

Action Research: Improving Advanced Learners' Reading Skill based on Strategic Based Instruction (SBI)

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Abstract

It is believed that reading strategies instruction is a significant factor in developing students reading comprehension. However, many teachers lack a solid foundation in doing so. Thus, it is of paramount importance to plan effective reading strategies so as to improve reading comprehension of English language learners. Therefore, this study aimed at applying some strategies including inferring, summarizing and predicting to improve reading comprehension of English language learners in an action research while doing a thick description. In this case, the participants of the study were 5 English language learners in an advanced level. With regard to the feedbacks which the researcher as the teacher of the class achieved through the portfolio and a given self-assessment quiz, it is worth noting that improvements can be observed in their reading comprehension; albeit to some extent. That is so say, part of their progress was because of their individual differences.

1. Introduction

Throughout life, reading comprehension is a skill which is constantly used. This implies language learners' success, and without the ability to read well they may lose the opportunity for future success to the extent that ever-increasing demand for high levels of literacy makes this issue more vital [1]. In so doing, it is argued that the key to success in reading comprehension is to learn critically that is to encounter the layers of text. Thus, this study aimed at considering the invisible layers through some reading strategies like inferring, summarizing, and predicting. According to Teele [2] 'the goal of all readers might be understanding of what they read' through active engagement in text. In this case, teachers can also help the learners so as to improve their reading comprehension. Some strategies such as inferring, summarizing and predicting among many may apply to improve reading comprehension [3].

In language teaching, there is also an assumption and principle on learner autonomy and action research which are related to one another since aimed at transforming the learner and learner contexts. Thus, critical quality enhancement in language teaching means increasing the teacher and

learner autonomy [4] along with teacher and learner empowerment [5]. To delve into the issue, teachers act as technicians in order to apply theory into practice [6], and learner autonomy is a means of equipping learners to engage critically and practically in social practice [7]. This aim can be materialized at promoting teachers towards critical teacher reflectivity and learner autonomy by using action research. In this way, teachers attempt to enhance collaborative learning to interrelating the theory and practice with a view to both personal and social transformation [8]. Therefore, action research aids teachers to consciously develop their own methodology, as 'a person's private knowledge, experience and values to teaching practices at any time' [9].

Regarding the purpose of the present study, three reading strategies were adopted in order to develop English language learners' reading skill. According to Duke and Pearson [10], it is of paramount importance to teach strategies in group practice, partner practice, and independent use of strategy.

2. Inferring

Inferring refers to reading between the lines through using students' own knowledge along with the information from the text draw from the context [11]. In this way, language learners can predict and create meaning from the context through identifying the underlying themes [12]. Practically speaking, language learners can be provided with a set of pictures, dates, illustrations, related vocabularies, and so forth to make logical inferences.

2.1. Predicting

Predicting is also another reading strategy that good readers use in their knowledge [3]. This strategy may help to enhance learners' interaction and interest in understanding of their text [13]; moreover, some of the approaches to teach in practice including predicting throughout the text with partners, teacher modeling, using titles, key words, and table of contents. Care also needs to be taken to evaluate the prediction and revise it if necessary [2].

2.2. Summarizing

And, summarizing is the third reading strategy which is known as the process of considering reading with regard to the information in the readers own words [14]. In so doing, it is necessary to distinguish the main ideas from the supporting ideas that is to say distinguishing the related knowledge from unrelated ones. However, it is assumed that this is a threaten act for novice language learners.

Considering the above-mentioned issues, in the present study the researcher aimed at applying some reading strategies to develop skill since without a solid foundation of reading skill students will struggle throughout their academic and personal life. Thus, reading strategy awareness is highly concerned along with achieving participants' outperformance in a specific language skill that is reading comprehension.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The participants of the present study were 5 female and male adult language learners with the age range of 22 to 30 who were schooling English language for almost three years. They were studying passages II, at advanced level in an intensive course for six hours weekly within ten sessions in spring semester. All participants were highly motivated to improve their language skills so as to be able to attend IELTS or TOEFL preparation courses with high proficiency.

