

ESL Learners' Metacognitive and Cognitive Reading Strategies in Comprehending Online Reading Materials

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Purpose:

To find out the cognitive and metacognitive strategies employed by ESL students when they encounter online reading materials.

Method:

- The participants consisted of 4 freshman students from Indonesia (2 males, 2 females) who were taking English 104 course (First Year Composition)
- They were asked to select an Internet article about gamelan (Indonesian musical instruments) and to summarize the article as a material for writing a paper about cultural artifacts.
- The data collected are the screen capture, video and audio recording, post-interview transcript and notes that they made during the activity

Analysis:

Qualitative analysis of the screen capture, video and audio recording (identification of the strategies employed and application of certain strategy due to the nature of online reading materials)

Results:

Table 1. O'Malley et al (1985) --- 70 high school ESL students, 22 teachers

| Metacognitive | Percentage of Strategies used | Cognitive | Percentage of Strategies used |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| Advance preparation | 22.9% | Repetition | 19.6% |
| Self-management | 20.8% | Note-taking | 18.7% |
| Selective attention | 19.8% | Imagery | 12.5% |
| Directed attention | 13% | Translation | 11.3% |
| Self-monitoring | 9.4% | Transfer | 10.4% |
| | | Resourcing | 5.3% |
| Total Instances | 192 | | 337 |

Table 2. This study --- 4 students, Indonesian freshman in ISU

| Metacognitive | Percentage of Strategies used | Cognitive | Percentage of Strategies used |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| Self-management | 56.8% | Repetition | 79.7% |
| Self-monitoring | 29.5% | Resourcing | 18.2% |
| Selective attention | 11.4% | Transfer | 1.1% |
| Directed attention | 2.3% | Translation | 0.5% |
| Advance Preparation | 56.8% | Imagery | 0.5% |
| Total Instances | 44 | | 187 |

- Students seemed to employ similar strategies, mostly because the strategies can be done in both modes of text presentation.
- There are certain behaviors in certain strategies which are unique to computer-based materials such as: managing the screen environment to be conducive to do the task, copying texts from the links rather than taking notes, using features of certain software as resources.

Conclusions

- Different tasks may require different strategy use
- Every student has unique reading strategies
- Computer-based materials may become an alternative to provide more opportunities to students to read and work on their reading strategies.

- The potentials of certain features of the software as an alternatives for certain pedagogical purposes

Some issues on this kind of study

- More participants, more tasks
- Time consuming data analysis

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Bio

Neny Isharyanti is 2003-2005 Fulbright grantee from Indonesia and a second year student of Master's Program in TESL/Applied Linguistics of Iowa State University, with specialization in Computer-Assisted Language Learning and English for Specific Purposes. Her research interest includes second language acquisition in Internet interpersonal communication.

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