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Reading Strategies

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1. Introduction

Students should be able to read more and more difficult graphical and informational texts as they rise through school grades.

Students' gaining is measured by what they comprehended from reading texts, which should be achieved by the various reading strategies that students use in different situations.

Students that struggle in understanding texts need additional teaching to get used to applying these strategies to become better readers.

Readers that are unable to read very well should :

- Differentiate between diverse types of strategies corresponding to different types of texts.
- Exercise on various levels of odds to comprehend multiple specific contexts.
- Read more extensively using the suitable resources.
- Have a chance to share their learning experiences with fellow students.
- Have an understanding of surrounding issues concerning specific areas.
- Use different techniques to maneuver variant texts in particular subjects, such as word-solving .
- Use several techniques for the goal of being free readers in different circumstances.

Reading is the live method to comprehend multiple types of texts, successful readers are those who comprehend what they read and think about it, they observe their understanding, and when they feel a slight reduction of the meaning, they try other techniques to connect again to the sense of the text.

Successful readers use different ways and strategies before and after the reading process, they use their previous realization about the subject in hand, and try to predict the best possible meaning of the text, by previewing the text to form an idea about it.

After reading the text, readers should be able to link what they have comprehended with their information and practices, and understand the overall purpose of the texts.

Readers should also watch their understanding of the text during the reading process, and have the ability to use a different strategy to reattach to the main idea of the text.

٢.1 Reading Strategies

Reading is the process of constructing meaning by interacting with texts, and is counted as contrastive procedure, considering that, as individuals read, they use their prior knowledge along with clues from the text, to construct meaning, while a strategy is an intentional mental scheme, that readers choose deliberately to achieve a specific function by gaining, saving, and recalling new data (Anderson,1991).

Reading strategies are specified as a conceptual cognitive action, done by the reader when he reads with the intention of comprehension (Blackowicz, & D. Ogle,2008).

A strategic reader is thought to have three creeks of knowledge, the knowledge of procedure of using the strategies, and the knowledge of why and when to use the strategies (Hall,2011:148).

Vandergrift,(1999) concludes that the reading used by successful and less successful readers are different, where successful readers use the metacognitive planning effectively, such as, putting plans for reading, self-evaluating, and checking the techniques, while readers who are not strategic, often encounter difficulties in their reading.

Baker(1984), indicates that effective and expert readers, are strategic readers, who set their reading strategies according to what the reading function is, and that a reading strategy becomes an instant coping technique, that can be, over time, enforced automatically, even if it is generally pictured as a deliberate, and calculated activity.

٢.٢ Classification of Reading Strategies

Classification means gathering items into one or more categories, based on certain distinguishing characteristics (Garner,1987) .

Generally classification of reading strategies is based on a structure of theories, multiple levels, and empirical – based grounds, according to Anderson(1991:463), who suggests the classification of reading according to five titles :

- Coherence strategies.
- Paraphrase strategies.
- Support strategies.
- Supervising strategies.
- Test taking strategies.

According to O'Mally & Chamot (1990), learning strategies are divided to three major categories :

- Cognitive strategies.
- Metacognitive strategies.
- Social \ affective strategies.

Rubin (1981), recognize six main strategies that participate to language learning, and they are :

- Clarification.
- Guessing.
- Deductive reasoning.

- Practice.
- Memorization.
- Monitoring.

A further classification step, is to sub – classify the main categories into subcategories, one of the most famous taxonomies that are used by a wide scope of studies, is Oxford's (1999) language learning strategy classification, which consists of six titles :

- Memory strategies.
- Metacognitive strategies.
- Affective strategies.
- Social strategies.
- Cognitive strategies.
- Compensation strategies.

Grabe (1991), identifies six main proficiencies, and they are :

- Vocabulary structure knowledge.
- Automatic recognition skills.
- Formal discourse structure knowledge.
- Content or word background knowledge.
- Synthesis and evaluation skills or strategies.
- Metacognitive knowledge and skills monitoring.

A poll was conducted by Mokhtari and Reichard (2000), to measure the application of the reading strategies during the reading of academic substance, led them to formulate a strategy named MARS (Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory), which classifies reading strategies into three sub-groups :

- Global strategies (which aims to analyze the text globally).
- Support strategies (that deals with the use of reference substance).
- Problem - solving strategies (with the goal of untangling a text and clarifying it when it becomes more difficult).

