بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

كتاب في الطب وأصول العلاج والأمراض

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WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THIS THESIS

BY

MOHSEN MAHMOUDI

ENTITLED

ON THE RELATIOPNSHIP BETWEEN THE USE OF L1 VERSION OF A READING COMPREHENSION TEXT AND LEARNERS' PERFORMANCE ON READING COMPREHENSION DISPLAY, REFERENTIAL AND INFERENTIAL QUESTIONS

BE ACCEPTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIRMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN TEFL

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بسمه تعالی

آیین‌نامهٔ چاپ پایان‌نامه (رساله)‌های دانشجویان دانشگاه تربیت مدرس

نظر به اینکه چاپ و انتشار پایان نامه (رساله)‌های تحصیلی دانشجویان دانشگاه تربیت مدرس، مبین بخشی از فعالیتهای علمی – پژوهشی دانشگاه است بنابر این به منظور آگاهی و رعایت حقوق دانشگاه، دانش‌آموختگان این دانشگاه نسبت به رعایت موارد ذیل متعهد می‌شوند:

ماده ۱   در صورت اقدام به چاپ پایان‌نامه (رساله)‌ی خود، مراتب را قبلاً به طور کتبی به "دفتر نشر آثار علمی" دانشگاه اطلاع دهد.

ماده ۲   در صفحه سوم کتاب (پس از برگ شناسنامه)، عبارت ذیل را چاپ کند:

"**کتاب حاضر حاصل پایان‌نامهٔ کارشناسی ارشد / نگارنده در آموزش زبان انگلیسی است که در سال ۱۳۸۰ در دانشکدهٔ علوم انسانی دانشگاه تربیت مدرس** به راهنمایی آقای دکتر سید اکبر میر حسنی **و مشاورهٔ آقای دکتر** غلامرضا کیانی **از آن دفاع شده است.**

ماده ۳   به منظور جبران بخشی از هزینه‌های انتشارات دانشگاه، تعداد یک درصد شمارگان کتاب (در هر نوبت چاپ) را به "دفتر نشر آثار علمی" دانشگاه اهدا کند. دانشگاه می‌تواند مازاد نیاز خود را به نفع مرکز نشر در معرض فروش قرار دهد.

ماده ۴   در صورت عدم رعایت ماده ۳، ٪۵۰ بهای شمارگان چاپ شده را به عنوان خسارت به دانشگاه تربیت مدرس، تأدیه کند.

ماده ۵   دانشجو تعهد و قبول می‌کند در صورت خودداری از پرداخت بهای خسارت، دانشگاه می‌تواند خسارت مذکور را از طریق مراجع قضایی مطالبه و وصول کند؛ به علاوه به دانشگاه حق می‌دهد به منظور استیفای حقوق خود، از طریق دادگاه، معادل وجه مذکور در ماده ۴ را از محل توقیف کتابهای عرضه شدهٔ نگارنده برای فروش، تأمین نماید.

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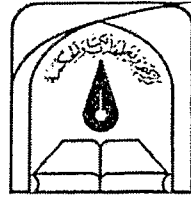
اصلی علومان تربیتی زبان و ادبیات فارسی

On the Relationship between the Use of L1 Version of a Reading Comprehension Text and Iranian Intermediate Learners' Performance on Display, Referential and Inferential Questions

A THESIS SUBMITED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN
TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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Abstract

Reading comprehension is a complex activity in which the background knowledge of the reader regarding language, life and reading is centrally involved (Alderson & Urquhart, 1984). Provision and activation of this background knowledge have been the subject of many researches, and proved to be of paramount importance in preparing the readers to read (Carrell and Wallace, 1983; Gribe, 1988; Grabe, 1997). This study is also an attempt to investigate the relationship between the L1 version of a text as a specific method of background knowledge provision/activation and the readers' performance on reading comprehension in general and reading comprehension display, referential and inferential questions in particular.

