

The Wonder of Reading: The Effect of Generative Study Strategies on EFL Learners' Reading Comprehension and Recall of Short Stories

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ABSTRACT

EFL learners often tend to shift the major load of language learning task to the reading skill, due to insufficient access to the spoken mode of language. Experiences of practitioners as well as various research reports in the literature indicate that the more actively learners get engaged with the reading materials, the more profound their comprehension of the reading texts would be. Drawing on Wittrock's "generative learning theory" (cf. 1992), this paper has investigated the effect of summarization and question generation, as two generative strategies, on EFL learners' reading comprehension and recall of literary texts. Three homogeneous groups of undergraduates (both males and females) participated in this study (N=63). They were randomly assigned to attend a "short-stories" course in three different sections. The participants in section A were trained how to summarize the short stories in their own words, those in section B generated questions out of the texts, but those in section C (i.e., the control group) were not asked to apply either of the two strategies. The results of administering a reading comprehension achievement test and a recall test indicated that the two experimental groups outscored the control group on both tests.

Keywords: Generative learning theory, learning strategies, summarization, question-generation, reading literary texts

1. INTRODUCTION

Text-based, expository instructional materials, such as textbooks, even in the beginning of the 21st century, when the dominance of online