

The Impact of the Use of Reading Strategies on Developing (EFL) Learners' Reading Comprehension Skills

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ABSTRACT:

The aim of this study is to investigate the effect of the use of reading strategies in comprehending English texts, and tries to find out how can Blue Nile University students understand a piece of reading by using reading strategies and encouraging them to develop their reading comprehension skills. The researcher used the descriptive analytical approach because it is suitable for such studies. Data has been collected through the following tools: questionnaire for English language teachers at university level, a pre-test and post-test for the students from Blue Nile University English department and an interview with experienced teachers of English language, from ministry of education, blue Nile state. The main findings of this study are: reading strategies and variation of techniques in reading comprehension are helpful to enhance reading skills, motivation and attitudes which are important in developing (EFL) learners' reading skills. and students were weak in reading comprehension and unable to score excellent degrees in it. In the light of the results mentioned above, the researcher recommends the following: There should be qualified Teachers in the field of comprehension reading. Teachers should adopt the reading strategies in teaching comprehension reading. Teachers should select an appropriate reading materials in terms of difficulty, cultural backgrounds and interest.

المستخلص:

هذه الدراسة تحت عنوان: (أثر استخدام استراتيجيات القراءة في تطوير دراسي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في الفهم والقراءة) ومجال التطبيق هو طلاب جامعة النيل الأزرق المستوي الثالث والرابع تخصص لغة انجليزية.تهدف الدراسة إلي معرفة أثر استخدام استراتيجيات القراءة في فهم النص باللغة الانجليزية. تتمثل مشكلة الدراسة في الوقوف علي قدرات الطالب في فهم النص باللغة الانجليزية باستخدام استراتيجيات القراءة وتشجيعهم علي تطوير مهاراتهم في الفهم والقراءة.

هذا، وقد اقتضت الدراسة أن يكون المنهج الوصفي التحليلي هو المنهج المتبع. عول الباحث في جمع المعلومات علي ثلاث أدوات وهي: الاستبيان، الاختبار (قبل و بعد) والمقابلات الشخصية.عليه، فقد توصل الباحث إلي عدد من النتائج أهمها:

استخدام استراتيجيات القراءة والتقنيات المختلفة تعمل علي تنمية مهارات القراءة والفهم ، الدوافع والسلوك تعتبر مهمة لتطوير مهارات الدارسين للغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية في القراءة والفهم ، ومستوي الطلاب ضعيف في فهم النص باللغة الانجليزية كما إنهم غير قادرين علي تسجيل درجات ممتازة في القراءة والفهم. بالتالي علي ضوء هذه النتائج يوصي الباحث بما يلي :تأهيل الأساتذة في هذا المجال وأن يعمل الأساتذة عل استخدام استراتيجيات القراءة، كما ينبغي للأساتذة اختيار المواد المناسبة للقراءة من حيث الصعوبة والخلفية الثقافية.

KEYWORDS: Reading strategies , effective reading , competency in reading comprehension

INTRODUCTION

Reading is considered as an essential activity in acquiring every aspect of knowledge. More than a thousand years ago, the first verse of the Koran (IQRA) which meant (READ) was revealed to Prophet Mohammed. This emphasizes that reading is of a great importance. Reading is the visual recognition of symbols, letters, words and sentences. This is besides the comprehension of their meaning. Because comprehending a written text, refers to its understanding. Moreover, reading represents a better access to a second/ foreign language for non –native speakers. Therefore, language teachers, in non –native language settings, should increase their efforts towards developing these important skills.

According Mckay, S (1987), (1987) reading is an important language skill. Various approaches for teaching the reading skill have been proposed. These were based upon different theories put forward to account for language acquisition and language learning. Because of this diversity of theoretical views, the reading approaches might differ in terminology and content. Each approach provides methods and techniques, which are combined to achieve the best result. Throughout the history of developing skills, different models of reading have been set for different goals of reading instruction.

The researcher is inclined to believe that if foreign language learners are able to understand the written second/ foreign language without difficulties, they may be efficient readers. So, he was encouraged to carry out a study about the strategies and skills that are needed for competency in reading comprehension. The teachers also should follow suitable strategies and methods that help them in facilitating reading comprehension skills.

