

Activating Metacognitive Strategies on Enhancing Reading Skill among High School Students

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ABSTRACT An investigation into the effect of metacognitive strategy application on High School Students' Reading Comprehension was carried out with 80 students from the middle school, Kalapet, Pondicherry. The results showed that metacognitive strategy use and cognitive control process has its effect on the reading comprehension of high school students. The significant correlation between their awareness on metacognitive strategies and their reading comprehension indicates the developed self-awareness and reading comprehension. The outcome of the treatment proved the possibility of development of regulatory skills among high school students which in turn helped them to acquire reading comprehension. It is recommended that language teachers should build metacognitive awareness among students and facilitate reading strategies for enhancement of Reading Comprehension.

INTRODUCTION

Recent observations in second language learning in schools revealed that there is mismatch between the design of the English course book and the actual classroom transaction in schools. There is no room for competency development on any accord. There is 'pointing', 'translating', 'rote learning' and 'writing'. There is imitation of loud reading and copying written texts with no meaning. Karbalaei (2011) says that language learning strategies are the operations or processes that learners employ to learn the target language. Research into what learners do to learn a language has resulted in the identification of specific strategies and in attempts to classify them in some way. Most current research has been carried out either through the framework developed by Oxford (1990) or through the metacognitive, cognitive, socio-affective scheme used by O'Malley et al. (1990).

The works of Diebold (2011), Iwai (2011) and Karbalaei (2011) were on metacognitive strategy instruction and they insist on the importance of student's knowing of their knowing. Metacognitive control, in which the reader consciously directs the reasoning process, is a particularly important aspect of strategic reading. When readers are conscious of the reasoning involved in reading, they can access and apply that reasoning to similar reading in future situations (Karbalaei 2011). Successful readers monitor their reading and the state of their learning; they use strategies, adjust effort

appropriately, and evaluate the success of their ongoing efforts to understand (Brown et al. 1986). It is the combination of conscious awareness of reading, strategic reading processes, and the actual utilization of reading strategies that distinguishes skilled from unskilled readers (Karbalaei 2011).

Objectives

The purpose of this research is to investigate metacognitive awareness of reading strategies, strategy use, and reading comprehension among high school students.

The specific objectives are:

- To investigate the level of reading comprehension among high school students, and
- To examine the extent to which the use of metacognitive strategies enhance Reading Comprehension

METHODOLOGY

The participants were 80 students from the middle school, Kalapet, Pondicherry. The research encompasses both teachers and students. The English Reader has the list of reading competency to be developed among high school students. It is obligatory on the part of teachers to possess all the expected reading competencies and the competency to inculcate the same among students. Although the reason for low achievement has been found as reading problem, research has shown that the same difficulties show

up when a text is heard as when it is read, indicating that many of the problems basically arise from failure to acquire the necessary metacognitive strategies for processing context reduced prose.

Metacognitive reading strategy instructional programme was designed incorporating the following principles: Activity principle, Scaffolding principle, Preconception principle, Self-Diagnosis principle, Cooperation principle, Content Theory, Functionality principle, and Learning conception principle. Students were oriented on using the metacognitive strategies, namely Advance organizers, Directed Attention, Functional planning, Selective attention, Self-management, Self-Monitoring, Regulating, Orchestrating, Evaluating, and Self-evaluation.

Procedure

In order to find out the existing level of reading comprehension of the students, a pre-test was conducted. In pursuance of controlling extraneous variables, the demographic particulars of the students were collected. The metacognitive strategy application went on for three months. After the treatment, a post test was administered to the experimental group. The content validity of the test was established by experts and the reliability was established by test-retest method ($r = 0.93$). Other than the achievement test, an awareness tool was administered to assess students' application of metacognitive strategies where the items are for self-reflection. Data obtained were subjected to statistical analysis. Analysis was categorized under Descriptive analysis and Relational analysis.

RESULTS

The analysis of data reveals that metacognitive strategy application among high school students has its impact on their reading comprehension. It is explicit in Table 1 which shows a significant difference between the pretest scores and posttest scores of the students' reading comprehension. The gain score was 45.66 percent. The students' awareness score on application of metacognitive strategies was 67.56 (SD 8.22). In order to find out the significant difference between the entry behavior and exit behavior correlation analysis was applied and

it was significant at 0.05 level. Further the correlation between students' awareness on metacognitive strategy application and their reading comprehension was significant at 0.05 level (Table 2). Then the 't' value (27.54) was found out in the correlated group and it was significant at 0.05 level. The post test mean scores reflect the impact of metacognitive strategy application on reading comprehension.

Table 1: Pre and posttest mean and standard deviation (SD) scores of the experimental group students

Test	Mean	SD
Pre test	8.73	2.5
Post test	54.39	7.35

Table 2: Correlation values between variables

S. No.	Between variables	'r' value
1.	Pretest and post test scores on reading comprehension	0.52*
2.	Reading comprehension and their awareness on meta cognitive strategies	0.598*

$P < 0.05$

DISCUSSION

The demographic particulars of the students indicate the homogeneity of the group. The parents belong to daily wages. There is little support from family for their academic achievement. The effect of the treatment is reflected in the gain score of 45.66 percent. This might be due to the application of metacognitive strategies on their reading comprehension. It is concurred with the findings of Auerbach and Paxton (1997) that strategic reading can only become efficient when metacognitive strategies, such as working towards a particular goal while reading, are actively used. Brown et al. (1986) have found out that metacognition plays a vital role in reading.

The significant correlation (0.598 significant at 0.05 levels) between their awareness on metacognitive strategies and their reading comprehension indicates the developed self-awareness and reading comprehension. This research is corroborated with the findings of (Baker 2008; Pressley 2002) that metacognition includes awareness and control of planning, monitoring, repairing, revising, summarizing, and evaluating. Essentially, individuals learn awareness of

their comprehension processing. More specifically, they learn strategies that support their comprehension (their awareness of strategies) and they learn how to carry out these strategies effectively (their control of strategies).

The 't' value of 27.54 significant at 0.05 level shows the effectiveness of the application of metacognitive strategies on the part of students and teachers. This was consistent with the findings of Pressley et al. (1987) that metacognition helps students to be consciously aware of what they have learned, and to recognize situations in which it would be useful, and progress in using it. Metacognitive control, in which the reader consciously directs the reasoning process, is a particularly important aspect of strategic reading. When readers are conscious of the reasoning involved in reading, they can access and apply that reasoning to similar reading in future situations (Karbalaei 2011).

CONCLUSION

Metacognition is concerned with active monitoring and regulation of cognitive process. The treatment on cognitive monitoring found to be effective on enhancement of reading comprehension. This will help students to acquire not only declarative knowledge (knowing what strategies are) but also procedural knowledge (knowing how to use the strategies) and conditional knowledge (knowing when, where, and why to use the strategies and evaluating their use). In other words, it is the combination of conscious awareness of reading, strategic reading processes, and the actual utilization of reading strategies that distinguishes skilled from unskilled readers. Teachers should be aware of metacognition (thinking about thinking), the key for reading comprehension.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The well designed curriculum should be transacted in a right way for students to develop the expected competency by teachers. The Language teachers need to have developed the linguistic competencies. They should know that learning has to happen within and language learning requires learner's participation. Initially teachers may elicit input while they model strategy use. Once students get familiarized with strategy application they continue to work with teacher assistance and soon they become inde-

pendent learners. Teaching metacognitive strategies explicitly is a key for success.

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