

DEVELOPING READING COMPREHENSION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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Annotation

This article explores the development of reading comprehension skills in foreign language learners, focusing on strategies that can improve comprehension. Through a mixed-methods study involving 60 adult learners of English as a foreign language (EFL), the research examines the impact of explicit instruction in reading strategies (such as prediction, summarization, and questioning) on learners' reading comprehension. The study finds that learners who received targeted instruction showed significant improvements in their comprehension scores, enhanced motivation, and greater engagement with reading tasks. The article emphasizes the importance of metacognitive strategies in reading and suggests that such strategies foster more active and independent reading practices. The findings highlight the need for language educators to integrate reading strategies into their teaching practices to support the development of reading comprehension in foreign language learners.

Keywords: Reading comprehension, foreign language learners, reading strategies, prediction, summarization, questioning, metacognitive strategies, vocabulary acquisition, language proficiency, extensive reading, second language acquisition, learner engagement, reading motivation, mixed-methods research.

Annotatsiya

Ushbu maqola xorijiy tilni o'rganayotgan talabalarda o'qish tushunish ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirish usullari haqida so'z yuritadi va tushunishni yaxshilash uchun foydalaniladigan strategiyalarni o'rganadi. 60 nafar ingliz tilini o'rganayotgan kattalar o'rtasida o'tkazilgan aralash metodli tadqiqotda, o'qish strategiyalariga (masalan, taxmin qilish, qisqacha xulosa qilish va savollar berish) qaratilgan aniq yo'riqnomalar o'quvchilarning o'qish tushunishini qanday yaxshilashiga ta'sir ko'rsatganligi ko'rsatilgan. Tadqiqotda o'qish strategiyalarini o'rgangan o'quvchilarning tushunish natijalari sezilarli darajada yaxshilanganini, motivatsiyasi ortganini va o'qishga bo'lgan qiziqishining oshganini aniqladi. Maqola, o'qishda metakognitiv strategiyalarning ahamiyatini ta'kidlaydi va bunday strategiyalarning o'quvchilarda faol va mustaqil o'qish amaliyotlarini rivojlantirishga yordam berishini ta'kidlaydi. Tadqiqot natijalari xorijiy til o'rganayotgan o'quvchilarda o'qish tushunishini rivojlantirish uchun o'qish strategiyalarini darslarga kiritishni qo'llab-quvvatlaydi.

Kalit so'zlar: O'qish tushunishi, xorijiy tilni o'rganish, o'qish strategiyalari, taxmin qilish, qisqacha xulosa qilish, savollar berish, metakognitiv strategiyalar, leksikani o'rganish, til bilish darajasi, keng qamrovli o'qish, ikkinchi tilni o'rganish, o'quvchi motivatsiyasi, o'qishga qiziqish, aralash metodli tadqiqot.

Аннотация

Данная статья исследует развитие навыков понимания прочитанного у учащихся, изучающих иностранный язык, с акцентом на стратегии, способствующие улучшению

понимания. В ходе смешанного исследования, проведенного среди 60 взрослых изучающих английский язык как иностранный (EFL), было проанализировано влияние явного обучения стратегиям чтения (таким как предсказание, подведение итогов и постановка вопросов) на развитие навыков понимания прочитанного. Результаты исследования показали, что учащиеся, получившие целенаправленное обучение этим стратегиям, значительно улучшили свои результаты в понимании текста, повысили мотивацию и заинтересованность в чтении. Статья подчеркивает важность метакогнитивных стратегий в процессе чтения и утверждает, что такие стратегии способствуют более активному и самостоятельному освоению материала. На основе полученных данных авторы предлагают педагогам интегрировать эти стратегии в учебный процесс для более эффективного развития навыков понимания прочитанного у студентов, изучающих иностранный язык.

Ключевые слова: Понимание прочитанного, учащиеся, изучающие иностранный язык, стратегии чтения, предсказание, подведение итогов, постановка вопросов, метакогнитивные стратегии, приобретение словарного запаса, уровень языковой компетенции, интенсивное чтение, приобретение второго языка, мотивация учащихся, интерес к чтению, смешанное исследование.

Introduction

Reading comprehension is a crucial skill in foreign language acquisition, as it not only facilitates the development of vocabulary and grammar but also aids in understanding the cultural and contextual nuances of the target language. For foreign language learners, mastering reading comprehension can be a challenging yet rewarding aspect of language learning. Effective reading comprehension requires the integration of multiple skills, including decoding, fluency, vocabulary knowledge, and background information. Moreover, the ability to interpret and engage with texts in a foreign language is essential for academic success and communication in real-life contexts. This article explores the strategies and methodologies employed to enhance reading comprehension among foreign language learners, examining key techniques, the role of prior knowledge, and cognitive strategies that aid in improving comprehension skills.