This study aims at investigating the effect of the use of reading strategies in comprehending English text. It concentrates on reading comprehension because reading is the most important of the four skills in the task of learning English as a foreign language (EFL).

Materials and Methods:

The researcher used the Descriptive Analytical Method. The data of this study is collected by means of questionnaire, test and interview. The researcher used three tools for data collection: the first is a questionnaire which was given to (47) teachers of English language from Blue Nile, Sinnar, Alimam Almahdy and Gaziera universities, The second tool is a test which was given to (50) students from Blue Nile university, the third tool is an interview with experienced teachers of English language .

Results and discussion

The researcher will analyze the data and discuss the results, to respond the research questions on (1) Using reading strategies enhances reading comprehension skill.

(2) The effect of motivating reading strategies on EFL Learners' attitudes towards comprehending English texts.

The students' pre-test and post-tests

The Paired Samples (T –Test)

The Paired Samples (T- Test) compares the means of two variables. It computes the difference between the two variables for each case, and tests to see if the average difference is significantly different from zero.

Hypothesis:

- 1- There is no significant difference between the means of the two variables.
- 2- There is a significant difference between the means of the two variables.

Table (1)

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	PRE	46.6061	33	11.17458	1.94524
	POST	66.1212	33	16.24184	2.82734

The statistical analysis of paired data is performed on the differences between the pairs, and for this data the mean difference (pre- post) is (20) degrees. The standard deviation (SD) of the difference is(5) degrees. The post-test mean scores are higher.

Table (2)

Paired Samples Correlations

Pair 1	PRE & POST	N	Correlation	Sig.
		33	.433	.012

There is positive correlation. People who did well on the pre-test also did well on the post-test.

Table (3)

Paired Samples Test

Pair 1	PRE - POST	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		-7.367	32	.000

The T value = -7.367

Our significance is (.000)

If the significance value is less than .05, there is a significant difference. If the significance value is greater than .05, there is no significant difference. Here, we see that the significance value (0.000) Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis with this data, and conclude that there is sufficient evidence to suggest pressures is difference between pre- and post-test scores.

Results of questionnaire

Results of questionnaire were discussed here in relation to the study hypotheses.

Using reading strategies enhances reading comprehension skill. To affirm this hypothesis first, the study estimates the medium for all terms of the hypothesis to know the trend of the samples size. The following table shows the values of the medium;

Table (4) the values of the medium.

The term	The medium	interpretation
I'm aware of the use of reading strategies to enhance comprehension of a text	1	Always
I use prediction in teaching reading comprehension.	1	Always
I use prediction strategy to develop (EFL) Learners ' reading comprehension Skills.	1	Always
I encourage my students to extract the main ideas.	1	Always
I use evaluation because it is an important post reading strategy.	1	Always

I encourage my students to use skimming because it is an effective strategy in improving students' ability at getting information in limited period of time	1	Always
I encourage my students to use scanning because it is an important reading strategy.	1	Always
I ask my students to infer the meaning of words rather than looking them up in dictionary	1	Always
. I use negotiation to allow students to express their opinions about the text item.	1	Always
I use intensive reading to prepare students to read more rapidly.	1	Always
I advice my students to read extensively outside the classroom.	1	Always

Source; own calculation based on data obtained from questionnaire

Second, to test the statistical evidence of the different between the numbers of those agree, neutral and who don't agree for the above result. The study use the chi-square test of significance differences between the answers for all items of the hypothesis.

Table (5) the values of the medium

The term	Chi-square	Sig
I'm aware of the use of reading strategies to enhance comprehension of a text	36.04	0.000
I use prediction in teaching reading comprehension.	12.31	0.006
I use prediction strategy to develop (EFL) Learners ' reading comprehension Skills.	35.4	0.000
I encourage my students to extract the main ideas.	42.2	0.000
I use evaluation because it is an important post reading strategy.	24.9	0.000
I encourage my students to use skimming because it is an effective strategy in improving students' ability at getting information in limited period of time	15.9	0.000
I encourage my students to use scanning because it is an important reading strategy.	14.38	0.000
I ask my students to infer the meaning of words rather than looking them up in dictionary	19.95	0.000
. I use negotiation to allow students to express their opinions about the text item.	20.31	0.000
I use intensive reading to prepare students to read more rapidly.	37.14	0.000
I advice my students to read extensively outside the classroom.	47.8	0.000

Source; own calculation based on data obtained from questionnaire.

