

Using Verbal Reports to Explore Reading Test-Taking Strategies of Saudi, EFL University Students

Wafa Ahmed Alsafi

English Language Institute

King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

walsafi@kau.edu.sa

Abstract

Reading test-taking strategies (RTTS) play a central role in test-takers' performance. Identifying these strategies and understanding their appropriate use is crucial for improving the test-takers accomplishment. Thus the present study attempts to further our understanding of EFL reading test-taking strategies (RTTS) by attempting to explore qualitatively the reading test-taking strategies (RTTS) of Saudi, EFL female students while completing a multiple choice reading comprehension test. The participants are 26 level-three, foundation-year students at a big Saudi University. The study uses think-aloud techniques, retrospective interviews, observations, and test protocols to deduce the participants' reading test-taking strategies (RTTS). The data were analysed inductively using some elements of grounded theory to explore the participants' strategy use. The result of the study is a list of 127 reading test-taking strategies (RTTS) classified under seven main categories and 21 subcategories. The classification of the strategies follows a narrative order that mirrors the test-takers' experience while completing the test.

Keywords: reading test-taking strategies, retrospective interviews, Saudi EFL students, think-aloud protocols, verbal report

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