

Reading Comprehension Strategies for University Students

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บทความนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษากลยุทธ์ในการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อความเข้าใจ ซึ่งปัจจุบันนี้การใช้กลยุทธ์ในการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อความเข้าใจนั้นมีความจำเป็นอย่างยิ่ง และเป็นประโยชน์ในการเรียนรู้ภาษา เช่นเดียวกัน ผู้เรียนที่นำกลยุทธ์ในการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อความเข้าใจมาใช้ส่งผลให้ได้รับประโยชน์จากการเรียนรู้ภาษามากขึ้น ดังนั้น ผู้สอนจำเป็นต้องออกแบบและเตรียมการสอนกลยุทธ์การอ่านภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อความเข้าใจอย่างมีประสิทธิภาพ และสอนเทคนิคการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อความเข้าใจเพื่อที่ผู้เรียนจะได้พัฒนาทักษะการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษในชั้นเรียน

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Abstract

The objective of this article was to study reading strategies is a key element in developing student comprehension. At present, using reading strategies have become important factors in learning language especially reading skill. The process of comprehension reading strategies has obtained particular attention. In addition, students understand the role of reading strategies will be received the beneficial in language learning. Therefore, the instructors need to design and prepare effective reading comprehension strategies. Teaching reading strategies is the important for students in order to improve reading skills in language classroom.

Keywords: reading comprehension, reading strategies, university, students

1. Introduction

Reading is one of the important skills in English languages and it gives many benefits for us. Most people can obtain more knowledge and information from textbooks, newspapers, magazines and other materials are written in English. Moreover, reading is the most essential component in learning process so it is a necessary skill for English learners.

Davies (1995) stated that “reading is private. It is a mental, or cognitive, process which involves a reader in trying to follow and respond to a message from a writer who is distant in space and time. Because of privacy, the process of reading and responding to the writer is not directly visible”

Students at University have always many different reading materials to read, such as stories, textbooks, novels, articles and so on. Most of students at university get beneficial from reading because it helps them to obtain many things about

the knowledge of language and understanding different subject areas. Therefore, EFL Learners need to have the ability to read written materials and understand what they have read.

However, most students have to face several problems of reading English. Point of view of Williams (1984, p. 2), reading is a process of learning, so readers should understand texts but they do not need to understand everything in a text. Reading without understanding is not appraised as reading; therefore, teachers should try to develop reading strategies to help readers effectively accumulate reading comprehension. In other words, using reading strategies can make EFL learners access the ability of getting meaningful reading easily. Teachers teach the reading strategies would be applicable with several kinds of text especially, in the contexts of EFL University in Thailand (Pajonsak & Udomkrit, 2018). Irwin (1986, p.102) describes that strategies involve the process of thinking about the learning process, self-regulation, and monitoring of learning. Because of the prominence of reading strategies,

The aims of this article are to define definition of reading, definition of reading strategies, the important of reading strategies, reading problems EFL Students, and finally reading strategies in reading comprehension.

2. Definition of Reading

There are many different definitions for the term of reading. Davies (1995) stated that “reading is private. It is a mental, or cognitive, process which involves a reader in trying to follow and respond to a message from a writer who is distant in space and time. Because of privacy, the process of reading and responding to the writer is not directly visible” (p. 1) Goodmann (1988) defined Reading as the process which requires readers to make the interpretation of graphic signs, delineates reading in a variety of ways, *i.e.* matching sounds to letters” (P, 11-12). In this sense, reading is as a cognitive process which could help readers to create meaning from text. Moreover, Pikulski (1997) defined reading as a process constructing meaning via the dynamic interaction. Readers need to have background knowledge, the information from reading text and the context of reading situation

In the reading process, the intersection of the author's knowledge and the reader's knowledge is called a psycholinguistic guessing game. Therefore, the readers' background knowledge certainly simplifies their understanding of written material. Readers are constantly prophesying words and are thinking while they read. When these predictions are confirmed, readers review the material for re-examination. Predicting, confirming, and comprehending are as continuous cycle, building concepts upon concepts.