The chi-square values of all items in table (5) show a very highly statistical differences at (5%) significant level. In other words, the computed χ^2 statistic exceeds than critical value in the table for a 0.05 probability level, and then we can reject the null hypothesis that main there is no enough statistical evidence to indicate that;. Using reading strategies enhances reading comprehension skill.

The effect of motivating reading strategies on (EFL) Learners' attitudes towards comprehending English texts.

To affirm this hypothesis first, the study estimates the medium for all terms of the hypothesis to know the trend of the samples size. The following table shows the values of the medium;

Table (6) the values of the medium

The term	The medium	Interpretation
Motivation is important in comprehending English texts.	2	Agree
(EFL) Learners ' attitudes are favorably directed towards using reading strategies.	1	Strongly agree
Learners ' attitudes towards reading comprehension are influenced by using interesting reading strategies.	1	Strongly agree
Positive attitudes enhance motivation for reading comprehension	2	Agree
Using games motivate students to read.	2	Agree
Using an element of fun and humors in the classroom to motivate students to understand.	1	Strongly agree
Motivated students react positively in reading comprehension.	1	Strongly agree
Positive motivation and attitudes are effective ways of improving students reading comprehension skills.	1	Strongly agree

Source; own calculation based on data obtained from questionnaire.

Second, to test the statistical evidence of difference between the numbers of those who agree, neutral and those who don't agree with the above result. The study use the chi-square test of significance differences between the answers for all items of the hypothesis.

Table (7) the values of the medium

The term	Chi-square	Sig
Motivation is important in comprehending English texts.	37.8	0.000
(EFL) Learners ' attitudes are favorably directed towards using reading strategies.	37.5	0.006
Learners ' attitudes towards reading comprehension are influenced by using interesting reading strategies.	47.7	0.000
Positive attitudes enhance motivation for reading comprehension	35.9	0.000
Using games motivate students to read.	15.36	0.000
Using an element of fun and humors in the classroom to motivate students to understand.	16.51	0.000
Motivated students react positively in reading comprehension.	35.63	0.000
Positive motivation and attitudes are effective ways of improving students reading comprehension skills.	30.93	0.000

Source; own calculation based on data obtained from questionnaire

The chi-square values of all items in table (7) show Avery highly statistical differences at (5%) significant level. In other words, the computed χ^2 statistic exceeds than critical value in the table for a 0.05 probability level, and then we can reject the null hypothesis that main there is no enough statistical evidence to indicate that;. The effect of motivating reading strategies on EFL Learners' attitudes towards comprehending English texts.

Interview with experienced English teachers in Blue Nile state.

The result of this interview (see appendix (a)) supports the hypothesis of the study.

The experienced teachers were interviewed. The following is a summary of their answers to the questions:

1- Do you think the reading strategies should be taught to the (EFL) students? And why?

For the first part of the question, 80% of the interviewees indicated that reading strategies should be taught to the (EFL) students. The answer for the second part of the question (why) can be summarised as follows:

a- Because reading strategies help in developing reading skills.

b- Identification of new structural knowledge.

c- They facilitate understanding of the text.

2- Do you think that EFL learners' attitudes towards comprehending English texts are affected when they use reading strategies?

80% of the interviewees said that (EFL) learners' attitudes towards comprehending English texts are affected when they use reading strategies. A bout 20% of the interviewees said that (EFL) learners' attitudes not affected when they use reading strategies.

Recommendations.

Teachers should adopt the interactive approach in teaching reading comprehension. The teachers should select an appropriate reading materials in terms of difficulty, cultural background and interest. The researcher believes that, using games, element of fun and humours in the class room motivate students to read and understand. Reading strategies should

be taught to the (EFL) students. Teaching reading should focus on topics that suit students' interest to improve reading skill.

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Appendix (a): Questions for experienced English language teachers.

- 1- Do you think the reading strategies should be taught to the EFL students? And why?
- 2- In what way do you think that reading strategies enhance reading comprehension skills?
- 3- Do you think that EFL learners' attitudes towards comprehending English texts are affected when they use reading strategies?
- 4- Do you think that Sudanese university teachers are aware of the importance of reading strategies?
- 5- To what extent do female students use different reading strategies from those used by male students?