An improved conception, inspired from MARS by Sheorey and Mokhtari (2001), called SORS (Survey of reading strategies, which classifies reading strategies into three categories :

- Cognitive strategies.
- Metacognitive strategies.
- Support strategies.

It is considered one of a few thorough taxonomies that deal with reading strategies in an inclusive characterization of each category, (Sheorey and Mokhtari 2001).

Sheorey and Mokhtari (2001:436) describe metacognitive reading strategies as purposeful, accurately controlled action that is utilized by readers to check, and supervise their reading, from the same point of view, Oxford (1990:136), conclude that metacognitive strategies require three maximal assignments :

- Focusing on one's learning.

- Regulating and organizing one's learning.
- Assessing one's learning.

Cognitive reading strategies, are interpreted as a topical method, used by readers during interacting with the text, such as the alteration of the speed of reading, deduction from the context, re-reading for better understanding, which is considered a perception of problem-solving strategies, indicated by Mokhtari and Reichard (2001).

An obvious categorization of reading strategies is advantageous, chiefly by showing how sub-classification helps to gauge the effects of enhancing the overall comprehension of the reading material (Oxford, 2004).

۲.۳ Types of Reading Strategies

Reading strategies are divided to two main types, which were named by Harold Palmer, after a thorough study and research, and they are Intensive reading strategy, and Extensive reading strategy (Davis & Bamford,2001).

Intensive reading is what the name indicates, its basic aim is evaluating, testing, and increasing knowledge, all of that, focus on the vitality of comprehending the precise connotation of the reading material, in addition to note-taking, and awareness of information (Carrell ,1997).

The priority in Intensive reading is to dismantle sentences to grasp, and comprehend grammar regulations, and syntax order, alongside with delivering the facts of the topic (Helgesen,1997)

Extensive reading , on the other hand, is a whole other kind of procedure, where fluency and complete understanding are not essential, because sometimes, not every word is familiar, but the reader can figure out its meaning, either from the context, or from the nearby words, so that the overall meaning is understood, despite the lack of high knowledge of every single word (Bell,2001).

The most obvious difference between the two types of the reading strategies is that Extensive reading is about covering a great deal of reading area, in the opposite to Intensive reading, that covers, relatively, less area, (Stanley, 2005).

Extensive reading means that, readers should read lengthy texts, or a considerable amount of them, to gain the overall comprehension, with the goal of enjoyment from the reading process, which implies that readers are free to select what they prefer to read, including , magazines, novels, and even comic books (Renandya & Jacobs ,2002).

The application of Extensive reading in learning process in schools, require the student to look for other sources of articles, to support their topic of interest, at the same time, the teacher asks the students to give a brief abstract, following to the reading of an article, which is a hard process, because it demands a thorough management, on both factual, and fictional substance on the reading material, alongside with the grammar and vocabulary used in it, in addition to the awareness of proper arrangements, self-reliance, and liberty that the student will gain from performing a short presentation of his summary, (Bamford & Day,1998)

Intensive reading, on the contrary, is mainly controlled by the teacher, students do not have the liberty to select the subject they prefer, the teacher provides the subject that students will deal with, they are not required to search for subordinate articles, or materials (Bamford & Day,1998)

The students activeness in Intensive reading class is less complicated than in Extensive reading class, because instead of writing an abstract, and performing a presentation, the teacher asks the students to answer several questions associated with the topic that he gave, often answers are found within the text, so that the students only have to find, and rewrite them (Stanley,2005).

Dictionaries are essential in Intensive reading, for students must know the meaning of every single word they encounter, to be able to answer the questions later to come, a process that will shift the concentration of the students away from the message delivered within the text, which will form an incompetent reading technique, and damage the feeling of reading entertainment and satisfaction, (Carrell & Carson, 1997).

Graham Stanley (2005), suggests that keeping off dictionaries, Extensive readers have to guess what words mean, relying on the context, and other

surrounding words, and that students should write down the unknown words, to look for their meaning later, after they complete their reading, thus , students are more capable to recall what words mean, because they looked for them by themselves.

