



Graduation Project

Final Draft

**The Relationship between Using Reading Strategies and Comprehension of Academic
Materials of EFL Saudi College Learners**

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Abstract

In the recent past, scholars have sought to carry put research activities that shed light into the process that is carried out for learners to understand various concepts explored in the classrooms. In this given study, the researcher will seek to explore the relationship that exists between the use of different reading strategies and the concept of comprehending academic materials among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) college learners based in Saudi Arabia. In focusing on this topic, the paper will highlight the extent to which reading strategies have been explored and seek to discuss the effects this has had on the reading comprehension of the students in various academic materials. This shall be achieved via use of various research methods to gather the data required and then, in using the best analytical techniques and tools, examine the findings for the readers. The expected results are that the EFL college learners based in Saudi Arabia are actively involved in the use of various reading strategies as compared to their counterparts who also employ the attendance as well as the evaluation strategies. However, despite the wide use of the reading strategies, this has no significant impact or correlation with the comprehension of various academic materials for these given students.

Introduction

Studies carried out in the modern times reveal that various scholars have shown interest in the subject regarding comprehension level and reading strategies. While some have sought to explore the different reading and learning strategies that could be implemented in the modern times, others have sought to understand the differences witnessed in comprehension levels of different learners in various countries. In this study, the researcher wishes to expound on the findings of these scholars and in combining their discussions, determine the correlation between the use of different reading strategies and the level of comprehension of academic materials. In order to limit the scope of the study to a feasible region, the researcher shall aim at the college learners in Saudi Arabia and more specifically, they will seek to base their study on EFL learners (Koda, 2008).

A couple of similar studies have been carried out in the past, however, most have sought to determine whether there is a relationship between the use of reading strategies among EFL college learners and the level of comprehension of academic materials. In this research study, the researcher will focus on the same line of thought, however, they will further seek to highlight how this correlation is affected mostly girls at level four. This paper will also highlight the other factors such as time spend on different tasks, the purpose a learner has while reading, and language vocabulary that have been noted to have an impact on comprehension level of the EFL college learners in Saudi Arabia.

In order to achieve its objective, the researcher will seek to use various quantitative research methods to gather the data and information required for analysis. Then, in using the most appropriate and the best analytical techniques and tools, they will seek to examine the findings of the study. This will give them a chance to highlight their own findings and thus

recommend the measures that facilitators and educators in Saudi Arabia should seek to implement in order ensure effectiveness and efficiency of their college curriculum.

Literature Review

In every given country, every student or pupil enrolls in school in order to better their lives and thus, it is critical that they get the opportunity to understand and comprehend the various concepts discussed and explored by their facilitators. Hence, this requires them to insert the effort necessary to ensure that they understand and comprehend what their tutors discuss in the classroom. This is because each individual has a different level of comprehension that is unique and different from the other learners. This is witnessed across various genders, age, race, and levels (Madkhali, 2007).

In any case, to various specialists and scholars, reading is an interactive process especially for the students seeking to learn a foreign language. Hence, while these students engage their minds on academic materials, they are involved in a mental process of decrypting written letters and creating their meaning and thus comprehension of the contents of the materials. In Saudi Arabia, previous research findings have revealed that depending on the number of times a student, especially those undertaking English as a Foreign Language course, repeated reading results in better understanding. A specific study by Madkhali (2005) that sought to investigate the effectiveness of reading strategies on female EFL students in Saudi Arabia revealed that reading strategies have no significant impact on the reading comprehension. Further, the perception of the female students of using varied reading strategies influenced their level of comprehension (Madkhali, 2007).

In another study when exploring the teaching and reading methods, Grabe and Stoller (2012) revealed that Saudi Arabian EFL female students in level four demonstrated higher

reading ability compared to others in lower levels. In addition, their vocabulary size was higher. However, this was noted to be below the international threshold that is required for reading complex academic materials. This was despite the fact that the participants in this given study used various reading strategies such as critical reading, terse, use of typographical aiding tools, and noting of text traits with higher frequencies than anticipated. The study also noted that the students who participated in the study did not employ extensive reading. Hence, this research findings supports findings by other researchers such as Madkhali (2005) that shed light into the relationship between the perception of EFL students reading habits and their comprehension level as well as vocabulary. In this given study, Grabe and Stoller (2012) allow readers to examine the relationship that exists between the reading strategies used by the EFL students in Saudi Arabia, the size of their vocabulary, and their reading comprehension levels. Further, they support findings of other researchers who have in the past embarked on similar studies (2012).

