The Role of Reading Strategies Awareness on Reading Comprehension Performance of Advanced Iranian EFL Learners

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Abstract

Reading both as a source of getting information and pleasure and also a means of extending one's knowledge of the language is one of the most important skills in any language class. For the majority of the university students of English as a second or foreign language, reading is not the primary means by which they become acquainted with the content of the subject area they are studying, but the most important way they would develop their knowledge of the language itself. In spite of this crucial role of reading, many university students have still problems concerning reading and understanding different types of texts. There are some non-linguistic factors involved in the process of reading comprehension. These factors are called "strategies". Reading strategies are of interest for what they reveal about the way readers manage their interaction with written text and how these strategies are related to text comprehension. The purpose of the present study was to investigate the role of reading strategies awareness on reading comprehension performance of advanced Iranian EFL learners. To carry out the present research, two tests were administered to subjects. A TOEFL test was administered to 280 subjects in order to check the homogeneity of the subjects. The experimental groups was offered oxford's fairly exhaustive list of reading strategies: Metacognitive, cognitive, memory, social, affective, compensatory strategies. Reading comprehension passages were administered as pretest and posttest. Finally, according to the obtained results, the researcher concluded that there is a relationship between reading strategies and reading comprehension, however, in case of unsuccessful readers, their limited control over English language short circuits their reading ability. These students should be helped with their L2 and, therefore their reading skills must be improved while successful readers benefit more from the reading strategies than unsuccessful readers do.

Keywords: Reading strategies, Reading comprehension, EFL learners.
Introduction

Strategy awareness helps to improve comprehension as well as efficiency in reading. By using strategies, students will improve their reading ability and will be better readers. Researchers have suggested that teaching readers to use strategies should be a prime consideration in the reading classroom (Pressley & EL-Dinary, 1992). The significance of strategy training is that it equips students with problem-solving abilities which they can apply whenever they encounter reading difficulties. It promotes learner autonomy, enables students to take responsibility for their own learning even when they are no longer in a formal classroom setting. Reading strategies awareness will help reading teachers become "enablers" rather than helpers to learning. Teaching reading strategies" will be an effective teacher's tool in English teaching methodology.

Method

In the present study, subjects were chosen from senior and junior EFL students. This is done because investigation of strategies in each study seeks high level of language users and speakers. The total number of the subjects in this study were 280, male and female students. They were given a TOEFL test in order to ensure their homogeneity in terms of language proficiency.

Results

This study was aimed at finding out whether there was any relationship between reading performance and reading strategies awareness of successful and unsuccessful readers or not. After 6 session's instruction, the obtained results computed with (ANOVA) indicated that the first null hypothesis suggesting no correlation between strategies awareness and improving reading comprehension performance was rejected. Therefore, with sufficient supportive evidence, the researcher concluded that there was a difference between the performance of those who were aware of reading strategies and of those who received no treatment. The second null hypothesis suggesting no relationship between reading strategies awareness and reading comprehension performance of successful readers was also rejected. As the results show (table 4.9), the t-observed value for the experimental and control groups of successful readers is 6.14 and this exceeds the t-critical value of 4. The second null hypothesis was rejected. In the same way, the third null hypothesis concerning unsuccessful readers and reading strategies awareness was also put to test. Since, the t-observed for the experimental and control groups of unsuccessful reader's was 1.92 and it was lower than the critical value of t i.e. 4 at 0.05 level of significance, at 86 degrees of freedom, then the third null hypothesis was not rejected. The researcher concluded that reading strategies awareness to unsuccessful readers had no significant impact on their reading comprehension performance. On the other hand, the results of one way ANOVA (table 4.8) showed that the F-observed was much greater than F-critical, so it was concluded that there was a statistically significant difference between them and it could not be due to chance. Finally a Scheffe test was applied in order to investigate where the difference occurs. Each of t-observed value for the four groups was compared (table 4.9) and the results made it clear that the t-observed values exceeded t-critical values except for unsuccessful readers. The t-observed value for poor readers was 1.92 which was lower than the t critical value of 4.

So it was concluded that the difference between group 1 and 2, group 1 and 3 and group 1 and 4 was due to reading strategies treatment, but for group 3 and 4 that are unsuccessful readers the strategies awareness, has no significant impact on improving the reading ability.
Table 4.1: Descriptive statistic of TOEFL test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>67.96</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>7.99</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>280</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2: Descriptive statistic of the pretest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44.77</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>9.51</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3: Descriptive statistic of the belonging to successful readers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>47.66</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>47.63</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>44</td>
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Table 4.4: Descriptive statistic of the belonging to unsuccessful readers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>45.09</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>6.76</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>43.91</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5: Result of F-Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>F. Cricital</th>
<th>D.F.</th>
<th>Two-tailed Probability</th>
<th>F.Observed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Successful Readers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsuccessful Readers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>3.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6: Descriptive statistic of posttest belonging unsuccessful readers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>44.66</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>43.41</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>44</td>
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Table 4.7: Descriptive statistic of posttest belonging unsuccessful readers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>49.05</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>47.53</td>
<td>47.53</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.8: ANOVAs for effect of group variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variance</th>
<th>Ss</th>
<th>D.F</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F-observed</th>
<th>F-critical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between</td>
<td>749.023</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>249.674</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Group</td>
<td>276.955</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>1.410</td>
<td>15.21</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1025.977</td>
<td>P&lt;0.05</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P<0.01

Table 4.9: The Scheffe test for comparing of four means

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>T. obs</th>
<th>D.F.</th>
<th>T.Critical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G1,G2,G3</td>
<td>79.05</td>
<td>47.73</td>
<td>6.14</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>4.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G1,G2,G4</td>
<td>4.005</td>
<td>45.66</td>
<td>9.68</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>4.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G1,G3,G4</td>
<td>49.05</td>
<td>43.61</td>
<td>8.16</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>4.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G2,G3,G4</td>
<td>45.66</td>
<td>43.61</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>4.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*: indicative of significant difference

G1: Experimental Group (successful readers)  
G2: Control Group (successful readers)  
G3: Experimental Group (unsuccessful readers)  
G4: Control Group (unsuccessful readers)

References