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READING STRATEGIES IN COMPREHENSION AUTHENTIC CONTEXTS

Abstract: In foreign language acquisition, reading comprehension is foremost to acquire specific terminology on specialty and enable learners increase number of vocabulary retention. ESP classes are content based as it explains meaning of sentences learners encounter while reading text. However, we often found texts difficult to understand and translate because of occurring unknown words. Therefore, lots of ESP teachers use different strategies to reflect target needs of learners. This paper highlights some views on advantageous of strategies in reading comprehension.

Key words: ESP classes, strategies, terminology.

Language: English

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Introduction

Learning language is long, complex process to acquire it fully, requires some methods of teaching and strategies to use for such purposes. Skimming and scanning are essential techniques to accomplish during the class. However, we should use more strategies in order to generate expected aims in order to reflect the target needs of learners. One of the target needs of learners in language learning is to comprehend both spoken and written contexts. Particularly, authentic contexts complicate learners ‘comprehension of their specialty in FL. Specifically, training learners on how to use the structure of the text to improve their reading comprehension is the focus of the proposed study. This involves self-regulation, metacognition in reading, and the feasibility of improving strategy use through direct training and instruction. Although reading strategy instruction has been found to be successful in first language reading [6] such claims of success in L1 environments need to be validated in FL contexts to determine their generalize ability to FL readers.

Importance of strategies in understanding unknown context

ESP courses are designed and planned according to the needs of learners and their skills (speaking, reading, writing, and listening). Those courses mostly focused on reading books, different materials; video, audio which tell about the subject matter in English, and which may be able to enhance prior knowledge of learners with technical profiles. As a consequence, one way of undertaking this is to evaluate the methodology component of ESP courses to understand whether they actually match course aims and meet learners’ needs[12]. Learning strategies are the steps that learners take in order to facilitate the acquisition, storage, retrieval or use of information[10]. They are the behaviors, techniques or actions used by students to enhance their learning and progress in internalizing, storing, accessing, and using the foreign language.

Several researchers have investigated the possibility of FL transfer of reading skills but they maintain that transfer of strategies cannot be viewed without simultaneously considering language proficiency. For instance, Lapkin and Swain [9] claimed that FL reading strategies differ at lower levels of proficiency, but as the proficiency level increases, the strategies approximate each other.

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Alderson [1] found that FL reading involves both language proficiency and reading strategies.

Results from other studies [7] also show that the teaching of reading strategies results in larger reading gains and better comprehension even among learners who are less proficient in the target language. A study by Kern [8] showed that reading strategy instruction was most beneficial for those students who had lower L2 proficiency. Besides, earlier studies have examined the strategies of successful and less successful readers. For example, Golinkoff [2] compared the reading comprehension strategies of poor and good readers and found that good readers have rapid and accurate word recognition and automatic decoding skills. They read in phrasal units, are flexible in their reading pattern, vary their eye movements, and shift the size of their processing units. They also make use of contextual information in the text and pay attention to information relevant to their purpose, while ignoring information that has no utility for the task. On the other hand, poor readers are slow decoders and are less able to organize texts, which they read word by word. They are inflexible when it comes to variations in task demands.

Similarly, Hosenfeld [3] reported that good readers keep the meaning of the passage in mind as they read and skip words that they view as unimportant to the total meaning. They use context

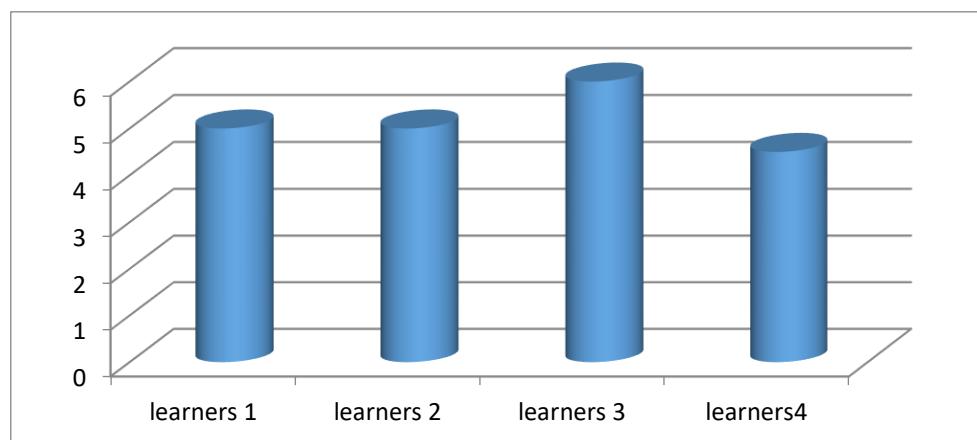
cues as aids in decoding meaning of unfamiliar words and look up words only as a last resort. They also have a positive self-concept of themselves as readers.

In fact, strategy training and metacognitive awareness that entail reader self-control and following reading guidelines were found to be useful in English for Specific Purposes courses, where students deal with technical texts which require specific processing skills.

Moreover, having known the structure of the sentences in the texts can enable learners be familiar with reading comprehension of that text, more and more they use their initial knowledge on specialty. Additionally, reoccurring words in every context allow readers understand the passage and full meaning of it. Working with reading strategies has also been shown to foster the metacognitive awareness that students need to engage in autonomous learning [11].

Research methods

The research based on experiment. We invited some students from different faculties in order to know their attitudes, beliefs according to the reading strategies reflection their needs in reading comprehension. Furthermore, we carried out a survey with students, making interviews with them; having used questionnaire consisted of variety of questions. The questionnaire was close-ended.



Picture 1.

Findings

1. Five of learners responded that they use skimming and scanning because it enables them to understand the passage.

2. Five of them often use dictionary which allow them to find translation of unknown words occurring in the texts and give exact explanation of the words.

3. Six of respondents gave an interview that they often would like using guessing strategy in order to be aware of full mean of the word.

4. Four of population expressed their ideas on performing GT(Google-translator) in order to quick finding the translation and immediate reading comprehension.

A skimmer browses over large areas of material rather than concentrating on words or sentences. Skimming is a twofold process: rapid reading to locate the desired piece of information and slower reading to assimilate. It may involve careful as well as expeditious reading and bottom-up as well as top down processing [13].

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Authentic material gives ESP teachers, learners new data which enriches students with additional information on subject matter. Furthermore, it may give them experience, instruction, description of works what they will be accustomed to. Authentic material not only gives information about profession but also it prepares students for job-oriented purposes and develops their linguistic and professional skills in FL. As a result, they can be enhanced their initial knowledge in reading comprehend in FL.

Conclusion

In teaching English to the engineering students, we use different techniques to involve learners better recognition the passage of authentic context. Such techniques: skimming, scanning, and translating and defining the meaning of the words by GT machine. Where English is used as the medium of

communication and students are expected to present written work and make oral presentations in accurate English, serious weaknesses in grammar require more specific help. This may mean allocating time to concentrate on the given difficulty, teaching both the form and its use in contexts relevant to learners' needs [5]. The ESP teacher is to know what kind of tasks and processing would be associated with particular texts or information. Furthermore, reading technical texts and understanding them is difficult not only for English learners but also English language teachers who is not specialist in that area of learning and sometimes feel needs for assistance from the staff at the Technical Department. Techniques learners use certainly improve learner's reading comprehension and acquisition of terminology in the field of their expertise.

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