Significance of Research

Research carried out in Saudi Arabia reveals that the country invests a lot of cash annually that goes towards supporting free education. Therefore, it is important that the stakeholders and policy makers in the country get adequate data and information that help them enhance teaching and improve the learning conditions in the country. This study will focus on exploring the methods that could be used to effectively deliver EFL instructions to all the foreign students in the country. As a result, this will go a long way towards improving the teaching of the English subject as a foreign language. The results of this study shall also help stakeholders in the education sector understand some of the problems that the foreign learners experience while reading and seeking to learn English. Hence, the findings of this research analysis will evaluate the progress in the education sector, and in particular, the progress of the learners as they

undertake the English as a Foreign Language learning programs within the education system (Fowler, 2012).

While some research has been carried out in this given line of thought in the past, a gap still exists. Case in point, the difference between the proficiency level of the college students in Saudi Arabia and the expected proficiency level of the EFL university students is huge. In fact, in taking a test, these college students in Saudi Arabia are likely to score below average and way below their counterparts located in other Middle East regions. More so, the case could be worse when the female students are considered. Therefore, the results of this study shall go a long way towards providing the insights needed by the policy makers and the decision makers in the education sector. Further, it will challenge the performance of more comprehensive research studies that will seek to provide empirical data for comparing the reading strategies and comprehension level of EFL learners in Saudi Arabia and in other countries across the world (Dornyei, 2011).

Research Question

1. In Saudi Arabia's college institutions, what reading strategies are commonly used by the female EFL learners?
2. How effective are the reading strategies in predicting the reading comprehension and achievements of the college students in English?
3. How does the perception of the students of the reading concept influence their understanding and the use of the reading strategies?

Research Methodology

In order to be able to present the readers with comprehensive details and answers to the research questions, this research study shall focus on using survey and interview data gathering techniques to collect data and information for scientific analysis. This shall be carried out from a sample population that shall be composed of EFL undergraduate learners who are studying in universities in Saudi Arabia. Via random selection in two different universities, the researcher will seek to focus on female students who are in level four. In addition, they will ensure that the number of participants in the group does not exceed 100 nor goes below 95 participants. In order to determine the effectiveness of the reading strategies in predicting the reading comprehension and achievements of the college students in English, the participants could be given a test whose results shall be used for evaluation and analysis.

Ethical Consideration

Since the study shall seek to gather data from participants in a survey and via an interview, some of the ethical considerations shall include adherence to the confidentiality clause of participants and the researcher, and the acquisition of a consent from the participants to gather the information. The researcher in this study shall seek to ensure that they respect the confidentiality of the respondents and adhere to all legal requirements stipulated by data protection. In addition, they will also seek to let the participants know about the objectives of the study and in the process, obtain a record of their consent to the terms of the research study (Kelley, Clark, Brown, & Sitzia, 2013).

Limitations of the Study

This study focused on only two major universities that resulted generalization of the research findings. In addition, the study did not concentrate on ensuring that the number of

participants is equal from all institutions and this might prevent the researcher from effectively concluding on regional differences and school policies and conditions could affect comprehension level. The study also sought to focus solely on the female students and it ignored the views of their facilitators. This could have provided more insights into the reading strategies and comprehension level. The test used to measure the comprehension level of the students could be inaccurate in providing the exact information required in this given study. In any case, the survey is not expected to measure the actual use of reading strategies but rather it is expected to measure the perceived significance of using the reading strategies.

Expected Results

It is expected that the results of this given study will reveal that female EFL Saudi learners use almost all the reading strategies that include planning, attendance, and evaluation. However, regardless of the reading strategy they employ, most of these students revealed that the environmental factors are likely to affect their comprehension level and reading. It is also expected that the comprehension level of the Saudi EFL college students and especially the female participants involved in this study is medium. With regards to the correlation between the perceived use of reading strategies and the level of comprehension, it is expected that the results of this study will find no significant relationship. Other factors such as poor time management, emotional factors, and self-regulation and discipline however, have a major effect on the level of comprehension and reading.

References

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Appendix

Survey questions

Tick (✓) if depending on how you feel about each of the statements

6 – STRONGLY AGREE

5 – AGREE

4 - PARTLY AGREE

3 - SLIGHTLY DISAGREE

2 – DISAGREE

1 - STRONGLY DISAGREE

STATEMENTS	1	2	3	4	5	6
	STD	D	SLD	PA	A	STA
I always have special techniques to achieve my goals.						
I can always overcome all comprehension difficulties.						
I always try to find a suitable environment.						
I use special techniques to guess what the text will be about.						
I always want to know what the text is about before I start reading it.						
I have special techniques to keep my concentration focused.						
While reading I always persist until I reach the goals						
When I feel uncertain of my comprehension, I give up						
I always have a purpose for reading.						
I always test the effectiveness of my reading strategies						

Interview Questions

1. Assuming that after reading a book or any other reading material that you will be examined on, what shall you do from the start until you feel ready for the examination of your comprehension level?
2. What techniques help control your concentration and understanding while reading?
3. From your own perspective, which readings strategies have more effect?
4. Do you use search engines, dictionaries or the internet to help you understand?