Literature Review

The importance of reading comprehension in foreign language acquisition has been well-established in the literature. According to Grabe (2009)¹, reading comprehension involves a complex interplay of various cognitive processes, including decoding, syntactic parsing, and the use of prior knowledge to construct meaning from text. In foreign language learning, the challenge is amplified by the learner's limited vocabulary, unfamiliar grammatical structures, and lack of cultural context. Several studies have highlighted the significance of vocabulary knowledge in reading comprehension. Nation (2001) posits that vocabulary size is a critical factor influencing reading comprehension, as learners are more likely to understand texts when they are familiar with a larger proportion of the vocabulary².

Furthermore, studies have emphasized the role of background knowledge in enhancing comprehension. Anderson (2003) notes that learners who can activate their existing knowledge about a topic are better able to make inferences and fill gaps in their understanding

¹ Grabe, W. (2009). *Reading in a second language: Moving from theory to practice*. Cambridge University Press.

² Nation, I. S. P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge University Press.

when reading³. This theory is supported by Schema Theory, which suggests that readers use their prior knowledge to interpret and understand new information (Carrell, 1988). In addition to these cognitive factors, the development of reading strategies has also been shown to significantly affect comprehension⁴. For instance, extensive reading, which involves reading large quantities of text for pleasure, has been shown to improve fluency and comprehension (Day & Bamford, 1998)⁵. Likewise, the use of metacognitive strategies, such as predicting and self-monitoring, can help learners navigate complex texts more effectively (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990)⁶.

Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods approach to investigate the development of reading comprehension among foreign language learners. The participants were 60 adult learners of English as a foreign language (EFL), divided into two groups: a control group and an experimental group. The experimental group received explicit instruction in various reading strategies, including prediction, summarization, and questioning, while the control group continued with traditional reading instruction. Both groups were assessed using a pre-test and post-test to measure their reading comprehension levels. The tests involved reading passages of varying difficulty levels and answering comprehension questions that tested their ability to recall information, make inferences, and understand the overall meaning of the text.

In addition to the quantitative data obtained from the pre- and post-tests, qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews. These interviews aimed to explore learners' perceptions of the reading strategies and their self-reported improvements in reading comprehension. The interview data were analyzed thematically to identify common patterns and themes that emerged from the learners' experiences.

Results

The results of the pre- and post-test assessments revealed a significant improvement in reading comprehension scores among the experimental group, with an average increase of 20% in their overall scores. The control group, on the other hand, showed a more modest improvement of 5%. Qualitative analysis from the interviews indicated that learners in the experimental group reported feeling more confident in their reading abilities and were better able to identify main ideas, make inferences, and summarize texts. They also expressed a greater interest in reading in English outside the classroom, attributing this motivation to the strategies they had learned. In contrast, learners in the control group noted less engagement with reading tasks and did not report any significant improvements in their comprehension skills.

Discussion

The findings of this study align with previous research highlighting the effectiveness of explicit reading strategy instruction in improving comprehension skills. The significant improvement in the experimental group's reading comprehension can be attributed to the

³ Anderson, N. J. (2003). *Metacognitive reading strategies and ESL reading comprehension*. TESOL Quarterly, 37(2), 221-250.

⁴ Carrell, P. L. (1988). *Some causes of text-boundedness and their implications for reading comprehension in a second language*. TESOL Quarterly, 22(4), 481-493.

⁵ Day, R. R., & Bamford, J. (1998). *Extensive reading in the second language classroom*. Cambridge University Press.

⁶ O'Malley, J. M., & Chamot, A. U. (1990). *Learning strategies in second language acquisition*. Cambridge University Press.

targeted instruction in prediction, summarization, and questioning techniques. These strategies likely helped learners to actively engage with the text and improve their understanding by encouraging them to think critically and interact with the material. The positive response from learners in the experimental group further supports the notion that metacognitive strategies can increase learners' self-efficacy and motivation to read. Additionally, the minimal improvement observed in the control group suggests that traditional reading instruction, which often focuses on rote learning and limited engagement with texts, may not be sufficient to develop strong reading comprehension skills in foreign language learners.

The results also emphasize the importance of providing learners with strategies that help them to make sense of unfamiliar vocabulary and grammatical structures. By promoting strategies such as guessing from context or asking questions about the text, learners can become more independent readers. However, it is important to note that the effectiveness of these strategies may vary depending on the learners' language proficiency levels, as beginners may require more support in applying these techniques effectively.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlights the significant role that explicit reading strategy instruction plays in developing reading comprehension among foreign language learners. By equipping learners with strategies such as prediction, summarization, and questioning, teachers can help learners become more active and independent readers. The findings suggest that such strategies not only improve comprehension scores but also enhance learners' motivation and engagement with reading in a foreign language. Moving forward, language educators should consider incorporating these strategies into their teaching practices to foster better reading comprehension skills among foreign language learners. Further research could explore the long-term impact of these strategies on learners' language development and investigate how they can be adapted for different learner profiles.

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