3.2. Data Collection and Materials

The objective of the present research is to help participants to improve their reading comprehension by using some strategies including inferring, predicting, and summarizing. Thus, the researcher who was the teacher of the same class applied those strategies while doing the reading comprehension tasks. Noteworthy, 8 passages of the main book namely Passages II [15] were covered during the semester with the language learners' cooperation and team working.

3.3. Procedure

In conducting the present study, teacher ensured that all were fully familiar with the strategies through asking them to share their experiences and problem in learning English language; however, it was revealed that they could not properly distinguish when and how to use those strategies in reading comprehension. In so doing, teacher prepared a portfolio for each language learner in order to compare their performances before, during and after covering eight reading passages of the course book. In addition, in

order to keep the identity of participants preserved, they were identified by alphabetical ID codes.

The first three session of the course, participants were engaged cooperatively to work on reading passages in order to have some predictions while doing the reading tasks. The second three sessions were practiced on prediction and summarization, and the last three sessions on prediction, summarization, and inferring. In these phases, all participants were actively attempted to perform better than before. Moreover, the researcher was also teaching, observing, giving feedback, and changing her plans in each session based on the needs of the language learner. Errors and mistakes were also corrected by recast, restructuring and metalinguistic awareness.

At the end of the course, the participants were supposed to sit for a self-assessment quiz to check their progress. Noteworthy, the test comprising reading, listening, and writing sections; however, the main concern of the present study was reading comprehension to report. Interestingly enough, this question was raised for all participants at the end of the course that why they did not care to some solutions earlier. Although they could not reach their ultimate attainment, some awareness was raised so that they changed their practices and enhanced their reading proficiency to some extent.

4. Results

The result of the study depicted that participants did not have fully language awareness on appropriate use of reading strategies in reading passage. That is to say, they did not know how to implement the strategies. Thus, in order to remove the participants' obstacles, the researcher monitored and guided students until they reached some achievements in learning. This present action research was also a productive one since the researcher perceived the language learners' problems and misunderstandings while doing her task and learners' confidence in reading and answering reading questions were also enhanced.

Table 1 demonstrates participants' performance in a self-assessment quiz on reading comprehension at the end of the course of instruction.

Generally, students D and E were both reflective, and interestingly their scores were the same. They could also get the highest scores in holistic rating scale (Table 2). Noteworthy, they had enough ability to analyze in order to perceive the meaning. Student C was introvert; thus, he was better in reading and writing rather than speaking. As always he was the top student; however, he/she needed to work on other skills. Language learners A and B are totally extrovert; especially A, but they were not as reflective as others.

Table 1. Participants' Total Score in Self-Assessment Quiz

Participants' IDs	Inferring (out of 5)	Predicting (out of 5)	Summarizing (out of 5)	Total Score (out of 15)
A	2.5	2	3.5	8
B	2	2.5	4	8.5
C	4	3	3	10
D	2.5	4	3	9.5
E	4.5	2.5	2.5	9.5

5. Discussion and Conclusions

According to Corey [16], the value of action research is in the change that occurs in everyday practice rather than generalization to a broader audience. It is a reflective process that is close to the instructors with the aim of making some changes. In so doing, assigning learners' needs, doing some inquiry, analyzing data, and making some decisions can lead to desired outcomes. In this case, McNiff [17] indicated four steps including planning, acting, observing, and reflecting for the betterment of action research in general and language awareness in particular.

Regarding the present study, all participants reached language awareness which was the most crucial factor is learning English in general, and reading comprehension, in particular. Having completed the task, the researcher would also like to implement action research in other language skills and sub-skills with the purpose of removing students English language problems but in a larger scale. It is also recommended to implement reading strategy awareness program in an action research for all levels including elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate and advanced levels in a collaborative teaching program with other teachers. In addition, apply different reading strategies other than the ones practiced in the present study would be fruitful. Researcher may also implement the same study in TOEFL or IELTS preparation courses so to give a deeper insight to language learners in reading comprehension.

8. References

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