Reading Comprehension Strategies as Applied by Iranian EFL Students

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ABSTRACT

To enhance reading comprehension, several strategies have been identified in previous research conducted (Naiman et al. 1978; O'Malley & Chamot 1990; O'Malley, Chamot, Manzanares, Russo and Kypper 1985; Politzer and McGroarty 1985; Prokop 1989; Oxford 1990; Salataci and Akyel 2002; Tercanlioglu 2004). However, using different types of Reading Comprehension Strategies shows to be an idiosyncratic task. Every learner uses certain types of strategies; furthermore, some factors like age, sex, background knowledge, text types, situational factors and textual features of the respective text read may affect the choice of strategies. Are the strategies found similar to or different from other strategies reported in other research? The present study attempted to explore what strategies Iranian EFL students employed while trying to comprehend an English text. Lack of efficient and sufficient connections with native language environment or limited exposure to English language in the society and some other factors may make Iranian students' condition somehow different from that of others. The results of this study indicated that 24 reading comprehension strategies were used by Iranian learners, some of which were similar to those mentioned by Block (1986). After the identification and codification of the strategies, they were grouped into three categories of metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective ones, based on O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) framework. Moreover, the observed strategies were ranked according to the frequency of their use by the readers and the most common strategies as well as the most common category of strategies were identified. Implications for the classroom and future research are also discussed.