courses, and it is one of the compulsory subjects, especially for English major students, which is aligned with the research conducted by Sriwantaneeyakul (2018). She studied 60 English major students enrolled in Thai-English translation and critical reading courses at a Thai university. Similarly, Khamkhong (2018) investigated 36 third-year English-major students enrolled in the English Literature for Children course in the second semester of the 2016 academic year at a university in northeastern Thailand. Namsaeng and Sukying (2021) also examined 61 English major students, aged 18–22, enrolled in the compulsory English reading course English for Academic Reading at one Thai university. Furthermore, Kaowiwattanakul (2021) used literature-based instruction with 47 second-year English major university students, who were enrolled in the Introduction to Literature Course. However, critical reading can also be taught in fundamental reading classes at the university level. Varaporn and Sitthitikul (2019) conducted research with 63 students from different years of study and faculties who enrolled in the Fundamental English Reading course.

Similarly, Sangkaew and Buasomboon (2020) developed the ACDEA literature instructional model to enhance the critical reading skill of 38 third-year Thai major students.

(b). Secondary School Level

In Thailand, some studies investigate the teaching of critical reading at the secondary school level. Tangpinijkarn and Modehiran (2018) investigated the effect of using literature on the critical reading instruction of 55 upper secondary school students (Mathayom 6) who were enrolled in the Thematic English course in Bangkok, Thailand. Similarly, Tae Hyun Kwon (2020) analyzed the use of literature in intercultural language teaching and learning (ILTL) on teaching critical reading skills and cultural awareness through classroom activities. The activities included comparison and group discussions with guided questions with 20 high school students (Mathayom 5) in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

(c). Elementary School Level

Two studies analyzed teaching critical reading at the Thai elementary school level. Phaengsopha and Jongkonklang (2020) investigated critical reading using the SQ5R method with 34 elementary school students (Grade 5) in Chaiyaphum, Thailand. Similarly, Doungwilai (2022) also examined the effect of learning management using the SQ5R reading process to improve critical reading skills and reading behavior. Participants were 52 elementary school students (Grade 5) in Maha Sarakham, Thailand.

IV. DISCUSSION

Critical reading is challenging for Thai students (Kaowiwattanakul, 2021). Thai students must develop their critical reading abilities to analyze what they are reading (Tangpinijkarn & Modehiran, 2018). It's not only Thai students who face challenges but also teachers and educators; they must find the appropriate teaching method for sufficient and successful learning acquisition (Kwon, 2020). This section discusses the research results regarding recent trends in teaching critical reading to determine the most appropriate teaching methods and the teaching level for teaching critical reading skills to Thai students. In Thailand, there are eight popular teaching methods for enhancing students' critical reading abilities:

- 1. Literature-based instruction
- 2. Group reading strategy (GRS)
- 3. QUEST analysis method
- 4. Multimodal tasks method
- 5. Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) model
- 6. PISA Reading Literacy Assessment Method
- 7. Applied linguistic-based method
- 8. SQ5R method

The analysis table revealed that the most frequently used teaching instruction in Thailand is literature-based instruction, as used in the research by Kaowiwattanakul (2021), Kwon (2020), Sangkaew and Buasomboon (2020), Tangpinijkarn and Modehiran (2018). This is a popular approach for teaching critical reading skills among Thai teachers or educators in English classrooms. It focuses on improving learners' understanding of the text by using literature in the reading classroom. According to Rashid et al. (2010), this approach uses literary texts to help students improve their language proficiency, vocabulary, and reading. Maley and Duff (1990) insist that the main purpose of this approach is to use literary texts as a resource for motivating language activities.

There are three levels at which critical reading is taught in Thailand:

- 1. University level
- 2. Secondary school level
- 3. Elementary school level

The study revealed that the most common teaching level at which critical reading skills are taught is university level, aligned with research by Sangkaew and Buasomboon (2020), Namsaeng and Sukying (2021), Namsaeng (2022), Suaysee and Thienpermpool (2018), Varaporn and Sitthitikul (2019), Khamkhong (2018), Sriwantaneeyakul (2018), Pantito (2020), and Kaowiwattanakul (2021). In Thailand, teaching critical reading will increase critical abilities to university students because students will have a better understanding of the text. Moreover, university level is identified as the most useful level for teaching critical reading because students can think more critically at this level (Sutherland & Incera, 2021).

These teaching methods and levels of teaching are extremely important information for modern-day teachers and instructors used in teaching 21st-century students. Twenty-first-century learners require 21st-century teachers for beneficial learning; these teachers should be relevant, collaborative, actively engaging, student-centered, using technology, and forward-thinking (Jan, 2017). These new characteristics of 21st-century teachers are applied all around the world, especially in Thailand. All teachers and educators must consider and develop these 21st-century traits. Thai English teachers must find suitable and appropriate teaching methods that will help improve student's critical reading skills with up-to-date instruction. Teachers must cultivate and promote reading skills in their students and improve the students' reading behavior.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

This study sought to provide an overview of the popular teaching methods in teaching critical reading skills to Thai students in the ELT classroom. As discussed above, there are many crucial issues that teachers, educators, and researchers must consider when teaching critical reading skills, including choosing suitable teaching methods for the teaching level. Different teaching methods might be more appropriate for students at different levels. The researcher hopes that this study provides insight into teaching methods for teaching critical reading at different levels. Moreover, this study will be useful for all the English teachers in Thailand. Teachers or educators can use this paper to find or develop a suitable teaching method for their context to enhance their students' critical reading abilities.

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