

Main Idea Identification Strategies: EFL Readers' Awareness and Success

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Abstract:

The present study was designed to determine whether there is a facilitatory relationship between awareness of reading comprehension strategies and their effective use in foreign language reading. To that end, it investigated the effects of reading comprehension strategy awareness and use on main idea comprehension and recall of foreign language texts. Subjects were four Libyan Arabic-speaking readers of English as a foreign language (EFL). Subjects provided written recalls of foreign languages texts, which were assessed according to weightings (Kintsch, 1988) derived from a propositional analysis of the texts (Zerhouni, 1996; Schellings, Van Hout-Wolter, Vermunt, 1996; Roloff, 1999). Subjects also completed a Reading Strategy Survey (Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002) and a semi-structured Reading Strategy Interview. Additional data were derived from the experimenter's observation of the subjects' approach to the recall task. The results indicate a positive relationship between reading strategy awareness, use of these strategies and main idea comprehension of the text. The implications of these results for teaching FL reading are discussed.

Key words: foreign language reading, reading comprehension strategies, strategy awareness, main idea comprehension