To do so, 61 intermediate subjects were randomly assigned to two groups of control and experimental. The two groups were pre-tested on a reading comprehension test to evaluate their performance on display, referential and inferential questions before the instruction. Carried out along the instruction was the treatment, providing a translated version of a text to the experimental group for five up to seven minuets at the beginning of the instruction. Then, the two groups were posttested. T-test was run on the gathered data to detect significant differences if any.

The results revealed that the use of L1 version of a text did not have a significant effect on the readers' performance on display and inferential questions. As for the referential questions, however, the results demonstrated a significant effect for the use of L1 version of a text. Although the gains of the readers on each individual kind of display and inferential questions was not statistically significant, the results showed a significant relationship between the use of L1 and all three kinds of questions combined.

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CHAPTER I

Chapter I

Introduction

Development in the reading theory and research that has originated in the first language studies has broadened our understanding about the nature of the reading process. Reading was traditionally viewed as a " bottom-up" process in which building up meaning for a text began from the smallest units at the "bottom"(letters and words) to larger units at the "top" (phrases, clauses and inter-sentential linkages). In other words, the primary emphasis is on textual units in a bottom-up view of reading (Carrell, 1988, 1991). Later on, with the parallel development in the cognitive psychology, there emerged "top-down" processes which were a shift from textual units to readers' interpretation and prior knowledge (Carrell, 1988). However, more recent views look at reading as an integration of top-down processes that utilize background knowledge and schema, as well as bottom-up processes that are primarily text-driven (Barnett, 1989; Grabe, 1997; Carrell, 1988,1991).

In addition, as Richards (1990) points out, researchers have focused on readers to identify the strategies employed by successful readers as they interact with the text. This line of research, even the development of an interactive model of reading a second language dates back to shifts occurring in the 1970s. Since the 1970s, research interest in EFL has shifted from teachers to learners, and increasing number of studies have been undertaken from the students' perspective (Wen & Johnson, 1997).

Weber (1984) points out that an interactive model of reading emphasizes the interactions between the text, various levels of linguistic knowledge,

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and various cognitive activities of a reader. Eskey (1988) maintains that there will be individual differences among readers and categories of readers at the time of interacting with the text. He goes on to say that the mixture of skills and knowledge (bottom-up and top-down processes) will vary from reader to reader and even for one reader in moving from text to text.

Aldreson and Urquhart (1984) argue that reading is a multi-disciplinary phenomenon in which both the process and the product of reading vary according to the reader and his motivation, background, purpose, interest and strategies used at the time of reading. Bachman (1990) states that some aspects of processing a text may go beyond the linguistic ability of a reader. She says that to answer reading comprehension questions involving inferences is not only a matter of linguistic knowledge but utilizing other sources of knowledge. Bachman relates performance on such questions to "strategic competence"-the capacity of making the most efficient use of available abilities in carrying out a linguistic task. She considers "strategic competence" as an ability within the realm of general cognitive abilities.

Rumelhart (1980) argues that schema theory research has also shown that the most efficient processing of a text is interactive. Like Rumelhart, Carrell (1988), too, considers it a problem for readers to be uni-directional in their style of reading, saying that some readers manifest a text biased (bottom-up) or knowledge-biased (top-down) style of comprehension.

According to Carrell, one of the possible causes if an inefficient interactive reading process, specially under-utilizing contextual information at the time of reading may be a matter of the absence of the relevant knowledge structures in the top-down processing. Carrell (1988) regards interactive reading as a process of superimposing internal

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knowledge structure on the text as an external stimulus structure. Carrell and Wallace (1983), on the other hand, argue that the availability of background knowledge on its own may not be enough, and that it is necessary for that knowledge to be activated. Along the same line, Samuels and Kamil (1984) maintain that skilled reading is a process of activating schemata and looking for information in the text that can fill "empty slots" in the activated schemata.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Based on what was mentioned in the previous section, it seems plausible to claim that background knowledge of an EFL reader may influence the process of reading comprehension. Therefore, it is reasonable and even necessary to find effective methods in order to provide and activate background knowledge. Recognizing the same need, researchers have tried and identified different methods of schemata provision/activation in the process of language learning (Carroll and Walance, 1983; Grabe, 1997). One of the possible methods which has been identified by many researchers and is believed to help readers to get better prepared is the use of mother tongue. Many researchers have implicated the role of L1 in EFL/ESL learning (Widdooson, 1983; Rumelhart, 1980), and many others have identified it as a method of schemata provision/activation (Grice, 1975); however, there is no consensus on its role. There are some language researchers who prefer the total abandonment of L1 from all EFL/ESL learning contexts (Grabe, 1897).