Reading Strategies

٣.١ Reading Comprehension

Good readers are those who benefit from reading because comprehension is the point of reading, "to read without reflecting is like eating without digesting, for reading is considered a disappointing, meaningless process with no benefit, if the reader does not understand what he reads" as the French author and philosopher Edmund Burke stated (1795).

Reading comprehension is the answer of the question 'why we read' , which is a very important question, we read during the educational process, to increase our knowledge, or simply for fun, whatever the purpose is, comprehension is the crucial part of the reading process, because when we comprehend what we read, we do not only understand the meaning of the words, but we are forming reflections, opinions, and thoughts along the way (Baker-Gonzalize,1995)

If we do not comprehend what we read, we are only making sounds that represent different symbols, that we pursue with our eyes, if we have a story that is written in cuneiform inscription, the words are only characters and symbols from our point of view, because we do not understand their meaning, that is why reading comprehension is very substantial, for reading is a useless process and a waste of time, unless we comprehend what we read (Lin,H.,2005)

There were many strategies for the perfection of reading comprehension, some of them faded away because they were not very effective, and could not stand in experimental studies and researches, which were conducted by specialist, and scholars, while in present days, learners have a huge resource bank of researches, theories, techniques, and studies, to improve their comprehending abilities, and to develop their reading proficiency (Brantmeier,2000).

Comprehension is creative multifaceted process that is dependent upon four language skills :

- Phonology
- Syntax
- Semantics
- Pragmatics

There is a significant relationship between vocabulary and reading comprehension, learners with high amount of vocabulary reserve, comprehend more than learners with less vocabulary, also the knowledge of word groups, such as, metaphors, idioms, collocations, and similes, where the meaning is figurative, and essential for understanding the overall meaning (Tompkins,G.E.2011).

Comprehension proficiencies are learned by education, instruction and some of the skills are learned by mere experiences, masterful reading is built on the strength of identifying the words speedily, and without effort, as well as the personal mental differences of the learner's sheer talent (Baker,2008)

Comprehension of different texts depends on certain features, such as, when the reader has former information about the subject of the text (Baker,2008)

Similar to reading strategies, there are strategies for better comprehension, that are used by highly skilled readers to understand different types of texts, where readers who struggle with comprehending texts may use these strategies to get better in the overall understanding of what they read, comprehension strategies are :

- Involving personal experiences, which is a way to make a relation with the text to create a profound cognitive understanding of the circumstances of the text in hand.

- Gathering many concepts or notions from different texts to make comparison between them, with the aim of comprehending how they match with one another.

- Locating the important thoughts and notions in a text.

- Designing a plan, and oversighting the process of comprehension, to recognize the main purpose for reading, which is a mental process, to answer the question of ' what do I benefit from reading this text '.

- Drawing conclusions, also known as, ' to read between the lines ' , is to gather multiple fractions of ideas, that are not directly connected, to come with a reasonable conclusion of the text.

- In order to consolidate the comprehension of a text, readers examine their information about different aspects of the text, by asking questions about them, with the aim of forming a non-subjective judgment about the meanings and characters within the text (Berkeley,2007) .

٢.٢ Models of Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is deliberate, dynamic, interactive procedure, that takes place before, during, and after reading a specific text, and there are three distinct models of reading comprehension:

- Bottom-up model.
- Top-down model.
- Interactive model (Barnett, 1989).

The bottom-up model is a procedure, where little fragments of the reading material is figured out , then, combined successively to gradually achieve understanding of the text in hand, considering that comprehension of a text is accomplished as a logical result of figuring out the meaning of words, (Chall , 1996).

Regardless of the fact, that knowing the bare meaning of the words is essential for understanding the text, the overall meaning is not always, undoubtedly perceived, which gives the impression that bottom-up model is a low-level reading technique, mainly , for two reasons, first of all, the model is fully text-centered, and the readers are inactive receivers of the given reading material, while the second reason is that meaning is built independently, at the grounds of word or sentence, and that deforms the big picture of understanding , and reduces the flow of reading considerably, because a reader has to concentrate on every word, in order to digest its meaning, before moving to the next word, (Nuttall, 1996).