3. Definition of Reading Strategies

There are several different ideas about the meaning of reading strategies. According to Garner (1987) states that EFL learners are generally deliberate, enjoy activities to participate reading process, while they sometimes have failure of perceived cognition. In addition, reading strategies are defined as learning methods, behavior, problem and solving or study skills which make learners can read text effectively. (Oxford & Crookall, 1989). Moreover, reading strategies refer readers use technique to access a text and understand what they read. (Barnett, 1988)

4. The Importance of Reading Strategies

In classroom, most students face several problems in reading comprehension. They do not understand the materials when reading. In other words, they get the meaning of texts through understanding each word or even each sentence; however, they fail to succeed the meaning of text as a whole. This mean, most students do not use the reading strategies that might assist them to solve their reading obstacles. Mc Namara (2007) suggest that “reading strategies are useful and beneficial for students who lack of knowledge in the reading skill so they need to apply reading strategies to achieve reading comprehension.

5. Reading Problems of EFL Students

Learning language with four language skills is very crucial in studying English for higher education and university. One of them is reading considered as an important part for obtaining knowledge and gathering information. People who are efficient and good readers are always successful in reading. Moreover, the high reading ability is necessary for students in the university level and helps them to succeed. Johnson (1994) analyzed students in this level and their need to comprehend several materials written in English. Although reading plays a crucial role in studying second language, the instructor found that some students are still having reading problems and reading difficulties. For instance, English as second language students are frequently reading very slowly and seem to read with less understanding than their first language (Aebersold & Field, 1997; Wei, 2005).

In reading a text, students encounter many problems which impede their reading comprehension. Firstly, background knowledge is the student’s prior knowledge or knowledge of the world. If readers have inadequate prior knowledge in reading text, they may face problems when text is difficult to understand. In addition, they do not enjoy reading. For example, the kinds of materials of reading such as newspapers, magazines or academic reading cannot make the

reader follow and understand what text is about. Therefore, if readers always have prior knowledge, they can fully understanding text reading. To read and learn effectively students need to combine new material into their prior knowledge base, construct new understanding, and adapt existing conceptions and beliefs as needed. Proficiency at these tasks is essential to literacy (Davis & Winek, 1989; Squire, 1983; Weisberg, 1988).

6. Reading Strategies in Reading Comprehension

Nowadays, there has been increasing interest in reading strategies employed by successful readers. Several studies have emphasized the use of strategies by good readers. Besides, many researchers focused on explaining good readers and their strategies. According to Oxford (1990) has developed six strategies group and has divided then into two main groups: direct strategies and indirect strategies.

Direct strategies are useful for learners since they can assist them to recognize information and create language learning as follow:

1. Memory strategies are employed for approaching new information such as difficult vocabulary. Various memories are kept to help learners to learn and retrieve when they want communication. (e.g. creating mental linkages, using image and sound, reviewing and take action). Memories strategies are often used for memorizing vocabulary and structure in the beginning stage of language learning.

2. Cognitive strategies are used for relating new information with the background knowledge of learners and analyzing and classifying. Cognitive strategies can help learners to control the learning process such as knowledge structure. (e.g practicing , receiving and sending messages strategies, analyzing and creating structure for input and output). These are used to understand the meaning and new expression of the target language.

3. Compensation strategies involve intelligent and gesture. These strategies help learners when they encounter inadequate knowledge of the target language, such as grammar and vocabulary. (e.g. guessing the meaning by bringing their own experiences to interpret data).

Indirect strategies refer to strategies for common administration to manipulate the process of language learning such as planning, co-operating and seeking opportunities:

1. Metacognitve strategies are techniques used for organizing, planning, focusing and evaluating process. Metacognitive strategies have an important and direct effect on cognitive strategies to provide clearly understanding. Centering your learning, arranging and planning your learning and evaluating your learning is set in this strategy.

2. Affective strategies refer are used for manipulating emotion, motivation and attitude (e.g. reducing anxiety and self-esteem). Three sets of strategies are in this group: lowering your anxiety, encouraging yourself, and taking your emotional temperature. Theses technique can be supported by the teacher to encourage students to have positive feeling in class.

3. Social strategies are used for approaching interaction with other learners or native speakers by asking questions, cooperating with others, and empathizing with others. These are to help the learners to communicate with the other's culture as well as language learning.

7. Conclusion

Having excellent reading comprehension skills is crucial. It increases the enjoyment and effectiveness of reading and helps not only academically, but professionally, and in a person's personal life. Reading strategy awareness plays a significant role in reading comprehension and educational process. In spite of its importance, reading strategy has long been the ignored skill in English language teaching, research, learning, and assessment. This lack of good reading strategy skill is exacerbated by the central role of reading comprehension in education success. One solution to the problem of poor reading comprehension is the learning of reading strategy skills. Reading strategy ability needs to be focused in language learning and teaching.

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