Taking these different views in mind, the present research aims at exploring this area focusing on the relationship between the use of L1 as a method of schemata provision/activation and Iranian readers' performance on reading comprehension questions. Since different

comprehension questions require different levels of cognitive processing, the aim of this study can be rephrased into exploring the relationship between the use of L1 as a method of schemata provision/activation and Iranian readers' level of text processing. Such a depth of text processing is defined in terms of comprehension at the level of sentences, inter-sentential relationships and inferencing in relation to world knowledge. In this study, display, referential and inferential questions manifest the levels of text processing. Display questions assess the readers' understanding at the level of the sentence through the structure and vocabulary found in the text (Hatch, 1992). Referential questions, however, assess the readers' comprehension at the inter-sentential level, and finally, inferential questions assess the readers' comprehension beyond the level of text in relation to the schematic knowledge of the readers (Hudson & Slackman, 1990). In this study, schemata provision/activation is manifested by a two minutes introduction of an L1 version of a reading comprehension text at the beginning of each session.

It is a note to remember that L1 version of a text used here in this study is meant to function as a pre-reading activity in order to prepare the readers better for the task ahead, and not to teach the skill of translation. Therefore, before going any further, it is necessary to discriminate between the teaching of translation as a vocation skill and the use of translation in the teaching situation as an aid to language learning. Translation in the EFL environment should clearly remain distant from the translation studies

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1.3. Significance of the Study

As stated by Alderson and Urquhart (1984), reading is a complex activity in which many aspects of language, cognition, life, and reading are involved. Among various disciplines, as they say, cognitive and educational psychology are centrally involved in an adequate study of reading. So, theoretically this study can be viewed as an attempt to cast more light on the nature of EFL reading in connection with background knowledge. This study may be viewed in line with the conceptions made by experts such as Hudson (1982) who believe that there are some non-linguistic skills that may affect an efficient interactive reading.

Jamieson (1992) points out that work in the area of learners' characteristics has been grouped as the " good language learner studies". Spiro (1979) states that skilled readers constantly change their way of processing to accommodate to the demands of a particular text; less skilled readers tend to over-rely on either bottom-up or top-down procedures in one direction which produce ineffective way of interacting with a text. So, pedagogically this study can be of help towards the first steps in clarifying some non-linguistic abilities that make a distinction of good readers and good reading strategies. This study will also reveal the readers' conception about reading and their ability to make use of different sources of information at their disposal while reading a text. The findings of this study may also help reading instructors to find out any possible uni-directionality in an ineffective interactive model of reading, and consequently develop a program to compensate for such uni-directionality.

1.4. Research Questions

The following research questions are stated to investigate the relationship between the L1 version of a text and the readers' performance on different questions

Q1. Is there a significant relationship between the use of L1 version of a reading comprehension text and Iranian intermediate EFL learners' performance on reading comprehension display questions?

Q2. Is there a significant relationship between the use of L1 version of a reading comprehension text and Iranian intermediate EFL learners' performance on reading comprehension referential questions?

Q3. Is there a significant relationship between the use of L1 version of a reading comprehension text and Iranian intermediate EFL learners' performance on reading comprehension inferential questions?

Q4. Is there a significant relationship between the use of L1 version of a reading comprehension text and Iranian intermediate EFL learners' performance on reading comprehension questions?

1.5. Research Hypotheses

To answer the above questions, the following four null hypotheses were stated:

Ho1. There is no significant relationship between the use of L1 version of a reading comprehension text and Iranian intermediate EFL learners' performance on reading comprehension display questions.

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