On the contrary, the top-down model concentrates on the use of schemata in dealing with the material of the text, which involves the mental background and

past experiences that the reader possesses, which builds up as he gets older (Nuttall, 1996:7).

An experienced reader can untangle events and happenings, comprehend the message behind the text, and understand the writers aim, (Bamford, 1998)

Top-down model devaluates the significance of word identification in the reading process, which leads to the shortage of consideration given to the word or sentence recognition, that will make the comprehension process of a given text, more difficult, (Carrell, 1988).

As suggested by the name, interactive model gives a balanced overview, that takes into consideration the advantages, and disadvantages of both bottom-up, and top-down models, which are substantial to simplify the comprehension process (Eskey,1988).

Nuttall (1996), pictures bottom-up model as " a scientist with a magnifying glass, examining the ecology of transect ", while top-down model as " an eagle's eye view of the landscape ", these vivid figures of speech, demonstrate the properties of both reading models, where bottom-up model regards the little details, by untangling word and sentence meaning, while top-down model serve readers look at the whole picture of the text, with the help of their previous experience, and knowledge background.

The integration of " an eagle's eye view " ,and " a magnifying glass " is an efficient way to comprehend meaning from different types of texts, in order for that to happen, readers must benefit from various branches of cognition all together, to create a better understanding, of the reading material , (Rumelhart, 1994)

Block (1992) notes that whether the information is lexical, semantic or syntactic, they can be used in both bottom-up, and top-down models, generally, the interactive model functions by combining the other two models as two complementary processes, to assist the overall comprehension.

Reading Strategies

٤. Significance of Reading Strategies

The significance of reading strategies in realizing the potentials of learners, was reinforced by experimental researches which led Block (1986: 463) to suggest that reading strategies show how readers handle a text, on what cues of the text do they depend, how they understand what they read, why a strategic reader should have the flexibility? And how should the reader adapt to different reading contexts, in addition to be able to choose the suitable strategy according to the text situation, to gain the best result of reading comprehension.

King (2008) notes that reading strategies is the most important factor, that determines the level of reading comprehension acquired by readers, because the purpose of reading strategies is to help them become skillful, competent, and expert readers, who can accomplish the liberty to read whatever they want, and to use literacy as long as they live, while the other factors that are significant in applying reading strategies includes; the text, the reader, and the goal of reading.

Brown (2007:119) indicates the importance of reading strategies when he defines reading strategies as the " specific methods of approaching a problem or a task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, planned designs for controlling and manipulating certain information "

While Pani (2004) draws attention to the significance of reading strategies by making their application in reading a certified standard, by which he recognizes good readers, from poor readers, when he defines reading strategies as " the mental operations involved when readers approach a text effectively to make sense of what they read ...Good readers apply more strategies more frequently ...and more effectively than poor readers ".

Empirical studies concerning the usefulness of applying reading strategies on the increase of reading comprehension, shows that the results confirm the growth of the participants' awareness, which directly reflects on their overall comprehension process (Wright & Brown, 2006).

Other researchers had noticed the significant role of utilizing reading strategies, during the reading process, in determining the level of comprehension of reading material, some of the strategies are conscious, while others are regarded as unconscious strategies, all contribute to on solving the reading problems, for a better comprehension, (Afflerbach, Pearson, & Paris, 2008)

Utilizing reading strategies, not only advances reading comprehension process, but also encourage readers to read more, which translates into better understanding for the written message\messages, and more awareness in reading a text, (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990).

◦. Conclusion

Reading strategies play a significant role in achieving the goal of reading, and solving problems related to comprehending written texts, mastering reading fluency, and developing reader's awareness throughout the reading process.

Readers in every sort of knowledge will be able to gain more outcomes from their effort in reading, and benefit from the results in multiple ways, such as less struggling in accomplishing duties and objectives, and having more time to invest in other activities.

Studies conclude that teaching reading strategies to students, help them to be more efficient in the reading fluency , assist them become more self-regulated readers, and understand when to utilize strategies during the reading process, unlike the untaught students.

Readers who receive reading strategy training generally read and comprehend better than those who do not, thus, instructors should draw learners attention to the application of utilizing reading strategies, bring up the awareness level of the significance of strategic reading, and the reserve of strategies available, to support the overall reading comprehension.

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